

el Periòdic News

INTERVIEW

Marc Rossell

SECRETARY OF STATE OF ANDORRA FOR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

«The biggest challenge we face is all aspects related to cybersecurity»

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In May 2024, the Government of Andorra approved a code of ethics for the use of AI. The document, addressed to the public, private sector and all citizens, aims to support the correct and reliable deployment of AI in Andorra. We spoke with Marc Rossell, Secretary of State for Digital Transformation and Telecommunications, about this document and the perspectives for optimizing Andorra's payment system.

—What exactly is the code of ethics on the use of AI?

—The code of ethics aims to provide a sound basis for the use of AI. All international organizations, whether

UNESCO or the United Nations, recommend having an ethical framework to promote new technologies. The interest is to be able to use these new technologies safely and to establish values, principles and guidelines among citizens, companies and the public sector.

In addition, the Government of Andorra cooperates with the Council of Europe.

In January, we approved a digital transformation strategy, closely linked to the goals of the European Union. And here, in Andorra, we worked actively with representatives of the Foreign Ministry, the Secretary of State and the ARI. Together, we were able to participate in the preparation of this document, amended to take into account



the interests of small states, as in the case of Andorra.

The next step is for the Council of Europe to join this framework agreement. The Government has a number of agreements of understanding and exchanging with different countries to be able to move forward together in the digital transformation. These exchanges allow us to observe experiences and be able to transfer them or, on the contrary, to create new ones and be able to implement them abroad.

—What exactly does the digital transformation process mean?

—There is a European Digital Transformation Index designed to address various risks. Finally, there is not only the measurable part of the interaction between

citizens and the administration, but also the infrastructures part.

In Andorra, when it comes to telecommunications, we are leaders at the European level. Andorra Telecom has made an important bet at the country level on the introduction of fiber optics. After all, this finally means being able to provide quality, fast and reliable service to all homes in the country.

The services offered have become easier and faster. We can run our businesses with complete reliability, let's say, while sitting on the sofa at home.

At the level of the country's digital transformation strategy, there are the following axes: everything related to companies, everything

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with competitiveness and also an economic benefit. The government provides assistance from 40% to 70%, depending on the size of the company, to enable it to use digital tools or solutions that contribute to the growth of the degree of digitalization of the company.

—Actually, the process of setting up a company takes at least three months, which is a very long time. How can the government help startups?

—It's true that the Digital Economy Law has opened up the global possibility of running a new business in Andorra, and that's partly what Andorra Business is aiming for. New businesses need prior authorization, sometimes some documentation is requested, which is difficult to obtain. But obviously, all these aspects need to be improved.

To identify all those obstacles that, in the business world, are considered blockages or brakes, we have recently held our first workshops with the Chamber of Commerce, CEA and EFA. This dialog will allow us to understand the procedures and change the habits of the administration.

To improve this procedure, work is underway with the Ministry of Economy.

—It would be interesting to know your opinion on the presence of AI in modern society. What are the main threats?

—In my opinion, the biggest challenge we face is all aspects related to cybersecurity.

Every time cyberattacks happen, they become more sophisticated and harder to prevent. To counter them, we have to utilize some aspects of artificial intelligence. It's still

a technological evolution, and we have to adapt to both the good and the bad.

Previously, banking institutions or other important organizations in the country were not in the habit of reporting an attack. That is why, in 2022, the National Cybersecurity Agency was created, which - besides monitoring - also accompanies the whole business structure. In a way, it is an ecosystem of information and experience sharing. When a facility is attacked, the agency can prevent any further attacks and alert us so that we know we need to increase our level of vigilance.

—Given Andorra's digital transformation and Andorra's possible future association agreement with the European

Union, can we say that Andorra is ready to compete in the banking and telecommunications sector?

—As I mentioned, a digital transformation strategy was developed at the beginning of the year. This strategy defines, for the first time, objectives with a horizon to 2030. There are objectives, some of which are specific and good only for our ambitions, but, at the same time, also include part of the European Union's objectives and are in line with them.

We are united and running parallel to the goals of the European Union.

In a way, the big challenge that we will face and that we identify is the exchange of information. But these are technical issues that have a simple solution. ●

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related to infrastructure and technology and its security aspects, and everything related to citizens' rights. In 2019, Andorra was at the bottom of the digitalization index for countries. Today, we have reached 11th place, while the average for European countries is 15. Spain and France remain about average among other European countries.

—The code of ethics has been in place for a month. Have you already taken any concrete steps?

—What we want to achieve is to try to motivate the country's companies to grow through digital transformation, because ultimately it represents an effective benefit with resources and, therefore,