

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE GRIFOLS PROJECT

## Marsol regrets the situation with Grifols and the loss of economic diversification

The women's research center is going backwards and from the Government it is understood as a great missed opportunity

EL PERIÒDIC  
ANDORRA LA VELLA

The decision of the Spanish health company Grifols not to go ahead with the research center in immunology planned in the parish of Ordino created grief in the Government. In this regard, the Minister of the Presidency, Economy, Work and Housing, Conxita Marsol, emphasized today that the Executive «regrets the situation and that a great opportunity has been lost, taking into account the moment we are living in diversification of the economy and added value».

Continuing her speech, Marsol pointed out that having a company like Grifols in Andorra was «a very important door», also because of the calling effect it could have in terms of attracting other investments or activities. The also president of Andorra Business expressed that the agreement has not yet been carried out due to various circumstances, while thanking the healthcare company for the initiative to build a research structure in the Principality.

Apart from that, regarding the process of its idealization, Marsol stated that a meeting was held with the head of government and the minister of health in Barcelona, together with some members of the Grifols family, to see how the research center project would be undertaken after the pandemic. «They had told us that they saw it as difficult as it was conceived because a very important center in



The Minister of the Presidency, Economy, Work and Housing, Conxita Marsol, during the press conference held.



**Conxita Marsol**

MINISTER OF THE PRESIDENCY

«Grifols continues to have a foothold in the country and we want to reach some point of collaboration»

immunology had been announced in Barcelona which would become a point of reference in the south of Europe», she said.

Continuing in the same line, the holder of the Economy portfolio emphasized that, according to Grifols, they could not have the same center in Andorra and another in Catalonia, and that in this way they would transfer another proposal to «re-adapt the needs of that moment». As for this year, Marsol maintained that in March she asked by letter to the president of the Grifols Pyrenees Research society an extraordinary meeting to explore how the situation

of the project was, and in April it was again ratified that it was not in sight future.

Finally, Marsol expressed that the most appropriate solution was to choose to sell the shares owned by Andorra Business in the Grifols Pyrenees Research laboratory for 20%, thus returning the 200,000 euros «destined for the social pacts that were signed in 2022», she clears up. Despite this, «Grifols continues to have a foothold in the country and we have the will to reach some point of collaboration», concluded the Government spokeswoman. ●

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# The echo of the controversy: rejection buries Ordino's laboratory

Dolsa: «Grifols saw that it was better not to make noise in Europe»

EL PERIÒDIC  
ESCALDES-ENGORDANY

Grifols' final decision not to build the immunological research center in Ordino marks the culmination of a process that has generated controversy since the first proposals. The controversy dates back to years ago, when the proposal was met with opposition by prominent figures in the country, such as the opposition councilor and member of Units per Ordino, Enric Dolsa, and the councilor general, Carine Montaner. This positioning was added to the creation of the anti-Grifols apolitical platform, which organized numerous rallies and peaceful demonstrations to express the rejection of many citizens to the construction of the P3 laboratory in Ordino.

This Thursday, the councilor for the minority of the Municipality of Ordino, Enric Dolsa, stated that the Catalan multinational «has seen the situation they are living in today and they have decided not to

make noise in Europe», remarking that «to Grifols obviously is not appropriate that there is a buzz about what was happening here in Andorra. Once it entered Strasbourg, they decided to put the project aside», referring to the company's decision not to continue with the project. In addition, Dolsa stated that, from now on, he will have to «ask for the expenses incurred in the expropriations», referring to the actions taken by the Government to build the new road from Pont de Sornàs to the ground. However, the opposition councilor declared that «this has shown us that the platform that was created worked, popular pressure has been able to counterbalance, and I am very satisfied».

## The timeline of the proposal

In July 2021, the Municipality of Ordino approved the Grifols initiative with the vote against councilor Dolsa and some reservations on the part of councilor Sandra Tudó, in an extraordinary session of the Municipality. The laboratory planned to develop three main lines of research: disorders of own immunity, immunological treatments for cancer and the treatment of infections in which antivirals were

not effective.

Despite these guarantees, Montaner was one of the most critical voices from the beginning. As early as 2021, she asked the Ministry of Health about the specific activities and biosecurity level of the future center. «There are laboratories that present a high level of risk for the population, and it's an issue that worries me», declared Montaner after an appearance by the Minister of Health, Joan Martínez Benazet (2019-2022), to update the health data.

The process was also marked by citizen opposition. The groups that were added to the created platform expressed their doubts about the viability and security of the project, questioning the transparency and management of the public resources allocated to the initiative. «We created a platform to oppose the construction of the laboratory to try to stop this installation, because it would not bring us anything positive», said Dolsa.

As the financial situation of Grifols deteriorated, with historic falls in the stock market such as those of August 2022 and March of this year, and the decision to put up for sale 2,000 million in assets to

reduce the pharmaceutical's debt in December 2022, public opinion closely followed these ups and downs. In addition, the demonstrations against the macro project in February and March 2023, and the town meeting that the anti-laboratory platform closed in September 2021, emphasized the health and legality of the project.

In this context, Dolsa added the appeal against the construction of the laboratory, despite the Government's willingness to continue with the project, despite repeated requests for information and transparency about the implications of the Grifols project in the parish. «I presented this appeal on behalf of all the citizens who were against it», he added, although he maintained that «it was said that I was not authorized to present this appeal».

The situation was further complicated by the investigation by Spanish and American lawyers into Grifols after the publication of the Gotham City report, which indicated monetary losses for some shareholders. An issue that intensified the controversy, but the Government maintained its stance of favoring the construction of the laboratory. As the head of government, Xavier Espot, defended in a session of the General Council last January, ensuring that, even if the accusations against the pharmaceutical company were true, the project in the parish of Ordino would continue. ●

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(+376) 353 424 / (+376) 379 769

(+376) 747 747

laportella@andorra.ad

Casa Nova Olivet 10 · Ordino

www.laportella.ad

