

Spain's energy policies brought before the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child by environmental lawyers

- *The environmental law organizations IIDMA and CIEL have submitted a Parallel Report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child concerning the adverse impacts of climate change and air pollution on many of the rights protected by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, highlighting the impacts of coal power plants as one of the most urgent matters the Spanish Government must solve.*
- *The report emphasizes coal-fired power plants are responsible for local and transboundary air pollution as well as climate change, due to their greenhouse gas emissions.*



Madrid, 18 January 2018- The Instituto Internacional de Derecho y Medio Ambiente ([IIDMA](#)) and CIEL (Center for International Environmental Law) have submitted a Parallel Report to the

UN Committee on the Rights of the Child concerning the adverse impacts that Energy policies of the Spanish Government cause on the rights of children, including their health, as a result of the air pollution and climate change they generate. Both organizations urge the Committee to recommend the Spanish State adopts all necessary measures to urgently avoid those impacts.

In its Final Recommendations, the Parallel Report highlights concerns for the rights of the child, both in Spain and beyond, associated with the pollution from coal-fired power plants. Furthermore, the report emphasizes that air quality has a direct impact on children's health, protected under article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In addition, adverse impacts associated to climate change are also considered. CO₂ and other greenhouse gas emissions from coal power plants contribute to climate change contravening articles 24, 27 and 28 of the Convention.

"The Government of Spain fails to uphold its international obligation to protect the rights of children when it refuses to regulate adequately the pollution generated from coal power plants in the country. The government has the legal responsibility to prevent adverse impacts of its energy policy on the health of children in Spain as well as on the climate." says Sébastien Duyk, environmental lawyer from CIEL.

According to the study "A Dark Outlook" * published by IIDMA in 2017, emissions from coal power plants in Spain were related to 10,521 asthma and 1,233 bronchitis cases in children during 2014, in addition to associated health costs of € 1.14 million. Currently, Spain has 15 coal-fired power plants with an installed net capacity of 10,004 MW, which emit 105,650 tonnes of SO₂, 83,723 tonnes of NO_x and 4,008 tonnes of dust per year. These emissions are associated with more than 700 premature deaths.

"We encourage the Committee on the Rights of the Child to urge the Spanish Government to adopt measures to protect children's rights which are paramount rights. It cannot be understood how this kind of adverse impacts are not considered when taking political decisions as they represent an unacceptable cost for society. It is mandatory to reduce air pollution by planning an orderly phase-out of coal, starting with the closure of coal power plants, as the health impacts they cause are contrary to the rights of children" says Ana Barreira, Director of IIDMA.

[*IIDMA's study: "A Dark Outlook"](#)



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Founded in 1997, IIDMA is a public interest law center whose goal is to contribute to the protection of the environment and to promote sustainable development through the study, development, implementation and enforcement of the law. Since 1998, IIDMA is accredited to the United Nations Environment Assembly under the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The IIDMA was declared an organization of public interest by the Spanish Ministry of Home Affairs in 2001. IIDMA is part of [Europe Beyond Coal](#).