

Measures to improve the purchasing power of the citizens ▶ The Social Democrats find them

## The tax on vacant flats will be used to promote social rent

The General Council approves the Executive's shock plan tomorrow, which will be retroactive from June 1st

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Taking the challenge of the Social Democratic Party, the government gave the green light to a modification of the empty housing tax which, within three months, will become a finalist to devote itself entirely to the promotion of affordable social protection flats. And it is that from the Executive «we are the first that we are not too satisfied with the impact that this tax has had until now, since the initial will was to influence the proprietors, to make them change of opinion, so that they destined [his empty house] in the rental market», without further intervention, declared the Minister Spokesman, Eric Jover, replacing the head of Government, Xavier Espot, positive of covid. This is one of the novelties included in the Bill of measures to improve the purchasing power of the citizens that was approved last Tuesday in an extraordinary Council of Ministers for the General Council to approve tomorrow in a procedure of extreme urgency. Then, within a maximum of 15 days, the two co-princes will have to sign the text, which will take effect immediately with retroactivity from June 1st in most cases.

Another change announced by Jover is the accounting of employers so that all those with an annual income of less than 150,000 euros who are not public limited companies or limited liability do not have to submit the deposit of accounts until the beginning of the year January 1st, 2023. In addition, the duty to submit comparative information with respect to the previous year is also relaxed, exceptionally for those who use the report models approved by the Ministerial Order of March 30th. It also includes an amendment to the Law for the Promotion of the Energy Transition and Climate Change (Litecc) to facilitate self-consumption, eliminating the current limitation on the production of electricity (renewable or through high energy efficiency installations) in the same place of consumption.

«This is a very important project, which aims to help citizens in a context of depletion of purchasing power. The inflation that we are currently experiencing is historic and from the Government we considered it opportune to develop a series of measures that will help the population to overcome the situation», said Jover. Thus, the shock plan also includes, and as already announced at the end



▶ Archive image of an apartment block of flats for rent.



**ERIC JOVER**  
MINISTER SPOKESMAN

«This is a project that aims to help citizens in a context of depletion of purchasing power»

of April, a reduction in the price of school transportation; flexibility in study grants by raising their thresholds; a reduction in housing subsidies, with an increase in the amount and greater access; a boost to the energy transition, with a new Renova Plan worth 1.5 million euros to renovate older insulation and heating systems; a refund of excise duties on the transport of goods and people, taxis and construction; an increase in wages and economic benefits of social services based on the CPI (3.3%); and a super-reduced IGI in basic necessities and feminine hygiene products.

### the measures

- 1** An increase in wages by 3.3% and an increase in the economic benefits of social services, IGI of 1% in basic necessities and feminine hygiene.
- 2** Flexibility of housing subsidies. The tax on empty homes will be entirely devoted to the promotion of affordable social protection flats.
- 3** Special Renewal Plan for energy saving and campaigns to promote sustainability and energy saving by renewing old insulation or heating systems.
- 4** Free public transportation from July 1st for residents only, although it has not yet been announced what the procedure will be. An 'app' or a physical ski pass is planned.
- 5** Reducing the price of school transportation and making study grants more flexible, with an increase in family economic thresholds in order to benefit.
- 6** Partial refund of fuel taxes for freight and passenger transport professionals, taxi drivers and construction-related vehicles.

All this at a cost of just over eight million euros, expandable to 10, financed with the available treasury through a higher-than-expected revenue collection, thanks to a very good winter season. The problem, however, is that the government will be left with a loss of four million from FEDA dividends, which it closed in 2021 with losses and will not contribute a single euro. In the coming days, Jover will present a new financial balance plan and a new budget framework, although he has already said that the deficit will have to increase «slightly». «The war in Ukraine has been the spark that has created a wider and more uncertain inflation. The government has decided to act objectively and according to the resources of the state, which are finite, and taking into account that we can not owe more if we do not want to jeopardize the sustainability of the country», insisted the minister.

As for public transport, Jover admitted that it is a «complicated» logistics and, although it remains free from July 1st, management and development are still being negotiated with the concession companies. ≡

# The PS is disappointed by the lack of debate with the Government

López considers that the majority does not make enough efforts to solve the housing problem

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The Social Democratic Parliamentary Group is disappointed by the lack of debate on the proposals included in the bill on urgent measures to curb the negative impact on the purchasing power of citizens. Through a press conference, its president, Pere López, and the general counselor Susanna Vela, expressed their «surprise» at the text's entry into the syndicate without any feedback on their counter-proposal, and lamented that «again, there has been no dialogue.» We are very disappointed because of the way they proceeded; we understand that the best option was the common debate of measures», said Vela, who added that «we are not happy with the way the Government has worked.» We were expecting a consensus that has not been reached, so we reject these forms and denounce it», she said.

According to the Social Democrats, the Executive sent them the bill and asked them to return it as soon as possible. That said, the members of the Social Democratic Parliamentary Group set to work and returned a battery of actions very focused on remedying the housing problem and a commitment for the minimum wage to reach 60% of the average, such as provided for in the European Social Charter, next year.» We did not have any answers until this afternoon's appearance», said Vela, who pointed out that in the end, the only return they received at the last minute was schematic and only accepting the measure that



►► Pere López and Susanna Vela, in a moment of their appearance last Tuesday.



**PERE LÓPEZ**  
SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC GP

«Our criticism is not because of what there are, but what it is miss. The central element that conditions everything is the house»

**SUSANNA VELA**  
GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE PS

«We are not happy with the way the government has worked. What do they mean by social and cohesion dialogue?

has to do with the rate on vacant flats, comparing the form of the response to that of an examination conducted in opposition by the Government.» What do they mean by social dialogue and cohesion?» Thus, Vela recalled the work done during the pandemic with the urgent measures and called for the recovery of that system of collaboration despite the complicated situation. To close the question, López regretted that the text has remained practically «at the same starting point» and stressed that «there is no social or political debate, almost no respect».

INSISTENCE ON HOUSING // Regarding

the actions that will finally be debated in the General Council, the president of the Social Democratic Parliamentary Group remarked that, in the course of the elaboration of his proposals they observed that «housing is the main problem», and they found that the fact that there was no concrete action around it was a great shortcoming. For this reason, the measures presented by the Social Democrats included the establishment of a reference price index, the creation and supply of a public fund for the rehabilitation of affordable apartments, the extension of leases or the finalist character of the tax on empty flats among others.

**The Social Democrats regret** that they have not been answered beyond a schematic return and the words of the Minister

But in the end, the government has only considered the last demand.» We celebrate that they include it, but it is not enough», said López, who said that while this action alone could only provide about 7,000 euros, the set of proposals they drew up provided about 35 million.» Our criticism is not so much for what is among the proposals, but for what is missing», said the Social Democrat, insisting that «the central element that conditions everything is housing and, once again, this government does not want to accept any of our suggestions.» «His insistence is to refuse to accept any proposal or address the issue», he said. Thus, given the development of the work of the legislative text and the lack of dialogue denounced, and despite the fact that «we believe that it is good to increase wages and pensions in order to regain purchasing power», López said that we will be able to support it» because «it seems to us insufficient».

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