

15 May, International Day of Families

"We need inclusive policies that support all family models to move forward as society"

- **In Spain almost 2 million families are single-parent families, one of the models which are increasing the most.**
- **The visibility of family diversity from school is essential to normalize all models and avoid discrimination.**

Madrid, 14th May 2018. On the occasion of the International Day of Families, which is celebrated tomorrow May 15th, Unión de Asociaciones Familiares (UNAF) calls for public policies in Spain that meet the needs of different family models to improve as society and achieve sustainable development.

There are almost 2 million single-parent families, of which 1.6 million are headed by women, that is, more than 80%. In addition, according to data from the INE (Spanish Statistics Institute), this family model has grown by more than 24 percent since 2006, making it an increasingly frequent family structure. In fact, they represent more than 10% of families in this country.

However **they do not have sufficient support from public policies to address their specific needs:** *"If parenting is already a challenge for families with two parents, in the case of single-parent families even more, with no possibility to share parental responsibilities and with much more difficulties for work-life balance. If we also take into account that most of them are headed by women and that they suffer gender discrimination (economic and social), we find families with an increased risk of poverty and social exclusion"*, claims Ascensión Iglesias, President of UNAF.

For this reason, UNAF joins the request for a **Single Parent Family Law** that defines them as a family model, regulates and protects them, guaranteeing their access to employment, housing, training, public resources for reconciliation and a taxation that does not discriminate them. In this sense, **UNAF considers insufficient the bill recently announced by the Spanish Government to recognize the condition of large family to single-parent families with two or more children**, since it excludes one million single parents with only one child. *"Vulnerability in these families does not come of the number of children but because of the difficulties involved in raising them by a single parent"*.

Another family model which is becoming more common is **reconstituted families**, those formed by couples that bring children from a previous relationship. However, these families remain invisible as not reflected in the statistics. Precisely that is the main difficulty for its recognition as a family model and for promoting measures to support them. Nevertheless, **UNAF offers a specific service that is a pioneer in the country**, where guidance is offered to help them manage the rapid changes that this model entails and that have to do with the incorporation of new adult figures, the ambiguity of roles and relationships between minors.

This need for recognition is also shared by **single-parent families**. Regardless the legal framework granted by the Equal Marriage Law 13 years ago, these families are still invisible in textbooks or administrative documents. In addition, they continue to suffer discrimination such as the need for married women to register their children in the civil registry, unlike couples formed by men and women, or the difficulty of moving or adopting in countries where this family reality is not recognized.

UNAF stresses the need for attention of public policies to these family models, as well as of **migrant, intercultural, adoptive or foster families and of those where one of their members has a disability**. *"They are all family and, therefore, the Government must guarantee their rights and opportunities, prioritizing those who are in a situation of greater vulnerability"*.

Finally UNAF reminds that in terms of public policy, **education plays a fundamental role**. "We must make visible all the family diversity from the school because that will allow us to normalize all the family realities and that all children recognize themselves and feel equal with the rest, avoiding discrimination and preventing violence." Investing on inclusive education is also investing on social cohesion and peaceful societies that will be capable of progressing and developing in a sustainable way", concludes the President of UNAF.

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