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AWARDING OF AIR ROUTES

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«Since the pilot test went so well, we started working on two lines to have them on a fixed and regular basis»

«The amounts to be paid will be substantially lower than these amounts»

The Secretary of State for Energy Transition, Transport and Mobility, David Forné, last Thursday.

Air Nostrum will continue to travel to Madrid and operate in Palma until 2026

Government will invest 940,000 and 660,000 euros in both frequencies for the next two years

ALEX MONTERO
ANDORRA LA VELLA

The airline Air Nostrum will continue to serve the Madrid line and will also start the Palma line until 2026, at least. This was confirmed by the Secretary of State for Energy Transition, Transport and Mobility, David Forné, who also took stock of

the good work of the pilot test framed in the first three months of this 2024: «Thanks to the success of the pilot test, we will be able to continue promoting La Seu airport and be with the tourism sector with a business opportunity for new visitors», he emphasized.

In terms of figures, Forné indicated that the pilot test with

the Balearic capital had collected a total of 2,594 passengers and a 70% average occupancy of all flights. The highest employment record occurred in February, with 81%, and the highest peak was 94%. In this way, the cost for the Government has been completely free, since the line «has supported itself». On the other hand, and as regards the

line that operates in the Spanish capital, the total number of passengers was 18,600, with an average occupancy of 52% and a percentage of 69% in February. The highest employment peak was 92%.

So, the Executive is now starting a new test to continue giving frequency to both lines with the Air Nostrum company,

THE FIGURES

220,000 €

The investment that the Government will have to make until December for the award of flights to Palma.

660,000 €

The investment that the Government will have to make in 2025 and 2026 for the award of flights to Palma.

940,000 €

The investment that the Government will have to make in 2025 and 2026 for the award of flights to Madrid.

which until now only operated with flights to Madrid. The starting shot will be given on September 28th, extending until December this year. «As the pilot test went so well, we started working on a single tender for two lines to have them on a fixed and regular basis», Forné emphasized, while indicating that there were two possible awards on the table: Air Nostrum and Swiftair. Finally, they opted for the first, since the second airline did not pass the first administrative phase due to lack of docu-



The first plane arriving from Madrid at La Seu airport.

mentation. Regarding Air Nostrum, Forné considered that it is a company connected to all the flights of the Oneworld alliance, in which all the tickets sold in connection with this are considered for a single journey. «If a person wants to travel from San Francisco to Andorra la Vella, they can do so directly without having to take another ticket», he emphasized.

As highlighted by the Secretary of Transport, the award could be divided into two parts. The first is related to this 2024, in which the Government will invest 220,000 euros in flights to

Palma from the aforementioned date. The frequency will be extended for fourteen weeks and until the end of October it will operate from Tuesday to Saturday, with two weekly frequencies. Looking ahead to November and December, interested passengers will only be able to fly on Saturdays and Sundays. On the other hand, the second part of the award is for 2025 and 2026, in which the Executive will allocate 660,000 euros for the Palma line and 940,000 euros for the Madrid line. Even so, Forné stressed that «the amounts that will have to be paid later will be

substantially lower than these amounts».

Finally, and questioned by possible other air destinations that may now be on the table, the Secretary of State has ruled out any short-term option, especially the one referring to Paris: «We are focused on these two destinations and although improvements have been made at La Seu airport, an investment should be made in the loading of fuel if longer flights are to be made», he stated, although leaving the door open to the possibility that do other pilot tests in the more distant future. ●

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