



Alianza Evangélica
Española

STATEMENT

Barcelona, 12 July 2017

The Spanish Evangelical Alliance's position on the proposed bill "*against discrimination with regard to sexual orientation, identity or gender expression and sexual characteristics, and of social equality for the LGBTI community*".

(This is a summary of the full declaration).

Historically, Protestants in Spain have had to endure suffering and persecution; we therefore think that proactive measures should be implemented to help change how society relates to us. We also believe that government should be proactively promoting real changes in the laws of religious equality that will overcome our historical invisibility and the lack of recognition of our rights.

All public authorities will promote Protestant visibility and celebrate our special commemorative dates. Training in Protestantism will be mandatory for professionals working in all areas of public services. All local and government administrations will promote the participation and representation of Protestants publicly. A State Agency is to be created to fight the discrimination of Protestantism. Protestant doctrine will be fully included in curricula at all educational levels. When a Protestant claims discrimination on the basis of his or her faith and provides substantiated evidence, the defendant shall be required to provide objective and reasonable justification. It is forbidden to preach to a Protestant to convert him to another belief or religion using aggressive counter arguments, even if he asks for it.

You don't need to say it yourselves, because we ourselves say it: this would be absolutely inappropriate because it would afford privileges which are incompatible in a democratic society where everyone has equal rights. Why is it not appropriate for Protestants and is acceptable for the LGTBI community? The bill under reference does not present objective evidence that LGTBI people are discriminated against in Spain nor that they may need special protection to justify such a law.

Prejudice, intolerance, false progress and specific ideology

This text is presented as a progressive initiative to combat prejudice, but is in fact itself impregnated with prejudice and intolerance and appears unable to distinguish between respect for people and the right to dissent. It limits, therefore, the freedom of parents to teach

values to their children, and the right to disagree and to say so in public. The text is loaded with ideology and lacks any scientific base to support it up.

Social progress is not defined by elites working from their own agenda, but is built by consensus with all of society, listening to everyone's views, and is proved by its results. We cannot conclude that the bill is progressive just because many people believe it to be so, but we must ask the question: what kind of a society does it really promote? A society impregnated with tolerance or dogmatism? With diversity or a specific ideology? With freedom or with coercion? Laws drafted by a lobby with its own agenda or drafted after taking into account that society's social diversity?

From the start it establishes the principle that "gender is a human category that can be in constant evolution and as such has to be perceived as a vital experience, a diverse journey in time and form"; this is a dogma based on ideology, not on scientific evidence, and you cannot build a truly democratic, progressive society based only on dogmas. In this bill there is no room for any discussion or alternative viewpoints.

As Protestants we reject being under tutelage, and this bill is impregnated with it by the LGBTI action groups, which are granted prerogatives and powers of control that no other group is granted under any other law.

Threats to democratic liberties

Protestants know what it means to suffer discrimination, but we have never used this to our advantage or claimed privileges over other groups. Privileges for a sector of the population are incompatible in a democracy, but the entire bill that is being proposed is full of special privileges for the LGBTI collective. Here are some examples:

- It imposes biased visibility for this group; it provides for the setting up of a specific Interdepartmental Plan and of a National Centre for LGBTI Historical Memory. It turns the LGBTI activists into judge and jury through their participation in the "State Agency for Non-discrimination based on Sexual Orientation".
- It penalizes not only the breach of law, but also the failure in proactive compliance. It establishes gender dogma indoctrination at all educational levels. It defines specific measures to support the LGTBI collective at work. It imposes specific criteria on the media, together with their corresponding coercive measures.
- It prohibits homosexuals or transsexuals to revert to their biological sex, establishing severe penalties for professionals who assist the person, even where the interested party gives consent to that reversion. It addresses the cross-hormonal treatment of minors with astonishing levity, disregarding the recommendations of medical science, and contradicts the Patient Autonomy Law 41/2002, where it is clear that the child cannot give their own consent in situations comparable to the one mentioned.
- It imposes the inversion of the burden of evidence, a basic ingredient of the rule of law, thereby eliminating the equality of all before the law and thus generating legal uncertainty. It grants unlimited power to the state, something very foreign to western

democratic thinking, by invading areas of competence within civil society and the family. The proposed sanctions regime seems to us to be exaggerated; at the same time, it is unacceptable that what is not tolerated against the LGBTBI is however tolerated, for example, against Catholics, under the pretence of “freedom of expression.”

Conclusion

We are not alarmed at the proposition of law only because it clashes with our Christian worldview, but because it threatens the democratic liberties of all citizens regardless. It is rooted in dogma rather than scientific evidence; it imposes a particular ideology, instead of recognizing the free concurrence of proposals; it contradicts the equality of all citizens by granting one social group privileges over others; it restricts freedom of conscience and freedom of speech; it invades the competences of civil society and the family.

We invite legislators to recover the spirit of democracy and genuine diversity in the debate on this bill and not be prey to dogma, a new orthodoxy, tutelage, inequality and intolerance, especially when disguised as progress.

The Executive Board of the Spanish Evangelical Alliance.