



Interview ► The opposition of Democrats in Escaldes–Engordany analyzes the first part of

Núria Barquín

Councilor of DA of the municipality of Escaldes

«Now you go down the street and you see sadness in Escaldes, we need a little joy»



Núria Barquín, at the headquarters of the Democrats of Andorra la Vella.

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After more than half of Rosa Gili's term, the opposition of Democrats in the Escaldes–Engordany Municipality, in the mouth of Núria Barquín, is critical of the majority, but also acknowledges success.

–What would be the balance of Gili's more than two years in office?

–Loose, especially when it comes to investing. On the other hand, good work is being done. New projects are being worked on in the youth field. But investments are the most important part of a budget, and little has been done in Escaldes during these years of the legislature.

–Last December you said that the majority was a brake on the national reference that was Escaldes. Do you keep it?

–Personally, I see Escaldes with sadness. I was for eight years in the municipality, I didn't have a good economic time, but it was the moment Vivand was created, there was a lot of dynamism in the street.

–But Vivand continues ...

–Those nights or days Vivand provided a lot of atmosphere, with various performances. We always talk about the center, the commercial part, the one that works, where unfortunately more resources

are put in than in the rest of the parish. I remember a beautiful time, we had a dynamizer who was in charge of giving life. I must also say that there is a good program in the field of culture. You go down the street and you see sadness, maybe also because of the works.

–The pandemic will have helped, won't it?

–What we need right now is a little joy and optimism to get out of this bad memory.

–What can be done to regain joy?

–In Vivand there are some plots of land that are under construction, which has an impact on the landscape. There is a lack of dynamism in street activities with groups from across the country. At that time, it was the only pedestrian street there was, it was a novelty ...

–It also cost a lot to do.

–A lot and we suffered a lot, but people came to Escaldes.

–What is your assessment of the opposition's work?

–We are a bit sloppy, it is difficult for us to receive information, even if they say the opposite. We ask for it but in the end you get tired. We want to have access to the resolutions of the governing board, which should be presented before the plenary. We did it when we ruled. Commissions can be made, but the

majority decides. It's hard for me to get out.

–How do you want to face the opposition in the remaining year and a half?

–We want to work together when there are important proposals in common, and look together for the best way to do it. I don't mean that they do it wrong and that we would do it better, but that everything can be improved. For example, the modifications to the town planning plan have not been passed by the committee, we found it in plenary. We are clear that the decision is the majority, but we should be able to say ours before the plenary.

–The consul has been critical of the towers. How do you see it?

–We can't be fooled, it's a visual impact, but at the time it was Caldea, and it was also controversial at the time. The towers are a before and after, a major visual change, but the municipality who approved the modification did so transparently. There was a public exhibition, the video is still uploaded to Youtube today with the changes to the town planning plan, and no one was fooled. There was only one allegation during the public exposure period. Whether they like it or not, it has an impact, but it was a decision that was made with transparency, nothing was hidden.

–But now that you see them, how do you feel?

–As they build, you look at it and you're a little stuck. When they are finished, we will get used to them. If we want a traditional country with a construction like the one preserved in Ordino, it has not been done. Either it is built horizontally with narrow streets or the image was changed, and it is true that it has an impact, but it has al-

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«The towers impact, a visual change, but it was a transparent decision, nothing was hidden or anyone was deceived»

ways been done with the good of the parish in mind and to increase the green area so that the feeling of drowning is not felt.

–Do you agree with Minister Gallardo's proposal to improve the mobility of cable cars from the airport and trams through the central valley?

–We have the space we have and we have to look for alternatives, if we want to maintain tourism. Sure, it would be great, but there is also the cost. It should be a legislature that gives it a boost and a desire to invest in a type of transportation like the tram. Anything to get vehicles off the road, welcome.

–The municipality has launched the bus on demand, which will eventually be free. How do you see the initiative?

–We also took it to the electoral program. Today we can say that it is an excellent service, because you call, they come to pick you up and they drop you off as far as Union Street. However, I believe that everything must be priced, even if it is symbolic, especially to make good use of it.

–In the style of Andorra la Vella, where is it worth 10 cents?

–Exactly, and not to collect, but to make good use of it, because in some cases it is not so. And I disagree with the console, because it doesn't help the environment with

reducing emissions, because we see a minibus carrying only one user. Many cars too, but a minibus is not the same as a car. Now, that's great for the user.

-The works of Fiter and Rossell are on the final stretch. At first they were critical, now do they care?

-This work had to be done because it is the water separators. We were critical of the forms. There was a village meeting a week before construction began, but the people who were there had not received any prior information. In a week, the logistics needed to cut a street like this cannot be arranged, we should have worked with the owners. But there is the second stretch, the upper part, and many residents in the area are angry because there has been no talk at any time.

-Should the work at the top be the same as at the bottom?

-Of course, it's the continuity, it's not a matter of beautification.

-How do you assess the point at which the Caldes project is?

-It's not at any point. Only the fees for the drafting and management of the project have been passed to the full council, which was awarded directly to a team of architects, with whom I have nothing against it, but with the way it is done. A contest should be held, and the winner will be judged. And we don't know exactly what the fees are because we don't know the basic estimate of the work. If you pay a fee, you need to know the amount, not the percentage, because the project can be inflated as much as you want, and that's a government deal. That's why I was critical of the way it was awarded. In the case of non-executive, what percentage corresponds to project writing and what to work direction? Because we have to pay for the project. There is also no report on intervention or town planning.

-On social policies, the consul stated that they had preferred to help people before making marble avenues. What do you think?

-I consider myself social, but this is the competence of the Government, I have always told them and also to them. Social assistance is the responsibility of the government because it is the law that pro-

ducts it. The common law is right, it's customary, it's closed. Because they are national policies, at least there is a transfer of data on which users receive common aid, because they may also receive government aid and are duplicating it. And that's when we talk about the seven Andorras. It is true that the municipality is faster, but the same user can not receive help from both sides, because we are making a difference.

-Maybe it was because of the exceptional situation of the pandemic and because they are different political colors?

-I don't like to talk about different political colors, we have to be united, especially in terms of what issues. For you to think white, I don't have to think black. Not because you do, I have to do it too. We need to move the country forward in the best possible way. And if the municipality of Escaldes-Engordany finally decides to make the aid, perfect, I'll buy it for you, but we'll pass on the information.

-And the social housing project on Pessebre Avenue?

-We repeat the same thing. For me, they are national policies, a housing institute has been created ...

-According to the PS it does not work.

-Why doesn't it work? At the moment, the only proposal that works is the land that the Andorra la Vella municipality has given to the Government, and it is moving forward as a public-private project. We still don't know if it works or not. Why go to Escaldes alone looking for a private one? What will this concession cost the community? We do not know. I guess users' revenue will be looked at. We are talking about people who earn 1000 € per month, will they pay 300 euros? If you build as a private person, my goal is profit. The municipality will have to pay an amount each month. You say you're building at zero cost, but you have to see it.

-The municipality approved a budget of 33.5 million euros. You said staff spending was too high. Why?

-The consul started the term with chapter I at nine million and now it is at 11, there have been a lot of recruitments, an expense that is



►► The councillor from Escaldes of the opposition, during the interview.



«I feel social, but the municipality, as usual, has thrown for the right in aid, although the competence is the Government»

«I will not run again, there must be new faces, but the party will have everything I need»

already fixed by the municipality. My complaint is that last year a person was hired to do job studies, but there is a lot of hiring in the budget report, so we're starting the house on the roof. What, then, is the purpose of this person, if he has not yet given his appraisal? It must be because it doesn't work and you need someone to organize it. You need to be able to make it work. I've been to the cumin and had staff issues. Councillors are also for that, that for some reason we charge a salary. And if you don't get it, then a trustworthy charge will go with you the day you leave. That way, the two new people will stay fixed. And we're not talking about 1000€ salaries.

-How should DA do it to win the municipal elections in Escaldes-Engordany again? Do candidates have to repeat? Should they run in coalition with LA? Should the generals be rehearsed?

-I don't want to or can't comment, because at the national level I don't

know what the idea might be, if they have any. The parish committee did not address the issue.

-What is your opinion?
-[...].

-Since Gili has left the PS, there may be two candidates on the other side.
-You never know in politics, there were a few in the last election. Who chooses is the people. As for Democrats, depending on the outcome of the generals, there will be continuity.

-But should there be a coalition with LA?
-I don't want to comment.

-Will you show up again?
-No. In the last election it was very difficult for me to decide. There must be new faces. I understand people when they complain that we are always the same, but it's not easy to find candidates you can be comfortable with. But the party will have me for everything I need. ≡

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