

el Periòdic News

HOUSING

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Last Monday, the Minister of the Presidency, Housing and Work, Conxita Marsol, reported on the issues discussed at the Economic and Social Council, held earlier in the day. At the end of the meeting, Marsol particularly highlighted the approval of the omnibus law, a key piece of legislation for sustainable growth and the regulation of the right to housing. «The Omnibus Law has been presented, the law on sustainable growth of housing rights, the effects of making the report or opinion to the General Council as established by all types of laws».

Marsol explained that the main objective of the omnibus law is to regulate and encourage the emergence of flats on the rental market, as well as to control the country's demographic growth. The minister emphasized that this legislation has been well received by the parties involved, although various opinions and comments have been expressed during the session.

«This law is essential to guarantee that there are more homes available on the rental market and to offer a solution to the needs of the population at risk of residential exclusion,» said Marsol. «With this law, we also establish clear deadlines for the session of empty flats, with a maximum of six to 12 months to put them up for rent before returning them to the owners if there is no demand», detailed the minister.

The Economic Council issued its favorable opinion, and the omnibus law will be presented to the Government for its final approval this Wednesday. In the event of any unforeseen circumstances, the minister pointed



The CEA day at the Art Hotel, last Monday.

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Conxita Marsol

MINISTER OF HOUSING

«The law is essential to offer a solution to the needs of the population at risk of residential exclusion»

Flats without demand will be returned within a minimum period of six months

The Executive will present the Omnibus Law to the General Council this Wednesday

out that the approval could be postponed for another 15 days. Once approved by the Executive, the law will enter parliamentary proceedings within 8 to 10 days, allowing parliamentarians to review and make contributions before the summer break. The return that the proposed law has had, as underpinned by Marsol, was along the lines of «everyone has marked their positions, but in principle the general interest is that it begins to be regulated, in addition to surface flats to the rental market,

to control the country's demographic growth».

Marsol stressed that, despite the modifications and adjustments made since its initial presentation in April, the law

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GABRIEL UBACH

SECRETARY GENERAL OF USDA

«We still don't know what is the definition of affordable housing in Andorra, neither for purchase nor for rent»

maintains the announced guidelines. «We have been careful to continue with everything contemplated by this law and the text we presented last April 2nd», she said. The highlighted measures include the definition of empty flats, the conditions for foreign investment, the management of capital gains and the exemption from the Property Transfer Tax (ITP) for the first home purchase.

EXTENSION OF QUOTAS // In addition to the omnibus law, the Econo-

mic Council also addressed the extension of self-employed quotas, which include an «extension of 100 self-employed places and 25 for liberal professionals». Although the salary issue was not part of the agenda, Marsol confirmed that unions and employers are scheduled for upcoming meetings to deal with this issue.

The minister concluded her speech by highlighting the importance of collaboration between all parties involved to ensure the success of the law and its positive impact on society. «We work together with all the parliamentary groups to ensure that this omnibus law is an effective tool for the improvement of our economy and the well-being of our citizens», assured Marsol.

The session of empty flats / Regarding the regulatory framework, known as the «session of empty flats», Marsol specified that a clear procedure is stipulated for properties that remain unrented for 6 or 12 months, after the session made by the owner, the house will be returned. According to the minister, this legislation will not only protect the interests of tenants and promote access to housing but will also give owners an opportunity to return to their property if it cannot be rented for a considerable period.

«It is important to understand that this initiative is not an attempt by the Government to have empty properties, but rather a measure to cover the needs of the population at risk of residential exclusion,» said Marsol. In addition, she stressed that the six-month period to put the flats on the rental market or include them in the housing stock will be crucial to guarantee the effectiveness of the program.

The holder of the Housing portfolio also pointed out the



GERARD CADENA

CEA PRESIDENT

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transparency of the law, ensuring that it clearly specifies the procedures and deadlines for all owners and tenants involved. «We are determined not to leave flats empty when there are people who could benefit from living in them,» she said. In addition, the minister added that the transfer time that is contemplated right now is five years, in addition to considering a transitory period for the application as well. «This procedure

will have a deadline. It is not because we empty flats, now it is because of the need to put flats on the market, but it is for a certain period. This mandatory feeing will only operate or can only be managed, we could say, for a few years, exact», remarked Marsol.

For his part, the general secretary of the Trade Union, Gabriel Ubach, pointed out the need to introduce more severe sanctions to encourage the renting of vacant homes. «I find that 50 euros per square meter as a penalty is very little. We need to be much more forceful in this aspect. For owners who consider their flats as an investment, a fine of 5,000 euros per year is not a great financial sacrifice», he said.

The general secretary also criticized the pace of implementation of the measures, indicating that two and a half years may not be enough to see significant results. «We must make these policies advance more quickly. We can't afford to wait two and a half years without seeing substantial changes in the situation of empty flats», said Ubach.

Regarding the new Omnibus Law, the general secretary expressed caution, pointing out that «we still do not know what the definition of affordable housing is here in Andorra, neither for purchase nor for rent».

This lack of clarity, according to Ubach, makes it difficult to effectively implement policies aimed at addressing the housing crisis.

At the same time, the president of the Andorran Business Confederation (CEA), Gerard Cadena, declared that «we have been presented with these amendments to the Omnibus Law and we are now in the evaluation process. Our confederation has approved the initial opinion, but now it is up to us to transfer it to the associations involved so that they can give us their evaluation», he mentioned.

As for the technical details, Cadena pointed out that there are still gaps in the available data on empty flats. «It is clear that the current data is not completely complete, especially in parishes such as Andorra la Vella and Escaldes, where precise information on the available properties is still lacking», he pointed out.

Finally, the president of the CEA expressed his expectation to have more clarity on the legislative details before the resumption of the legislative sessions in September. «I trust that with the assessments of the associations and our internal work, we will be able to provide a detailed view to all the parliamentary groups in the General Council», he concluded. ●

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