



A 68% AVERAGE OCCUPANCY

More than a thousand passengers on the first flights between La Seu and Madrid

Gallardo is optimistic about the viability of the route and points to a third weekly expedition

The ministry is already working on «feasible offers» for destinations such as Paris and Lisbon

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After almost two months in operation, the flights between Andorra Airport-La Seu d'Urgell and Madrid-Barajas have had a total of 1,089 passengers. This was reported yesterday by the Minister of the Presidency, Economy and Business, Jordi Gallardo, and the Secretary of State for the Economy, Èric Bartolomé, who detailed that the average per flight is 34 users, a figure that represents 68% of the total places available. «It is a good trend and higher than expected,» said the minister, who added that this context «makes us optimistic about the viability of the route.» Going into the details of the operation, Gallardo pointed out that there had been no incident in relation to delays, cancellations or diversions, and shared that the average journey time in the direction of Madrid is 1.08 hours, and 1.12 hours to La Seu d'Urgell.

At the same time, the Minister stated that «if the trend continues like this, its economic guarantee will be assured in June», that is, that the «economic balance» established in the award agreement with Air Nostrum would be achieved, company that operates the route. This fact is relevant, not only because it will mean the viability of the connection, but also because it will help to reduce the compensation of a maximum of 620,000 euros by the Government to the concessionaire. Gallardo emphasized his «satisfaction with the operation of the route» and said that the ministry had begun contacts with various companies in the country and in different sectors to «know the demand for a hypothetical flight during the week». Thus, given the good results of the trips on Friday and Sunday, they will consider the possibility of establishing a third weekly flight, with the option on the table that these be either Tuesday or Thursday. «The infrastructure is ready and there is already experience on the part of the company,» said the head of Economy on the possible third day, who insisted that «demand is the sine qua non requirement.»

The ministry has also begun work to expand its offer at Alt Ur-



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Jordi Gallardo
MINISTER OF ECONOMY AND BUSINESS

«It's a good trend and higher than expected. It makes us optimistic about the viability of the route»

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Èric Bartolomé
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE ECONOMY

[On possible new routes] «We are working to qualify potential demand and cost for the airline»

If the pace is maintained, the economic balance of the agreement will be reached in June and the possible compensation will be reduced

gell Airport, with two other European capitals in the spotlight: Paris and Lisbon. «We are proceeding in the same way as with Madrid, doing a job of qualifying the potential demand and cost for the airline,» said Bartolomé, who pointed out that it is a matter of «doing a theoretical exercise to ask potential operators feasible offers». Thus, the current will, according to the Minister, is to be able to publish these tenders «at the end of the year», and present the business plan to the same companies that contacted on the previous occasion, hoping to get more candidates.

SERVICE FORECAST // Looking at the

development of the connection in the coming months, Gallardo acknowledged that «everything makes us think that after the winter, the demand will go down and go up again in the summer», thus coinciding with the low and high tourist seasons of the Principality, and with the doubt in the autumn by the coincidence with long weekends in Spain. In any case, the government believes that the use will be enough to achieve the balance in June and to continue attracting visitors to the country.

Regarding customers, the Minister regretted that the Executive does not have the information on the type of user of the flight, as this is

data collected by Iberia, which provides the platform for the sale of tickets to Air Nostrum. This information has already been requested by the Government because it will «help us to direct promotional campaigns», which will also help to attract tourists throughout the year. At the moment, the Principality is being sold in the Spanish capital, turning it into a crossroads.

However, Gallardo is aware that «not all passengers on flights come to Andorra», but many people also use it to travel to La Cerdanya or stay in the same Seu d'Urgell, a fact that for Gallardo shows that «the airport is a strategic infrastructure for the whole Pyrenees». ≡

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NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The Piragua project foresees a sharp decrease in the flow of rivers

The climate change scenario also predicts a rise in temperature in the Pyrenees



►► The Sustainability Coordinator of Andorra Research and Innovation, Oriol Traveset, and the researcher Marta Domènech.

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ORIO TRAVESSET
SUSTAINABILITY COORDINATOR

«The people of this country know very little about the water consumption and payment we make»

MARTA DOMÈNECH
ARI RESEARCHER

«It is necessary to improve the aspects related to water resources and promote conscious consumption throughout the population»

occur in coastal areas; the mountain also experiences these extreme situations that affect the ecosystem. «The plan predicts that water consumption will increase by 68% in all sectors within 30 years if industry and the public continue the same growing trend of exploiting natural resources.

The station from which most of the conclusions were drawn in the Andorran area is La Borda Sabaté. From there, ARI researchers predicted that the general hydrograph of the Principality would be affected by a reduction of 7.16%. They also pointed out that due to the decrease in snowfall in the winter season, there is an increase in rainfall during the months of December, January and February, which is unusual.

Finally, Traveset stated that «we know very little about this country about the consumption and payment of the water we make.» He then explained the lines of work for the coming years to combat the adverse effects of climate change. On the one hand, it aims to respond to models of extreme weather situations and the detection of vulnerable stretches of river to promote protection policies. On the other hand, the ARI wants to develop protocols for indicators of related biological alterations to detect changes in the ecosystem. ≡

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The Canoe project promoted by Andorra Research and Innovation (ARI) predicts a gradual decrease in the flow of rivers in the Principality over the next 30 years due to the effects of climate change. In this sense, the initiative includes a cooperative work with the research centers of Spain and France in order to establish an evolution of the uses of water resources in the Pyrenees area that was launched in 2018 and ended in the end of last December. The study also looks at the potential for tensions in mountain ecosystems under the current climate and the future.

ARI Sustainability Coordinator, Oriol Traveset presented the project stating that «we have estimated a decline of between 4% and 15% in river water resources every decade

if we do not take responsible action.» These events can be exacerbated during the summer and early fall months, as these are the periods when rainfall is scarce. In the same way, Traveset presented the activities carried out by the ARI in the field of analysis during the last three years. It first focuses on the recent changes in the flows of the Pyrenean rivers. The second part deals with the characterization of water resources in the future and, finally, revolves around the impact of human activity and adaptation prospects.

ARI data show that the domestic sector consumes the most water, followed by the agricultural sector during the summer months. According to ARI researcher Marta Domènech, “the resources consumed by ski resorts must be taken into account; if we learn to optimize snow production systems, we will save a

ARI data show that the highest resource consumption rate is at home

The National Hydrological Plan aims to combat extreme weather conditions, such as droughts

lot of resources” Each parish, however, shows a different consumption in relation to the different sectors that it includes, such as the number of tourist accommodation, ski resorts or farms and livestock. In addition, Domènech emphasized that «the scenario of the emission of gases into the atmosphere will also affect us at the country level in terms of the general change in rising temperatures». However, the researcher indicated that this prediction was not «as accurate» as the decrease in river flow.

In the face of a scenario of increasing population and, therefore, greater water consumption, Domènech presented the proposal to create a National Hydrological Plan in order to “tidy up aspects related to water and promote conscious consumption by the citizens”. The aim is to combat drought, which, according to Domènech, “does not only

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