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Attn: Mr. Mariano Rajoy
Prime Minister/Presidente del Gobierno

Mr. Alberto Ruiz-Gallardón
Minister of Justice/Ministro de Justicia

<Place>, 17 January 2014

RE: Spanish Government draft bill to reform the current law on sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Your Excellencies,

The <name of your organization> wishes to express its concern regarding the content of the draft bill, approved on the 20th of December by the Council of Ministers, aiming at reforming the current law on sexual and reproductive health and rights. If approved, this new bill would lead to a 30 years step backwards in the rights of women and the failure of the Government to fulfill its fundamental role to promote gender equality and human rights.

<brief presentation of your organization if appropriate>

The <name of your organization> is a member of the EWL, the largest umbrella organisation of women's associations in the European Union working to promote women's rights and equality between women and men. EWL membership extends to organisations in all 28 EU member states and three candidate countries, as well as to 20 European-wide bodies, representing a total of more than 2500 organisations.

A wide range of Spanish women's organisations have brought to our attention the publication of the draft bill whose worrying provisions can seriously undermine women's right to decide freely on their own maternity. Several women's organisations throughout Europe have already expressed their concerns through demonstrations and petitions, and more actions are foreseen in order to support Spanish women, and give visibility to the demands of millions of women and men committed to equality between women and men. We hope that you are sensitive to these actions expressing the opinion of the population of Europe and reflecting the democratic functioning of the EU.

The <name of your organization> is deeply concerned as the health of women living in Spain could be seriously threatened due to the planned restrictions on abortion and the constraint of women's right to early termination of pregnancy to only two assumptions (if the health of the women is at risk or if the pregnancy is result of rape). As several studies of the World Health Organization (WHO) have shown the number of voluntary abortions in countries with restrictive laws does not vary from those with laws based on time limits. However, restrictive abortion laws forces women with fewer resources to risk their lives in clandestine and unsafe abortion practices. It is unacceptable that in the 21st century, a European country includes in its legislation a provision which directly endangers women's lives.

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According to the UN¹, restrictions regarding of abortion “infringe human dignity by restricting the freedoms to which individuals are entitled under the right to health, particularly in respect of decision-making and bodily integrity”.

The <name of your organization> believes that it is essential that the Spanish Legislation take stocks of all its International Commitments to ensure women’s full enjoyment of their human rights including their sexual and reproductive rights. Please, allow us to recall some of the international human rights agreements to which Spain is a party calling for the realization of equality between women and men and the full respect of each individual’s sexual and reproductive rights, including the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action.

Europe should be leading the way on ensuring women’s full enjoyment of their human rights, including their sexual and reproductive rights. On the 20th anniversary of the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development and the adoption of its Programme for action, it is essential for all the parties to recognize and ensure the basic rights of all couples and individuals to decide freely and responsible on the number, spacing and timing of their children, and to have the information and means to do so, including access to healthcare, legal and safe abortion, and reliable, safe and affordable contraception.

The <name of your organization> counts on the Spanish Government’s commitment to ensure women’s rights and calls on the Spanish Government to withdraw the proposed draft bill; listen to the demands of the women’s rights NGOs and take into account the general opinion of the Spanish population: according to a recent opinion poll by Metroscopia, 86% of people consider that a pregnant woman should have the right to freely decide on her pregnancy².

We are at your disposal for further discussion on this important issue.

Sincerely yours,

<signature

Name

Contact details>

¹ [Interim report of the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health](#). 66 session. Document number A/66/254.

² http://elpais.com/m/elpais/2014/01/11/media/1389453933_455931.html