**Abs: Ort, Datum:**

**An:**Botschaft des Fürstentums Andorra
Kärntner Ring 2a/13
1010 Wien
ÖSTERREICH

Dear Attorney General,

I am writing to express my deep concern about the ongoing criminal prosecution of Vanessa Mendoza Cortés, a human rights defender and the president of Stop Violence (Associació Stop Violències, in Catalan), for exercising her right to freedom of expression and defending women and girls’ human rights in Andorra and criticising the full ban on abortion in the country. If convicted, she could be fined with up to EUR 30,000 (circa USD 32,000) and would have a criminal record.

The prosecution of Vanessa Mendoza Cortés appears to be in retaliation for her actions to defend the human rights of women and girls, including their right to safe and legal abortion in Andorra. It is particularly concerning that the charges against her stemmed from her engagement with the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (UN CEDAW), as part of the regular and vital exchange of information conducted between this UN body and human rights defenders around the world.

I am aware that in 2021 the prosecutor’s office dropped two of the three charges initially brought against her, which carried potential prison sentences. However, it is disappointing that she remains accused of a crime 'against the prestige of the institutions’ (article 325 of the Penal Code) and could be punished solely for exercising her right to freedom of expression.

I therefore urge you to immediately drop the charges against human rights defender Vanessa Mendoza Cortés, who is being prosecuted solely for exercising her right to freedom of expression and must be allowed to continue her legitimate work defending the right to safe and legal abortions and other human rights of women and girls in Andorra, without fear of reprisals.

Yours sincerely,