

Interview with the Minister of Common Objective Albert Torres ▶ He warns of the lack of pro



EL PERIÒDIC
Common Objective
Councilor Albert
Torres.

Albert Torres

“Common Goal” Advisor

«The members of the majority have despised us since the beginning of their term»

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The Municipality of Canilo is a corporation marked by the controversy surrounding the Ice Palace and the management of some infrastructures aimed at promoting the tourism sector, such as the Roc del Quer viewpoint and the Tibetan Bridge. Common Goal (OC) Councilor Albert Torres reflects on the minority's views on the management of the corporation at the final stage of the term.

–After the equator of the communal mandate, what is the assessment of the management of the corporation by the majority, in general terms?

–First of all, I would like to emphasize that the members of the majority have despised us since the beginning of their term. And it seems that this contempt is increasing, as we could see in the last session of the Municipal Council. On the other hand, I think a lot of things have been done unexpectedly without knowing or wanting to know. I don't know if they were very interested in renewing the Ice Palace contracts, and I don't think a pool slide is the salvation, but we'll talk

about that later.

–Why do you think this contempt occurs?

–It has been eight years without anyone to question them and now there are two people who express a different point of view towards the guidelines of the corporation and it seems that this bothers them.

–And, specifically, has the management of the covid in the parish been adequate in your opinion?

–I think it's done the best it can. In fact, we have pushed for various proposals that have received support from the corporation and we have been open to supporting people in the most difficult times. There is one thing that catches our eye and we do not fully agree with it. It's about telecommunications. At the beginning of the pandemic, the commonwealth began to promote video calling and remote communications, and they have extended it to the present day. Recently, the consul sent us a message on his mobile phone to hold a town meeting and other meetings. Another example is the tourism commission in which we learned about the slide and climbing wall project at the sa-

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«It's been eight years without opposition and now there are two people who think differently, so it bothers them»

«Nothing is being done in the housing sector, and the corporation is not interested in understanding the problem»

me time as the citizens without having a chance to discuss it.

–How has the opposition worked throughout the term to represent the interests of voters and citizens of the parish?

–We have held many debates with our own criteria, proposals and questions to the corporation on key issues such as common investments. They have only accepted some measures for the hardest stage of the pandemic such as reducing the cost of some shops during the closure and lowering of the taxes for people who could carry out less economic activity due to restrictions. However, they were not carried out as we proposed. However, the municipality decides by 8 out of 10 people, without listening to the remaining two. It is not a question of making a project of eight, but a project of 10 with the objections and appreciations that arise.

–What dynamizing element do you think the parish lacks to increase economic activity?

–The economic dynamism goes through the promotion of the de-seasonalized tourist activity and also through the generation of wealth

outside the ski resorts. The business movement needs to be revitalized. The management of the municipality goes through the day to day, not through the promotion of large infrastructures that we do not know what profitability they will offer us. However, it should be noted that we have just emerged from a very difficult time due to the pandemic and the general geopolitical context is not very optimal either. I would also like to emphasize that the Municipality of Canillo should not become the Ministry of Tourism of Andorra.

–What are the priorities for the minority party that should be given more attention?

–I think there is a lack of closeness on the part of the majority to the people. It's nice to be on the fifth floor, but you have to go down the street. Reality can only be seen by walking down the street and asking questions of the citizens. People's representatives need to be closer to everyone.

–Do you think that work is being done well in terms of housing, according to the competencies that the municipality has?

–Nothing is being done. The corpo-

ration doesn't want to know what the problem is or how to fix it, so we can't do anything about it. We asked them to do a study of the available areas and we have not yet received a response. However, this is a national issue and for this reason it is the National Housing Board, but we only see that there is a lot of talk, and no action is taken. The table, if it does not move forward, should be closed. I also think that the budget is not enough to start projects of this magnitude. It is necessary to have professionals of all kinds and, above all, political will.

-How should this situation be reversed in Canillo?

-At the moment, we do not have the operational capacity for ourselves with a budget of 22 million euros. Also, no one in the world knows exactly where to start.

-As for Andorra 2027 for the Alpine Skiing World Championships, FEDA, together with the organization, reported that private mobility would be restricted to these areas if the candidacy succeeds. How will this event affect the mobility of the parish?

-I think it's perfect that these two bodies collaborate for a country goal, but we will have to see the new

formations of the Government and the municipalities. It's too early to talk about an event that will take place in five years. However, the impact of these restrictions should not be further studied so as not to cause problems for the inhabitants of Canillo.

-What is your opinion on the registered deficit of the Ice Palace and its management?

-This chronic problem should have been solved 10 years ago. This is a problem without solution; if it is not reversed, it is not renewed and vice versa. If resources had been managed intelligently a decade ago, today we would have a return and the deficit would have been fixed, but now they look like squatters. Investments in the structural aspect are consistent because all buildings need maintenance, but some measures are late.

-In this sense, the corporation announced a restructuring and new activities to revitalize the Ice Palace and rescue it from the economic deficit.

-Neither the slide with the pool nor the climbing wall will save half a million euros from the deficit plus the 20,000 euros per month rent that



«Neither the pool slide nor the climbing wall will get the Ice Palace out of its current deficit»

«We have not been informed about the return on investment from the Tibetan Bridge and the Roc del Quer; another example of mismanagement»

this infrastructure drags on year after year. In any case, a dialogue table should have been set up with all the actors involved and, of course, with a common goal.

-What policy would you adopt, then?

-I believe that a solution must be found in the field of energy around sustainability and green energy in order to turn the Ice Palace into an element that generates wealth and social cohesion in the parish. I would also study in depth the investment proposals so as not to waste funds.

-How has this year's season workers been handled?

-I have no complaints or problems about it and people have started going out and recovering from pre-pandemic influx levels.

-Do you think that the Tibetan Bridge project will get an adequate return on investment?

-It costs five to six million and the corporation says that even if nothing is charged for its use, it will be good for the parish. We have not been informed of the return calculation, nor of the Roc del Quer. We have been asking unanswered questions for days, and this is another

example of the shortcomings of community management.

-If you could instantly reverse any joint action, what would it be?

-The management of the Ice Palace and the Urban Plan, without a doubt.

-During the last session of the Municipal Council, your group sent a press release stating a disregard for the majority.

-As I mentioned earlier, most of us have been underestimated since the beginning, but the last municipal session was the icing on the cake. During all the years I've been able to witness board sessions, I've never seen a dynamic like this. They cut off our answers, kept us from talking, and treated us badly in response to allusions. We are not enemies of anyone, we just bring our vision to the public sphere. Taking a long time when no one openly opposes the common causes a series of bad vices that harm the institution.

-Will we see Albert Torres running for consul in the next election?

-More than a year away. We have not yet raised anything and there will also be general elections in between. ≡



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