

Analysis of the United Nations Role on the Development of Women's Rights in Portugal

The principle of non-discrimination sex based is established in international law. Starting with the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the two main international covenants: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

In 1979 the principle of non-discrimination sex based and other women's rights were the subject of a specific treaty, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

Between 1974 and 1979 a change would happen to the social status of women in Portugal, namely the extension of maternity leave, of the access to different careers and of the right to vote, as well as constitutional recognition of equality between men and women. Portugal signed the CEDAW on 24 April 1980 and the Optional Protocol on 16 February 2000.

The present paper aims to study the influence that the United Nations (UN) has had on the evolution of portuguese women's rights through the commitments undertaken by Portugal as a CEDAW State Party.

This investigation had the goal to analyze the degree of compliance and non-compliance by Portugal with the CEDAW provisions, and the reasons behind that (non)compliance. We also intended to understand the impact CEDAW has had on political, social and economic rights (connected with women's rights) in Portugal.

The data collection and analysis was mostly based on the reports submitted by Portugal to the CEDAW Committee, the concluding observations and recommendations made by the Committee to Portugal, on individual communications, on inquiries implicating Portugal and on trials in Portugal in which the CEDAW was invoked.

Key words: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Women's Rights, Compliance, Implementation, UN and Portugal