

Dear President Metsola,

Around 4,000 people who live in the Cañada Real neighbourhood, just 14 kilometres from the centre of the Spanish capital, Madrid, are facing their third winter without electricity. Among them are 1,800 children. This means that they are unable to heat their homes in the middle of winter or carry out the most basic activities of daily life, a situation that violates their fundamental rights. The electricity cut-off is therefore part of a serious mistreatment of the population, which began on 2 October 2020 and is becoming chronic with the time, in the face of the passivity of the public administrations.

We made you aware of it on Tuesday 29 November in the European Parliament, when we met you during the visit we made to denounce, at the institution that represents all European citizens, the situation of the inhabitants of Cañada Real.

Cañada Real is a neighbourhood out of urban planning. As the Spanish Ombudsman has pointed out, it is not a temporary camp or a slum, although there are a large number of substandard housing. The company responsible for supplying electricity to Cañada Real is Unión Fenosa, part of the NATURGY group. They are not supplying electricity to sectors 5 and 6 of Cañada Real, but are also working to dismantle the existing electricity network. Neither are the company and the administrations facilitating contracts, nor is the right of the neighbours to participate and be heard being respected. The Ombudsman has formally requested on several occasions the public administrations to take the necessary measures to guarantee the electricity supply and to enable individual supply contracts.

The lack of electricity supply prevents the most basic activities in Cañada Real (such as the use of electrical appliances, lighting and heating, daily hygiene, washing clothes, etc.) and has a serious impact on the physical and mental health of its inhabitants, especially women and girls, who are mainly responsible for care tasks. Unfortunately, some neighbours risk their lives every day when they use butane bottles or candles to heat and light their homes, with the danger of suffering accidents and irreparable health problems.

Children in this neighbourhood have been disproportionately affected by the power cut, especially in their right to education. They cannot do their homework with light, they have difficulty wearing dry and clean clothes, they cannot sleep in the heat, they cannot bathe in hot water, among many other deprivations. The UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Olivier De Schutter, and a group of nine experts from the High Commissioner for Human Rights, have pointed out that this situation is unacceptable, especially in the heart of the EU. He has also pointed out the breach of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The damage caused to people by the power cuts is serious and irreparable, as recognised by the Council of Europe's own European Committee of Social Rights in an unprecedented resolution dated 19 October. It says that Spain must guarantee access to electricity and heating for those living in Cañada, taking into account the needs of particularly vulnerable groups, and ensure that all relevant public authorities are aware of this decision, as well as inform the Committee of the measures planned by **15 December 2022**.

We are deeply grateful to you for listening to us and we would like to ask you to support this resolution of the European Committee of Social Rights of the Council of Europe and to join our demand "Light Now, contracts and a monitoring committee" at the Cañada Real.

We remain at your disposal for any clarification or other information you may require. We will be happy to help or contribute in any way we are asked to.

Plataforma Cívica de Apoyo a la Lucha por la Luz de Cañada Real Galiana.