



## ELECTION PROCESS

# Cabanes will dispute with Pallarés the leadership of the Liberal candidacy

The president of the Facip appears 'in extremis' following the request of several members of the party

The executive, convened in an extraordinary manner, will validate the proposals today with their endorsements

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Finally, there will be a process of elections within the Liberal party. According to EL PERIÒDIC, the former Minister of the Interior and Justice in the mandate of Marc Forné, leader of Andbank and president of the Andorran Federation of Hunting and Fishing (Facip), Josep Maria Cabanes, presented the candidacy that will compete with that of the Minister of Social Affairs, Youth and Equality, Judith Pallarés. This move came after the president of the blue party and Minister of the Presidency, Economy and Business, Jordi Gallardo, announced on Monday in a press conference that he was renouncing to run in the race to lead the party in the next elections, and confirm in return that with this «step aside» he temporarily stopped his political career.

Thus, although on Monday it seemed that the election process would be in vain as only one candidacy had been submitted, everything took a turn yesterday before the formalization in the last hours of Cabanes' proposal. In this sense, the leader of Andbank was considering the possibility of running in the elections after different members of the party encouraged him to take the step following the resignation of Gallardo. «They considered it necessary because I have a lot of experience,» said Cabanes, who also confirmed that he had managed to gather «more than twice the required 15 endorsements.» «A lot of people have turned upside down and I'm very grateful,» said the president of the Facip. In this sense, the Liberals confirmed after midnight that two lists had been presented, corresponding



**Judith Pallarés**

MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS, YOUTH AND EQUALITY



**Josep Maria Cabanes**

ANDBANK LEADER AND FACIP CHAIRMAN

**The blue race may be sentenced at the end of the month, taking into account the progress of the revision of the lists**

to the candidacies of Pallarés and Cabanes.

This is not the first time that the president of the Facip has made a foray into politics. A historical activist and founding member of the Liberal Party of Andorra (PLA), he was already part of the government of Forné, occupying the portfolio of Interior and Justice. In addition, he also spent a few years in opposition to the Andorra la Vella municipality, in the early 2000s. For her

part, Pallarés is an active member of the party and holds one of the ministries in the Executive in coalition with Democrats, Social Affairs, Youth and Equality, although she initially took office in the Civil Service portfolio - the government made a ministerial redistribution just a year ago with the departure of the Minister of Tourism and also liberal, Verónica Canals-. In fact, hours before the deadline closed and the candidacies were made official, Ga-

llardo himself confirmed in his appearance to announce his retirement that Pallarés had applied as a candidate, stating that the minister «is my absolute confidence». Pallarés thanked these words through social media, highlighting her intention to «keep alive and united» the liberal political project.

On the other hand, the blue party also reported yesterday that this afternoon the validation process will be carried out by the executive of the formation, convened in an extraordinary way, according to the timetable initially set, this ratification was scheduled for June 10th, convening the congress by June 30th to elect the head of the list. Thus, given that the validation is done today and that the congress must be arranged after 10 to 20 days, according to the initial announcement, the determination of the Liberal candidate for the next general election could be resolved at the end of the month. In this sense, as stated by the party at the beginning of the primary procedure, candidates to head the list must have the support of at least 10% of party members, and they can only sign in one of the candidacies or the support will be invalidated. In any case, this cooperation will have to be made effective in the general congress, and it will be in this period, in which the candidates will have to gain the favor of affiliates, members of the executive, elected representatives, and of the different parish committees.

Liberals is the only party that has officially started the preparation of the next general election, which should be called in March 2023. However, the reality is that for a while, the Executive seems to point to an advance of the elections a few months. ≡

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SUMMER SEASON

# The tourism industry is again against the application of the tax in July

Bonell and Magallón argue that its implementation has had to be advanced due to the gravity of the economic context

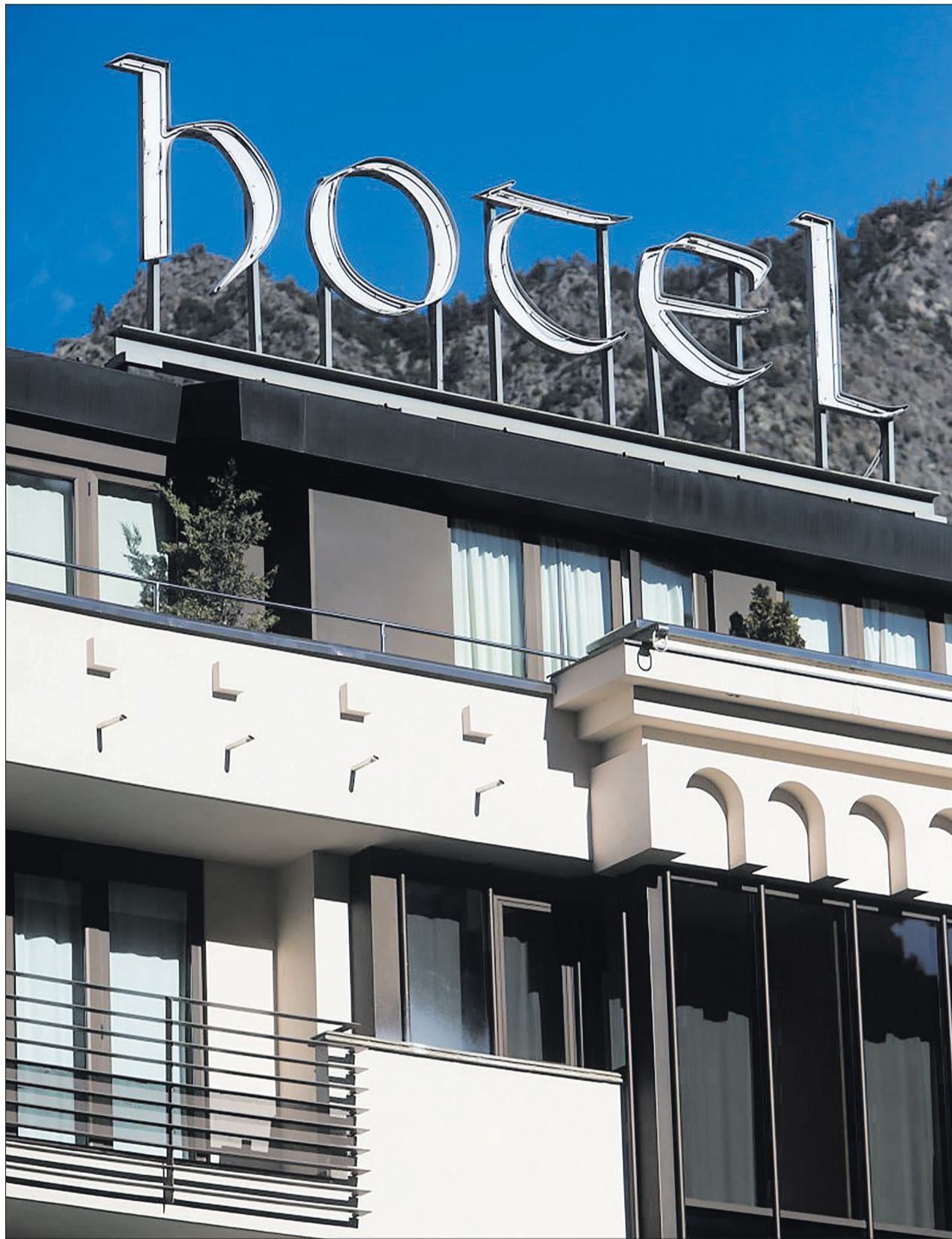
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The tourism sector is once again criticizing the imminent application of the tourist tax from July 1st, following Monday's statements by the Minister of Tourism and Telecommunications, Jordi Torres, in which he reaffirmed the vote on this new measure in the General Council next month. The representatives of the sector agree in the fact that none of them expected this way of acting «hastily» on the part of the Executive and, also, the lack of direct contact, since, according to the commercial director of Autèntics Hotels d'Andorra (AHA), Meritxell Cassi, «we noticed this change of direction through the media.»

With regard to the Association of Tourist Businesses and Accommodation (AEAT), its president, Àlex Ruiz, warned that «if we have to warn all tour operators about the application of an increase in the final price that we had already closed, it is probable that there will be effects». In fact, he added that «now we have to run in order to adapt the appropriate electronic systems and technicalities to square the application of the tax to the bills.» However, he noted that customers are accustomed to paying this type of amount and do not believe that it will cause any cancellation in relation to the tax.

In turn, the director of the Hotel Union of Andorra (UHA), Jordi Pujol, stated that «we welcomed this new measure as long as it becomes a finalist and is reinvested in the same sector in which it is collected.» However, the application of this fee «may lead to the cancellation of some contracts and this may in no way benefit us». In addition, the UHA stressed that a double conflict can be created with the government and tour operators. «Everything that is signed before March does not have the asterisk of this new amount, so we have a lot of work to do in a short time if it is finally confirmed,» Pujol added. Following a similar line, the AHA representative stated that «this was not the agreement we had negotiated and could be a significant amount for some large families.»

However, representatives of the ruling coalition parties argued that the progress of this application was due to the current situation of rising prices and the war in Ukraine. In this sense, the Liberal General Councilor Marc Magallón



►► The façade of a hotel in Andorra la Vella.

stated that «we are the first to be disappointed to have to change our minds, but the financial resources of the packages of measures promoted by the Executive must be recovered». What at first the three parties of the coalition saw with good eyes, lately they had to retract in front of the representatives of the tourism sector. «We recognize that we wanted to delay its implementation, but we need that revenue that is projected in the budgets,»

said Democrat General Counsel Mònica Bonell.

However, Bonell indicated that a solution is presented for those contracts that have been signed prior to the application of the tourist tax. Thus, the general minister pointed out that once the tourist tax of the establishments is collected, «those companies that assume the cost of the tax, send the liquidation to the Ministry of Finance in order to find a consensual solution». However,

the Liberals leave the door open for the postponement of the application of the tax, as Magallón explained, «right now we are in the period of amendments and it is not entirely certain that this directive will be final».

**OCCUPANCY, DOWNWARD** // In relation to the data provided by the UHA, overnight stays continue with a declining trend «typical of the low season in which we are today,» said Pu-

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**ÀLEX RUIZ**  
PRESIDENT OF THE AEAT  
«We have a lot of work and little time to notify all those operators with whom we have already established a previous contract»

**MERITXELL CASSI**  
DIRECTOR OF THE AHA  
«We noticed this change of direction in the application of the media tax»

**JORDI PUJOL**  
DIRECTOR OF THE UHA  
«We defend this measure, as long as it is a finalist and reinvested in the sector»

**MÒNICA BONELL**  
COUNCILOR GRAL. YES  
«Companies that assume the fee in the contracts already signed will be able to find a solution with Finance»

**MARC MAGALLÓN**  
DIRECTOR GRAL. LIBERALS  
«We are currently in the period of amendments and it is not entirely certain that this guideline will be final»

jol. In this sense, the figures show that the Principality barely exceeded 32% of employment in the country during the last week, which is a decrease of 5% compared to the records of the report of the last week of April, when it reached 37%. The sector is still waiting for summer events such as Cirque du Soleil and the opening of the summer campaign, with the advertising strategy of Andorra Turisme, to register good employment figures, as Pujol said «we expect and assume that numbers similar to the last one will be recorded in the coming weeks.»