

BENAZET PASSES THE BATON

Albert Font swore the position

The new head of health places the state pact and the reduction of health spending as objectives

Esport points out that he is the «best minister you could choose», and highlights his experience in public service

SFGA / JAVILADOT



► The Minister of Health, Albert Font, and the outgoing head, Joan Martínez Benazet, on Monday.

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The new Minister of Health, Albert Font, took the oath of office before yesterday in an event held in the middle of the Central Park of Andorra la Vella. With the assistance of the entire ministerial cabinet, some consuls and secretaries of state, as well as representatives of the parliamentary groups of the General Council and the outgoing head of health, Joan Martínez Benazet, the head of government, Xavier Esport, to address a few words to both Font and Benazet: of encouragement for the former and of gratitude for the latter. «He is the best minister you could choose,» Esport said about Font, saying he was «the right person»

and highlighting his «outstanding political and public service experience». In this way, the head of government entrusted the new minister with the task of working so that the health system in Andorra continues to be «strong and resilient», while at the same time being able to respond to «other eventualities», such as it has been the pandemic. And with these goals in mind, Esport also encouraged him to make “brave decisions” that are not always the most popular. Thus, the head of government cited as main challenges the regulation of the liberal professions in the field of health, the deployment of the Portfolio of Services, the deepening of cross-border cooperation, and the achievement of the State Pact in matters of health.

In fact, this last element was one of those mentioned by the same Source as one of the main purposes in his time at the head of the ministry, added to the reduction of health spending. «Health policy is not the most ideological of policies,» said the Minister of Health, stressing that «it should be possible to reach a health pact with guidelines, so that the political programs of the different options do not contradict each other. In all, he pointed out that «this agreement must be believed» and that, in fact, rather than a state pact, he acknowledged that he preferred to call it a «declaration of intent».

On the other hand, Font also mentioned the need to review the financing of health care. «We cannot have a deficit of 70 million every year,

because we will all be the ones to pay for it,» said the minister, who pointed out that «the real challenge will be to reduce the cost of health care without reducing its quality». In this sense, and quoting Esport's words, he referred to the «difficult decisions» and compared them to an injection: «It pierces and hurts, but then it has beneficial effects that you may not see when someone pricks you the needle».

Ultimately, the new head of Health stated that another of the responsibilities he will have to take on is the deployment of the CASS Services Portfolio, around which he advanced that “the main ingredient that is missing to be able to make it executive is the nomenclature of the acts”, around which it indicated that, in the first instance, they

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Xavier Esport

HEAD OF GOVERNMENT

«[Albert Font] is the right person. He has outstanding political experience and public service»

Albert Font

MINISTER OF HEALTH

«We can't have a deficit of 70 million every year. The real challenge will be to reduce the cost of healthcare without reducing its quality»

would analyze the French model, as well as they adopted the skeleton of the Gallic social security.

THE LAST FAREWELL // With a supporting role, Benazet took part in the event to pass the baton in a figurative way. In any case, the head of government dedicated a few words to the current minister during his parliament, assuring that Martínez Benazet has been «one of the best health ministers the country has ever had». In particular, he acknowledged the achievement of two «old and legitimate demands» of the Principality: the approval of the Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Plan (Pisma) and the advancement of the Services Portfolio. And of course, he also highlighted his key role in managing the coronavirus pandemic.

In this way, and as a conclusion, Esport celebrated that the Secretary of State for Health, Helena Mas, will remain in office, also acknowledging that part of the success in the fight against covid was thanks to him, and how an insurance for the continuity in the portfolio. ≡

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ADMINISTRATION

Rossell predicts an «optimal» functioning of justice in three years

The shock plan envisages 25 new places and the creation of the vice-president of the Batllia and the deputy judicial secretary

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The government is determined to improve the administration of justice. In fact, it has set a date for everything to work «optimally» in three years. This was stated last Monday by the Minister of Justice and Home Affairs, Josep Maria Rossell, during the presentation of the amendment to the Qualified Law on Justice and the shock plan to improve the administration. «The new measures must not have an immediate effect, but justice is increasingly discredited and that is why we seek to give it prestige and give it the image it deserves,» said Rossell. «If everyone puts the batteries in,» he asked, «we might think it might be possible; Delays in proceedings are the most important, but we must keep in mind that there are more and more conflicts. According to the Minister of Justice and Home Affairs, «we have copied what they are doing elsewhere and we have followed the recommendations of Greco and the UN so that outsiders will see that we are a serious country».

The executive work commission began assessing the state of justice in November 2020, and as a result of this work, a number of measures have been decided, including several legal amendments (some already approved, others current and some future) and a budget allocation of 650,000 euros for eight months with extendable credits and one million euros per year. Thus, new figures are being created, such as the Vice-President of the Mayor's Office, with the aim of strengthening the body, and the Deputy Judicial Secretary, with functions of technical assistance to mayors or magistrates to «help evacuate pending files and future».

The reform provides for the creation of new places. In this way, the Batllia will incorporate five court clerks and 13 officers, while the prosecution will have a deputy prosecutor, a court clerk and five administrators. In addition, the salary base for the job of court clerk is being increased, which will charge an additional 500 euros (from 2,800 to 3,300 euros), with the aim that when pu-



► The entrance of the new headquarters of justice, in Andorra la Vella.

The amendment to the qualified law includes new types of very serious or serious infractions by mayors and magistrates

Public competitions are called to fill vacancies, candidates will be nominated contrary to what had happened recently, that no one showed up. In addition, «the responsibility for the position requires this increase,» said Rossell.

Changes in the status of mayors and magistrates are also planned. Thus, members of the judicial career are prohibited from participating in public auctions arising from legal action. New types of offenses are also introduced: very serious and serious. On the other hand, it is stipulated that the appointments of the members of the High Council of Justice must contain a sufficient motivation of their suitability for the position, as well as the obligation to approve a code of ethics applicable to its members.

It is also established that, in case of need and to obstruct the admini-

stration, the mayors may be empowered to act as a substitute in the Court of Cortes, and the magistrates of the Court of Cortes may do so in the Superior Court of Justice - and thus allow the formation of the court when it is not possible for any cause. In the same vein, the procedure to be followed in the event of recusal is established for the first time.

On the other hand, it includes the limitation of the mandate of the inspectors to a period of three years renewable only once, and emphasizes the purpose of the figure: to ensure the effective and efficient management of the affairs of the adminis-



Josep M. Rossell

MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS



«It is becoming more and more discredited, so we have to give it the image it deserves and let them see that we are a serious country»

«Delays need to be addressed, but keep in mind that conflict rates have increased; everyone has to put the batteries in»

tration of justice. At the same time, the Code of Criminal Procedure is also being amended to make the confiscation procedure more agile, while maintaining and strengthening the guarantees, and extending the cases that may be tried by criminal ordinance.

Finally, the deadline is set. Thus, the period for resolving definitively in the declaratory phase the judicial processes that were being processed at the time of the entry into force of the Code of Civil Procedure is extended by two years, and is extended until December 31, 2023. the deadline for requesting authorization or making the corresponding prior communication of the video surveillance systems in operation. ≡

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