



SOCIETY

The (non) normalization of hearing and visual disabilities

On the occasion of the first Sign Language Film Festival, we speak with three witnesses

The Visual and Hearing-Impaired Association of Andorra regrets the lack of empathy from Education

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The First International Sign Language Film Festival is born in Andorra and it is inevitable to ask the big question: is the country's society really ready to host an event of this nature? To what extent are hearing and visual disabilities normalized and visible among our people?

In search of these answers, the representative of Parl'App — the company organizing the event — steps forward, Quim Barceló, who believes that «Andorra needed a festival like this», adding that «the fact of organizing an event of these characteristics enhances the empowerment of people who may present a disability». Words that are signed by the artistic director of the Signema Awards, Lázaro Contreras, who also has a hearing disability. According to the director, our country is the ideal place to launch a festival like this, due to «being a very touristic place, having the resources at the demand of the deaf community and facilitating the reunion of filmmakers and fans».

Contreras, however, cannot avoid being concise in his words: «hearing disability is not normalized». Statements that are justified by the filmmaker due to their «physical invisibility and communication barriers», two factors that completely distance these people from being able to feel truly integrated in the social framework. «Cultural events and public services of any kind should have sign language interpreters», he says, emphasizing the fact that «since the recognition of this language as an official language in the neighboring state, there has been very little progress due to a lack of attention from political representatives.» In the same way, Barceló believes that normalization will not be truly effective until, both from the public and private point of view, «it is not considered extraordinary to have to use a sign language interpreter to make any communication or that the letters from the country's restaurants should have integrated braille».

Following this line, the members of the board of the Visual and Hearing Impaired Association of An-



► Lázaro Contreras and Quim Barceló during the presentation of the festival.

The aim of ADVAA is to make known the needs of these disabilities in order to obtain visibility and help

dorra (ADVAA), headed by Diana Figueras, are also explained. An organization that was born of «making known the particular needs of sensory disabilities in order to obtain visibility and help». A visibility that, in keeping with the words spoken by Barceló and Contreras, has not yet been effective in the Principality: «Today there are no Special Education teachers in the country who teach Braille, the Catalan Sign Language (LSC) or to get around with a cane», affirms Figueras, adding that «if you want to train you have to go abroad». In addition, the association has requested a grant from the Ministry of Social Affairs to teach a course with a trainer from Barcelona and train volunteer staff, but they have not yet received any response.

It is not the only situation that the members of the ADVAA board denounce, but they highlight two more equally crucial to understanding the situation that the country is currently going through with regard to visual and hearing disabilities. The

first has its origins in the LSC course that the Lifelong Training Center taught some time ago, which «was not communicated to us and when we found out about it through the media, no longer there were places and we didn't have access», mentions Figueras. The second complaint and disappointment falls on the Ministry of Education: «The government does not always understand the needs of students with these disabilities and they cannot be waiting for a specific tablet or a micro FM, in addition to waiting three weeks for when the product arrives in Andorra, the staff of the ministry goes to collect it».

It is for these reasons that, now more than ever, it is important that platforms such as Parl'App or the Sign Language Film Festival have their space and the necessary resources to continue progressing, especially in fields such as audiovisual: «There are very few people who work professionally in the media because of its problems», says Contreras, who does not hesitate to ho-

nor the work of all those filmmakers with hearing disabilities: «Most deaf filmmakers are self-taught and are aware that his work will give a very big message to society». A sample of this struggle is precisely the tool promoted by Barceló, who believes that they have made «a clear commitment to universal accessibility and we will continue to do so, not only for deaf or blind people, but that it is a service for everyone».

Figueras also wanted to send a message to the application, claiming the important work they are doing in making sensory disabilities visible: «We hope that soon they can also make a cover for TVPs and thus make the lives of people with visual difficulties easier», added the ADVAA board member, with the hope that these initiatives «will end up being done more often». An illusion that Contreras also maintains, who hopes that «they will help us raise awareness and make our collective visible, as well as learn about our idiosyncrasy». ≡



LÁZARO CONTRERAS
FESTIVAL DIRECTOR

«All cultural events and public services should have sign language interpreters»

QUIM BARCELÓ
FOUNDING PARTNER OF PARL'APP

«We have made a commitment to universal accessibility, not only for deaf or blind people, but for everyone»

DIANA FIGUERAS
MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF ADVAA

«There are no Special Education teachers in the country who teach Braille or Catalan Sign Language (LSC)»

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POLITICS

Concòrdia participates in the Annual Session of the OSCE PA

Councilor Pol Bartolomé explains the work objectives that have been set

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The General Councilor of the Concòrdia parliamentary group, Pol Bartolomé participates in the Annual Session of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, OSCE PA. Bartolomé arrives at the session with a series of objectives to work on in addition to participating in the various commissions marked by the event's agenda. The meeting will take place in the Canadian city of Vancouver, and hundreds of parliamentarians will meet for five days to work and debate the resolutions of the committees, as well as to participate in numerous bilateral meetings and parallel events with the global purpose to promote inter-parliamentary dialogue and advance the purposes of maintaining security and preventing conflicts that the OSCE proposes.

Regarding the Andorran parliamentary representation, Councilor Bartolomé, titular member of the delegation, explains the different work objectives that have been set during the Annual Session of the OSCE PA.

Apart from tasks such as participating in the Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and the Environment and the Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Issues and following up on proposed amendments to each resolution, the Andorran delegation wishes to contact with parliamentarians from potentially interesting countries for Andorra, as well as contributing to the security debate, as the OSCE is a platform for multilateralism in action, a priority area for Andorra. In addition, there are specific tasks that the



►► The member of the Concòrdia parliamentary group, Pol Bartolomé, during the Annual Session of the OSCE PA.

The purpose is to promote inter-parliamentary dialogue and maintain security and conflict prevention

delegation wants to carry out.

Bartolomé supported the amendment presented to the resolution corresponding to the Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and the Environment, by the Swiss parliamentarian Glanzmann, in which it is advocated to facilitate the recognition of foreign university degrees.

We also want to give continuity to the Network of Young Parliamentarians in which Andorra, through

former General Counsel Roger Padreny, played a leading role in the creation of the network through the Declaration of Andorra.

For this reason, Bartolomé will participate in the different meetings of the network that have been called in order to coordinate actions between the different members.

Another measure to be carried out is to follow up on the work of the organization on priority issues for Andorra relating to climate change,

young people, the fight against corruption, the promotion of gender equality, as well as undertake actions aimed at promoting tolerance and non-discrimination.

In addition, support will be given to missions on the ground that promote the OSCE concept of security and assist states in promoting the organization's commitments and values; for the tasks of the special observation mission in Ukraine, to mitigate the crisis in the country and assist the civilian population; to encourage more cooperation and create synergies with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

In the coming days, other aspects will be worked on to move forward on the basis of existing commitments and principles, in particular what refers to the Helsinki Final Act and the Paris Charter, where it is sought to work on a road map to stabilize the OSCE situation and provide a unifying agenda for par-

Bartolomé will participate in different meetings of the Young Parliamentarians Network to coordinate the actions

ticipating states. They also want to contribute to the debate to give the organization a sense of direction and a purpose for the future.

Finally, the candidatures for the position of president of the OSCE PA and the various presidencies of the commissions will have to be voted on. In this sense, the councilor of Concòrdia, Pol Bartolomé, wants to initiate contact with the political group of the European Greens in order to coordinate joint actions in the voting.

It should be remembered that the Andorran delegation, which will be in Vancouver until tomorrow, is made up of the titular members, Pol Bartolomé from Concòrdia and Meritxell López from Democrats, and the substitute members Carles Naudi from Ciutadans Compromesos and Noemí Amador from Andorra Endavant. ≡

SOCIETY

Young people are the ones who consume the most marijuana and hashish

Between 21 and 30 years of age is when consumption rises the most

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Marijuana and hashish continue to be the drugs that «a priori» are most consumed in Andorra, especially during the entry into adulthood. This is clear from the criminal interventions carried out by the Police Force during 2022, which show how, in total, 564.3 grams of marijuana and 355.4 grams of hashish have been confiscated.

One of the most alarming facts about this situation is consumption among increasingly younger people. In fact, these two substances are what teenagers usually use to

enter the world of drugs.

According to the Police, during the past year up to 22 criminal offenses were committed in this regard among young people aged 15 to 17. As the age of young people advances, consumption is increasingly evident, so much so that the sanctions imposed on young people aged 18 to 20 have risen in the last year to 281, while from 21 to 30 years is the age group where consumption rises the most, taking into account that there were 565 criminal offenses.

The number begins to decrease in the age range from 31 to 40 years, with 169 interventions by the Police, and even more in the range from 41 to 52 years, when the number drops to 34, as reported by the ANA. ≡



►► The most consumed drug.

HEALTH

Shouts to pregnant women who have consumed sobressada

The College of Physicians recommends that they contact the gynecologist

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The College of Doctors of Andorra asks that all pregnant women who have or may have consumed Escaubells brand sobressada, contact their gynecologist, their reference doctor or go to the Medical Permanence Service or to the Emergency Department, given the effect it can have especially on women who are pregnant, even if they are asymptomatic.

It should be remembered that on Friday the Ministry of Health issued a health alert to inform of

the withdrawal of a product of the Escaubells brand, a batch of sobrasada in which the presence of the bacteria *Listeria monocytogenes* was detected.

All product available on the market was promptly recalled as a precaution while the investigation continues. This lot had only been sold in one establishment in Pas de la Casa, where a few units of the product had been sold before the sale of the rest of the units in the lot was withdrawn. The Ministry of Health advises all consumers who have been able to purchase batch number 042223 of the sobrasada to refrain from consuming it as a precaution and to return it to the place of purchase. ≡