



CLIMATE CHANGE

The glaciers of the Pyrenees could disappear in about 20 years

Riva claims that winter sports are looking for new sustainable training options in the summer

The total ice area of the mountain range has decreased by more than 23% since 2011



ALEX LARA

►► View of the Comapedrosa valley.

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A study promoted by the researchers of the Pyrenean Observatory of Climate Change (OPCC) points out that the glaciers of the Pyrenees could turn into residual ice patches or even disappear in about 20 years if the trend of increase in temperature and the lack of precipitation continues to increase. According to the data provided by the scientists of the Spanish Pirinean Institute of Ecology (IPE-CSIC) in a complementary report, from 2011 to 2020,

the total ice area of the mountain range has been reduced by 23.2%, along with the surface thickness of 6.3 meters on average.

In the same way, the results of the study confirm that half of the glacial masses spread over the Pyrenees have disappeared over the last 40 years. Of the total of 19 glaciers that still survive, only three exceed the size of 10 hectares. In this sense, the scientists point out, on the one hand, the increase of 1.6 degrees in the average annual temperature of the high Pyrenean mountain climate, which has been experienced during the period 1959-2020, as one of the

main reasons for the decrease in ice concentration.

At the same time, OPCC experts say that in the last six decades, rainfall in the area has decreased by around 8% on average annually, which is another factor that has aggravated this thawing situation. In fact, they say that the remaining glaciers are in a situation of «delicate balance», among which are Anet, Maladeta and Monte Perdido, all three on the slopes of the Spanish Aragonese Pyrenees. Likewise, experts indicate that the increase in temperatures prevents daytime rivers, which originate during the hottest hours

The average annual temperature in the high mountain area has increased by 1.6 degrees in the period 1959-2020



Sílvia Riva

MINISTER OF CULTURE AND SPORTS

«They are looking for ecological solutions [to the tourist impact] that allow an alternative to the snow by sportsmen»

of the day, from freezing at night. This fact favors the continued retreat of the glacial mass with the addition that, this year, there have been Saharan dust storms «which accelerate melting».

WATER SAVING // With regard to the incidence in Andorra, the studies by Andorra Research + Innovation (ARI) on the availability of water resources continue in the same line as the thawing reports, since the impact of tourism in the country could establish restrictions on the uses of water. In fact, in relation to the use of ski slopes by sportsmen, «more ecological solutions are being sought through technology that allow an alternative to snow, because less and less precipitation is recorded», said the Minister of Culture and Sports, Sílvia Riva, in an interview with EL PERIÒDIC.

Aside from the efforts of ARI researchers to optimize resources in ski resort machinery, Riva pointed out that all energy-saving actions contribute to a sustainable activity to mitigate the effects of climate change. Finally, she emphasized that in activities such as cross-country skiing «we also see how they take advantage of the mountain in the summer and we witness new training alternatives each time using techniques conditioned by the climatology». ≡

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Interview ▶ Balance of the legislature



«Before, whoever came to Social Affairs didn't have a job, but now everyone has a salary»

JUDITH PALLARÉS Minister of Social Affairs, Youth and Equality

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Minister Judith Pallarés began the legislature at the head of Public Service and will end it as head of Social Affairs, Youth and Equality. In both cases, she feels satisfied by the goals achieved, but recognizes that there is still a lot of work to be done in social matters.

–At the end of the legislature, what is the balance sheet?

–Well, I can talk about two ministries. On the part of the Public Service, I think I started the legislature with an important challenge that, despite the pandemic, we have achieved with the defense of the law. Now there is a lot of development and a lot of work to do with the unions, but in general I can say that I am happy and satisfied. As for the Ministry of Social Affairs, Youth and Equality, so many things are covered that it is impossible to arrive one day and say that everything is done, we will always need to respond to families and citizens in many areas. Fortunately, society is dynamic and everything is changing, so the adaptations of the ministry itself are also constant and of continuous improvement.

–Which project would stand out?

–The law of effective equality between men and women. It is a very important advance and we are now working on its regulatory development and the creation of the Andorra Women's Institute.

–The pandemic put all kinds of social affairs more at the center than ever before. Has the situation normalized?

–In relation to support for families due to the consequences of the pandemic, we still have to do a more thorough analysis, although in the commissions in collaboration with other ministries we have already regularized the follow-up of the most complex cases with problems linked above all to mental health or addictions. There are situations that existed before the pandemic, but that have worsened following the health crisis and require more support from the Administration.

–What is the most common demand?

–Housing without a doubt. The Government has made the measures more flexible and, as occasional aid, we have a couple of articles through which we can determine other issues, because we have realized that sometimes if we transfer housing aid the overall situation of the affected improves. We act both at the request of the citizen and ex officio.



EL PERIÒDIC



«The profiles of the tenants of the Armor building will be diverse and the problems will be addressed from different areas»

ministry what we seek, precisely, is that the profiles are diverse. Both the ages of the residents and their problems can be addressed from different areas and the ways of working vary depending on the needs; they are not stigmatized.

–This summer, two commissions were created, one for children and the other for adults, to assist people in «highly complex» situations. What are these situations and how do commissions work?

–Until recently there was a monitoring table for young people in situations of behavioral disorders or addictions, in which we worked together with Health, and now we have extended it to the adult sector to offer them a more comprehensive control and more continued support. We have made a small regulation for the commissions which indicates that there is a minimum of one quarterly meeting, but also a fast track for emergency situations. What it's about is serving people with a chronic situation through therapeutic plans and confidentially.

–How is the new CREI?

–Well; the awarded company is finishing all the administrative management of internal procedures. The agreement states that in September work will begin between your team and ours to determine the profiles that can be accommodated there and, progressively, we will award the nine places for the residential center and five for the day center.

–The management of Ukrainian refugees has been a great challenge. Do you plan to expand the top?

–From Social Affairs we are following up on the families and, for the moment, we will not extend the closure because we have noticed that some of them have left. With the Department of Immigration we are looking for a way that will allow us, without expanding this barrier, to accommodate the people who are currently on the waiting list taking into account those who are no longer there. ≡



«There are situations that existed before the pandemic, but have now worsened and need more support»

«Housing is a subject of constant debate within the Government to be able to find the most effective measures»

–Is there a specific profile?

–No, there is everything. If before the benefits were for people who did not have resources because they did not have a job, now everyone has a salary, but, even so, they do not reach the end of the month.

–Within the plan to improve the purchasing power of citizens, the flexibility of the grants that I was just commenting on was included. What impact has it had?

–Positive. We have had 124 demands linked to the flexibility of rental notices, thanks to broader criteria, which must be added to the 180 already granted previously. It was clear that there was such a need.

–Is the Government doing everything it can in terms of social housing?

–Yes. Housing is a subject of regular debate within the Government to be able to design and find the most effective measures, such as the creation of the housing institute, which is the body that demonstrates our constant concern. Many of the projections that are made, such as the social floors, need time, although we are aware that we need the help today. That is why we think that housing support will remain in force until there is a defi-

nitive solution, which will not be easy to achieve, because it is not a problem exclusive to Andorra. When we analyze with comparative politics what others are doing and what we can do, we realize that it is a global affair and that there are many things to work on.

–Before leaving for vacation, the floors of Casa Aristot Mora were inaugurated. When will we see the first tenants?

–Precisely this Tuesday I was talking about it with Minister Filloy, because we have already analyzed the cases that may be susceptible to entering it. The truth is that we are waiting for the missing furniture; August is a bad month for the supply of materials, but as soon as we have it ready, we will start referring people there. I cannot say how many people have registered, but from the ministry we have located those who need it more urgently.

–Do you think that bringing all people with difficulties together in a single building is a good idea? Some say it's stigmatizing.

–The Armor building was built under the housing first concept, in which the people who live there do so temporarily and from the