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**PRESS RELEASE**  
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**Brussels, 26 February 2025**

## **ECSR Rules Spain Violated Housing and Social Rights in Cañada Real**

The European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR) has found that Spain has violated several provisions of the revised European Social Charter in relation to the prolonged power cuts affecting residents of Sectors 5 and 6 of Cañada Real, Madrid.

Collective Complaint No. 206/2022 was submitted in March 2022 by Defence for Children International (DCI), the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless (FEANTSA), Magistrats Européens pour la Démocratie et les Libertés (MEDEL), the Confederación Sindical de Comisiones Obreras (CCOO), and the international movement ATD Fourth World.

The ECSR's decision highlights Spain's failure to protect the fundamental rights of approximately 4,500 residents, including 1,800 children, who have endured electricity cuts since October 2020. The lack of electricity has severely impacted residents' housing conditions, health, safety, and overall well-being. The electricity cut continues to this day.

### **Impact on the rights recognised by the European Social Charter**

- Violation of the **Right to Housing**: Authorities failed to provide adequate housing with essential services and utilities.
- Violation of the **Right of Families to Social and Economic Protection**: Failure to ensure appropriate housing conditions and meaningful participation of residents in decision-making processes.
- Violation of the **Right to Protection of Health**: Neglect in safeguarding residents against health hazards caused by electricity deprivation.
- Violation of the **Right of Children and Young Persons to Social, Legal and Economic Protection**, particularly by undermining children's development and access to education.
- Violation of the **Right to Protection Against Poverty and Social Exclusion**: Stigmatisation and social exclusion of residents.
- Violation of the **Right of Elderly Persons to Social Protection**: Failure to protect older residents from the consequences of electricity cuts.
- Violation of the **Right of Persons with Disabilities to Independence and Social Integration**: Disproportionate impact on individuals with disabilities.

The Committee has made clear that it considers "stable, consistent and secure access to adequate energy" a prerequisite for, and a key element of, enjoyment of the rights to housing, health, education, and protection against poverty and social exclusion under the European Social Charter. To be "adequate" for the purposes of the Charter, energy must be affordable, clean and sustainable.

The ECSR emphasised that technical challenges cannot justify denying residents access to electricity, underscoring that the right to adequate housing includes access to essential services and utilities. The Committee also criticised the slow and uncertain progress of relocation plans, noting that the proposed rehousing schedule extending to 2034 is inadequate.

The Spanish Ombudsman has played an active role as a third party in the process, denouncing the inaction of the authorities and the seriousness of the damage caused by the power cuts. He has made observations and recalled his repeated recommendations since he received the first complaint from the residents.

### **A Way Forward: Urgent Actions Required**

The Spanish authorities must act in accordance with the decision:

- Immediate restoration of a stable and legal electricity supply to Sectors 5 and 6 of Cañada Real.
- Implementation of measures to regularise electricity contracts for residents.
- Establishment of a coordinated, transparent, and participatory framework involving all levels of government, residents, and their representatives to ensure the provision of essential services and dignified living conditions.
- Acceleration of the relocation process with clear timelines and guarantees for residents' rights and well-being.

FEANTSA welcomes the ECSR's decision, calls for the immediate restoration of electricity for the residents of Cañada Real and reminds the Spanish government of its obligations under the new EU Electricity Market Directive which mandates protection against electricity disconnections for vulnerable customers.<sup>1</sup>

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- For further information, please contact:

**Maria Jose Aldanas**, Policy Officer at FEANTSA: [maria.jose.aldanas@feantsa.org](mailto:maria.jose.aldanas@feantsa.org) +32485328305.

**Notes for Editors:**

1. [FEANTSA](#), the European Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless, is the only European non-governmental organisation focusing exclusively on homelessness at a European level.
2. This collective complaint was the result of the joint work of [Plataforma Cívica Luz para la Cañada Real](#), [CAES](#) and [Gentium](#). The complainants include [Defence for Children International](#) (DCI), FEANTSA, [MEDEL](#), [CCOO](#), and [ATD Fourth World](#).
3. The documents pertaining to the collective case are available [here](#).