

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Espot announces three new buildings, without knowing the number of applicants

The head of government also defends pragmatism in the management of the housing crisis

EL PERIÒDIC



The Head of Government, Xavier Espot, during his speech on Meritxell Day.

ALEX MONTERO / LAURA GÓMEZ RODRÍGUEZ
CANILLO

The head of government, Xavier Espot, stressed the need to adopt a pragmatic approach to deal with the housing crisis in Andorra. During the Meritxell Day celebration, Espot emphasized that the demand for affordable rental housing is one of the main concerns of citizens and recalled that «there are not 50,000 measures to address it», but that all actions must prioritize effectively.

Thus, the representative assured that the Government is working to put more affordable rental flats on the market, stressing that before the end of the year

two or three more buildings in central parishes can be put into circulation. These would be added to the homes already available in Pas de la Casa, which will be the first to be available to people registered in the affordable rental program and who meet the established requirements.

On the other hand, Espot wanted to respond to some criticisms about the order of allocation of the homes, assuring that «they are the first because they are the first that are available». However, he stressed that «hopefully all the homes will be ready», but that the Government will act «quickly» to put them at the service of citizens as soon as they are ready.



Xavier Espot

HEAD OF GOVERNMENT

«I wish all the homes were ready [...] The government will act quickly to put them into service»

MEASURES IN PROCESS AND POLITICAL CONSENSUS // However, the Head of Government also emphasized that the Omnibus Law Project, which is in the parliamentary process, seeks to establish a

balance and asked the political groups to put aside the confrontation in order to find consensus in benefit of citizens. In addition, Espot considered that, in sensitive matters such as housing for tourist use and empty flats, attempts have been made to introduce guarantees to give security to the economic and social fabric without distorting the measures. «This law must be clear, easy to apply and must provide legal certainty», said Espot, while assuring that the Government is prepared to make adjustments to obtain the maximum possible parliamentary support. «We cannot avoid any recipe that helps us put more flats on the market», he concluded.

EVOLUTION OF PISMA // Two years ago, the Ministry of Health presented the Comprehensive Plan for Mental Health and Addictions (PISMA), which is still in the implementation phase. «Many of the measures have already been implemented, others are in phase and others are more long-term such as, for example, infrastructures that need time and reflection», revealed Espot. Therefore, it is expected that Minister Helena Mas will soon hold a press conference to update the new developments of the Plan: «Soon we will have a new mental health service with some dependencies included near the hospital», detailed the head of Government, pointing out that it is impossible to say that progress is not being made. ●

EUROPEAN UNION

The government clings to the constitutional debate to defend the Agreement

Espot urges to maintain an open and moderate dialogue

A.M. / L.G.R.
CANILLO

The Head of Government, Xavier Espot, took advantage of the Meritxell Day celebration to also highlight the importance of maintaining an open and moderate dialogue on the Association Agreement with the European Union, one of Andorra's current major challenges. Espot stressed that all opinions are valid, but warned that maximalism must be avoided, referring to some sectors critical of this agreement. «The citizens who shout the most do not necessarily represent the majority of the country», he said, while insisting that the Principality cannot live with its back to the world and must continue to move towards internationalization and homologation with Europe.

However, Espot compared this process to the constitutional debate 30 years ago, when some sectors were also reluctant to the Constitution. «Today, no one can imagine an Andorra wit-



The archbishop of Urgell and episcopal co-prince, Joan Enric Vives, greeting the head of government, Xavier Espot, during his arrival at the Sanctuary.

hout a Constitution», he assured, being convinced that, in 30 years, integration with the European Union will be seen as natural, as the Principality's Magna

Carta is now.

In relation to the possible date of the referendum on the Association Agreement, Espot indicated that there are still many unk-

nowns. The negotiation process with the European Commission is pending several procedural issues, such as the approval of the text by the Council of the European Union. According to the head of government, if everything progresses without delays, the referendum could be held at the end of next year. However, he did not rule out that this could be postponed, depending on the evolution of the negotiations.

BORDER CONTROLS AND NEGOTIATIONS WITH EUROPE //

On the other hand, Espot also addressed the issue of border controls, another concern in Andorra's European agenda. In addition, he reported that negotiations with the European Commission will resume in October to deal with the Andorran exception in this regard, guaranteeing that systematic border controls will not be implemented, which could have a negative impact on mobility and the tourism of the country. Even so, the head of government celebrated that Andorra has a specific mandate to negotiate this issue, which other countries like Monaco do not have. ●

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