



2021 Annual Report

The Catalan Ombudsman's annual report highlights the need to strengthen the welfare state to overcome the deep social crisis evidenced by the pandemic

- During 2021 the institution has received 11,932 complaints i 12,727 consultations and it has initiated 264 ex officio actions
- Primary care must be a priority and must be strengthened
- A new protection system that is better suited to the needs of vulnerable people is needed
- It recommends policies in favour of the right to enjoy nature based on the implementation of the zero alternative
- Rafael Ribó claims the effective right to self-government

The Catalan ombudsman, Rafael Ribó, accompanied by his two deputies, Jaume Saura i M. Jesus Larios, delivered to the President of the Parliament, Laura Borràs, the annual report of the institution corresponding to the year 2021, which once again has been marked by the pandemic of the Covid-19, with the consequent effects not only to the health system, but to a broad set of rights to the economic activity of the country.

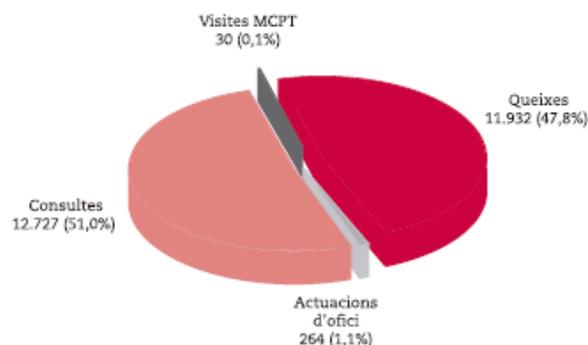
In 2021, the number of complaints lodged, close to 12,000, was again surpassed, and more than 18,000 were processed. There were also more than 12,700 inquiries and a large number of ex officio proceedings (264). In total, around 25,000 cases have been initiated, 14% more than the previous year, which was already extraordinary.

Actuacions del Síndic iniciades el 2021

	N	%
■ Queixes	11.932	47,8
■ Actuacions d'ofici	264	1,1
■ Consultes	12.727	51,0
■ Visites MCPT	30	0,1
Total	24.953	100,0

2. Actuacions tramitades el 2021

	N	%
■ Queixes	18.450	57,8
■ Actuacions d'ofici	699	2,2
■ Consultes	12.727	39,9
■ Visites MCPT	30	0,1
Total	31.906	100,0



Evolució de la tramitació de queixes i actuacions d'ofici durant el període 2012-2021

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
En tramitació	4.826	4.837	6.006	7.471	6.365	4.450	6.663	4.727	5.114	6.327
Finalitzades	8.626	9.517	9.337	10.059	11.714	12.624	9.347	12.788	13.299	12.822
Total	13.452	14.354	15.343	17.530	18.079	17.074	16.010	17.515	18.413	19.149

In addition to this report, during 2021, in accordance with the regulations applicable to the institution, the *Annual Report on the Rights of the Child 2021*, the *Annual Report of Catalan of Prevention of the Torture 2021* and *The Annual Report on transparency 2020* were also submitted. In addition, the Catalan Ombudsman delivered five monographic reports, *The granting of a partial pardon to the persons sentenced by ruling 459/2019 of the Supreme Court*, *Inclusive education in Catalonia* or several reports on segregation school.

PROTECTION OF SOCIAL RIGHTS

Once again, actions related to social policies are the most important in the Catalan Ombudsman's institution, with more than 40% of new complaints and almost 60% of new official actions. As for the right to health, the biggest impact of Covid lies in the effects it has had on primary care and waiting lists. In this area, the Catalan Ombudsman considers that tackling the situation of primary care does not allow for further delays and calls for the determination and firmness of the Plan for the strengthening and transformation of primary care that has been launched. The Catalan Ombudsman also considers it essential to demand from the State the budgetary execution of the 9 billion euros of the so-called covid fund, in the part that pertains to Catalonia.

With regards to poverty, the Catalan Ombudsman denounces that the pandemic has increased the poverty rate in Catalonia, and it claims that it is necessary to make progress in redefining existing benefits and setting up a new protection system that is more in line with needs of more vulnerable people. Also, the pandemic has increased the difficulties in accessing and maintaining the usual housing, which makes it more evident the insufficiency of the existing social housing stock, and the number of people in a situation of energy poverty.

In education, the Catalan Ombudsman emphasized that the Pact against School Segregation is being implemented more slowly than expected and called for a decisive and without delay approach to the implementation phase of the planned actions, particularly the instruments provided for in the new student admission decree.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

And, in the field of sexual and reproductive health, it has been established that not all women in Catalonia, such as those in the health regions of Lleida and the Alt Pirineu and Aran, could access voluntary interruption of pregnancy in its territory. In this case, the Catalan Ombudsman has called for the immediate implementation of the right to voluntary termination of pregnancy in these health regions.

In the field of taxation, discrimination has also been detected in the case of the tax treatment of the amounts received in relation to the care of children affected by cancer or other serious illness. From the analysis of the cases studied, the Catalan Ombudsman has been able to ascertain that for civil servants the reduction of the working day associated with this leave is quantified as income from work and is subject to taxation, while non-civil servants perceive it

as an economic benefit and is not subject to personal income tax. In this regard, the Catalan Ombudsman has asked the Spanish Ombudsman to propose the relevant legislative amendments to ensure fairness and tax justice.

RIGHTS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

Adequate attention to the needs of people in a vulnerable situation due to dependency or disability is an essential part of social policies and must be a priority in an advanced society aimed at the full enjoyment of the rights of children. In this context, the Catalan Ombudsman considers it essential to modify the circuits and simplify the procedures for recognizing the situation of dependency and the right of access to services and related economic benefits, increasing the provision of residential places for people with intellectual disabilities and to intensify the actions of the administrations to eliminate the architectural barriers. It also calls for more determined action by the public authorities to facilitate access to employment opportunities for this group.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

In this section, the Catalan Ombudsman highlighted the hundreds of complaints received about the disagreement with the configuration of the tax on carbon dioxide emissions from mechanically propelled vehicles, the selective collection system implemented in several municipalities, or the rejection of the model established in the Decree on Urgent Measures for Climate Emergencies and the Promotion of Renewable Energy. The Catalan Ombudsman recommended improvements to the Administration both in terms of the configuration of the CO2 tax (and, for example, not taxing vehicles that are deregistered), the readjustment of waste management (adapting it to the needs of each district or municipality) and the need to draw up a sectoral territorial plan for the implementation of renewable energies and to prioritize implementation in degraded or already altered soils.

CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

Following the report, should politicians be prosecuted for statements issued in the exercise of their mandate?, approved by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, which raises, among other things, the necessary political treatment - not criminal - of the conflict, the modification of crimes such as sedition, rebellion and embezzlement, the granting of pardons and dialogue between the parties, the Catalan Ombudsman asked the Parliament to set up a commission or working group to monitor and assess the level of compliance with the measures contained therein, which is still pending.

LINGUISTIC RIGHTS

The establishment of a 25% share of classes in Spanish in a general way in the whole education system interferes with the current and obvious legal framework that, according to the data available so far, Spanish is already vehicular language in our education system. The Catalan Ombudsman warns that not implementing the language immersion model can lead to a risk of social and linguistic segregation, and negatively affect the linguistic competence in the Catalan language of children from non-Catalan-speaking families who do not have the opportunity to speak or develop it in its closest environment

Access to the content of the report



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