



Interview ▶ Balance of the legislature

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The Minister of Presidency, Economy and Business, Jordi Gallardo, makes a general assessment of the work carried out throughout the legislature with a positive assessment of the implementation of free public transport, the start of studies to implement cable transport in the country and considers that the criticism and the controversy generated around the national heliport of La Caubella by the PS are the result of the final moment of the legislature and pre-campaign in which the country finds itself, as reported by the ANA.

– How do you rate the work carried out by the Ministry of Presidency, Economy and Business?

– Bearing in mind that it has been an atypical legislature because it is more than obvious that the outbreak of the Covid largely disrupted the roadmap of the Government's legislature and, therefore, also of the ministries, the balance I can make of the projects of Presidency, Economy and Business is positive. First of all, because the delivery of the team has been total to manage the pandemic, the large dossier that asked us a lot of time with the participation in the soft credits, the management of the ERTes, the attention towards the self-employed own; all in all it was a project not foreseen in the electoral and Government program that we had to manage and I think that the ministry team, in particular, did a very good job managing it.

–What is leave out?

– The Free Trade Zone, but only the commercial one because we think we can throw out the competition for the custody of securities. In addition, the project of making a concession to have a registry of maritime vessels, we would certainly have liked to have affected the second phase of the cable transport analysis a little earlier and for it to be at a more advanced stage. From a legislative point of view, there are also some texts, but due to the large amount of work in the parliamentary process we have not entered them, such as for example the modernization of the trademark and patent law, and the legislation for managers to professionalize this collective. It is true that it would have been important to carry out a review of the trade law, but we have not been able to start the work to enter the text. The foreign investment law will also remain pending if working days are not enabled in February.

–One of the outstanding projects has been the implementation of free public transport.

–I have a mixed feeling about it. On the one hand, the feeling that there are still many things to improve, since the user expects a higher quality service with better attention, although I have always explained that transport in the country is conditioned by the fact that the



ANA/L.G.

Jordi Gallardo

Minister of Presidency, Economy and Business

«The PS makes political use of the heliport for the pre-campaign moment in which we find ourselves»

bus shares the road with the vehicle and, with the exception of the Express line, the rest have a negative impact when there are problems on the road or a large influx of tourists, snowfall, etc. On the other hand, I rate it well because of the increase in users, first with the reduction of the subscription and then with the free service. I think that as a country we have made a qualitative leap in public transport compared to the beginning of the legislature and the results show that it was a good bet. The final result is acceptable, and we have the will to continue working

to improve mobility, one of the country's great challenges.

–At what stage are the files opened for non-compliance with the concession?

–The files are open and will certainly not be closed immediately, except if it is closed without any kind of sanction. It is a new system, a new mode of transport management compared to four years ago, but in the same way that the Government must fulfill its obligations, the companies must also do what they said they would carry out and it has not

always been this way. If there is a large influx of users at a stop and the bus cannot board them all, the companies have the obligation to activate a second vehicle and this has not always been the case. This is one of the breaches of contract that can result in a sanction to the company.

–The Executive is committed to improving mobility with cable transport.

–Correct. Our bet takes into account a combination of tram from the border point to Escaldes and from the parish, in the direction of La Massa-

na and Encamp, to implement cable transport. This modality is fully adaptable to our orography and would integrate very well into the country. It should be noted that this model has given very good results in several cities, such as Toulouse, where it has been a success and they plan to expand it.

–What do you think of the criticisms of the study on rail transport?

–Andorra cannot have everything and our location does not allow us to have an airport or a rail connection to the country, so we have to try to provide alternatives. What we cannot do is discredit the calculations



«I have a divided feeling on free public transport; there are still things to improve, as the user expects a better service»

and approximations made by professionals with a long career because we do not like the result. The result is what it is, and although we would like it to be different, the investment it would require and the natural impact make it unfeasible; out of responsibility we have to say it.

– A new connection with France through Solana and the third lane on the N-145, would that be more possible?

–These projects depend on our capabilities and are more affordable, even if we continue to talk about road options. The segregated lane to connect with La Seu d'Urgell is viable because it would only require some agreements to enable the irrigation parallel to the road. Regarding the connection with France, it would be a very good option to have another exit and entry route with the French side better than the current Pas de la Casa road.

– The heliport project has generated some controversy, especially with the Social Democratic Party.

– I think that the PS makes a political use of the heliport project because of the pre-campaign moment in which we find ourselves. When I took on the challenge of promoting a heliport, I committed to promoting it and looking for a location with guarantees that would not raise controversy or opposition. The fact that there have been no appeals or allegations gives me peace of mind that there is neither the opposition nor the doubts that the PS wants to make us believe, there is simply a political use in the face of the moment we are in. ≡

ANNUAL BALANCE

The country's museums welcome a total of 114,047 visitors during 2022

It has been possible to reach the pre-pandemic figures thanks to the loyalty of the local public

Casabella and Tarrés affirm the need for the National Museum to «redo the museum network»

SFGA/JAVILADOT



►► A moment from the press conference, last Monday.

the keys

- 1** The total elimination at the end of January of last year of capacity limitations has been a key point in the recovery of customer figures prior to 2020.
- 2** The removal of the limitations allowed the recovery of tourism. Thus, visitor numbers in 2022 increased considerably compared to the previous two years.
- 3** The positive response of the citizens to the various activities that were proposed by the Government made it possible to build the loyalty of the national public, especially the family members.

figures have been reached before the pandemic, surpassing the number of visitors achieved in 2018 and almost equaling those of 2019. «We can say that we are back to normality», declared the head of the museum and monuments area.

On the other hand, the two heads of area pointed out the difficulty of attracting customers to these cultural facilities: «It really costs a lot for people to approach them because there is a lot on offer in the country, and culture is not often included», remarked Casabella. «It's one of the handicaps we have to fight with every day», added Tarrés.

Finally, both affirmed the need to build the National Museum, as it is an «opportunity to rethink the network of museums, which at some point has grown in an unorganized way», emphasized the head of the museum and monuments area, who added that «it may be the opportunity to redo it». Along these lines, the head of the Bike Lab Andorra asserted that «it is no longer necessary only for the tourist, but for those of us who live in Andorra when it comes to creating social cohesion in a country with characteristics such as those has the Principality».

EL PERIÒDIC
ANDORRA LA VELLA
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The country's museum spaces reached a total of 114,047 visitors in 2022. This was explained the day before yesterday by the head of the area of museums and monuments managed by the Government, Rut Casabella, and the head of the area of Bici Lab Andorra, Eduard Tarrés, in a press conference. In more detail, the total number of clients was distributed in: 60,273 in the centers managed by the Executive; 21,850 in Andorran museums; 16,916 in cultural equipment; and 15,008 at the Carmen Thyssen Museum.

Specifically, the monument that received the most visitors was Casa de la Vall, with almost 19,000. For their part, nearly 13,000 were registered for the Casa d'Areny-Plandolit, and 8,500 for the National Au-

tomobile Museum. In addition, Casabella highlighted the figures of the Farga Rossell, «a facility that was closed from the end of November 2021 until May 2022» and received almost 5,000 customers. He also mentioned the Columba Space, which received nearly 6,700, mainly for the programming of the first edition of the Romanesque art days that took place in May.

It should be mentioned that the Postal Museum, which during 2022 received just over 2,000 visitors, will close its space during this year, since «we are in a process of transformation from physical to digital» of the collection. Thus, the idea is to make the current area complete the exhibition hall already available in the Era del Raser.

For his part, Tarrés commented on the figures of the Bici Lab, which opened its doors last October. In this sense, in its first two and



Rut Casabella
HEAD OF MUSEUM AREA

«It costs a lot for people to approach [these facilities] because there is a lot on offer in the country, and culture is not often included»

a half months of life, the center received almost 3,000 visitors, with a very important weight from the local public, coming to represent almost 70% of the total. Its objective is to work with different types of specific audiences, such as cycling enthusiasts, with environmental awareness, the local and the school.

As Casabella pointed out, these positive data are due to circumstances such as the boom in visitors, whether due to the return of school groups or the elderly; the elimination of capacity limitations; the recovery of tourism; and the citizens' response to the various activities that were proposed. In relation to this, «we have noticed a loyalty on the part of the national public», especially family members, who, thanks to doing one of the actions, started to sign up for others.

On the other hand, it should be noted that at global level similar fi-

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