



OLD AGE

## The PS demands that the Government withdraw the decree from the social and health centers

The Federation of Associations of the Elderly criticizes the Executive for not consulting them

CASS pensioners' representative regrets increase in rates of up to 96%



MARICEL BLANCH

►► Archive image of the El Cedre social and health center.

EL PERIÒDIC  
ANDORRA LA VELLA  
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The Social Democratic Party (PS) is demanding that the government step back with the decree to raise the rates of social and health centers. This was stated yesterday by the president of the PS, Pere López, emphasizing that «the Executive has approved this measure with its back to the elderly, associations and political parties». In fact, the member of the executive committee, Marta Pujol, stated that «the coalition of Democrats and Liberals has not made any predictions regarding the level of income of the working classes that need these essential services». Following the same line, the proposal of the Social Democrats is to «keep the price for people with a mild degree of functional diversity and lower the rate for people with higher degrees». López stated that «it has already been difficult enough to spend two years in

a pandemic to make life more difficult for such a sensitive group».

Regarding the reaction of the social actors to the increase in tariffs, the president of the Federation of Associations of the Elderly of the Principality of Andorra,

Félix Zapatero, criticized that «the Executive did not consult us in any moment this measure that affects us fully and, above all, negatively». Thus, the group believes that prices should be in line with the level of pensions. Zapatero stated that

«residence is a biological necessity for the last stage of people's lives; it's not a whim, that's why we're so worried about the fare. «The government says it will take care of the financial part that the users of the centers cannot afford, but the

federation is against «people having to depend on the public administration to be able to cover these expenses; everyone should be able to finance their stay in geriatrics». In addition, Zapatero stressed that they represent a group of approximately 7,000 people, which «deserves the approval of this decree to have gone through a more participatory process by social actors».

For his part, the pensioners' representative on the CASS Board of Directors, Jacint Risco, described

### Social Affairs states

that people who are already users of the centers will not notice any change in rates

the new measure as «terrifying», as he considers that a 96% increase in rates cannot be assumed in the most serious cases of dependence». On the one hand, Risco admitted that «the climb makes sense and can be adjusted to reality», but on the other hand, «it cannot be done overnight without warning; the change should have been gradual over time. «At the same time, as a representative of the Andorran Multiple Sclerosis Association (Trana-EM), Risco stated that «we do not rule out actions of denunciation and demonstrations against this decree, as the Government has not consulted us».

It should be noted that during the press conference following the Council of Ministers, the head of Social Affairs, Judith Pallarès, stated that this amendment to the regulations «will not change anything for people who are already part of social and health centers; only about 30 new entrants will be affected by the end of the year». For his part, Minister Eric Jover said that «the accusations of the PS are often untrue and only seek attrition».



**JACINT RISCO**  
REPRESENTING PENSIONERS

«This change has taken us all by surprise; should have taken place through a more gradual process»



**FÉLIX ZAPATERO**  
PRESIDENT FED. ASS. SENIORS

«Residence is a biological necessity for the last stage of people's lives; this is not a personal whim»



**PERE LÓPEZ**  
PRESIDENT OF THE PS

«The government has approved this measure with its back to the elderly, associations and political parties»

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## COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

# Wearing ostentatious religious symbols at school is a serious offense

The amendment to the Education Law introduces a teaching alternative linked to ethics to the subject of religion

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The Government approved yesterday the Bill amending the Qualified Education Law in the framework of the meeting of the Council of Ministers and at the proposal of the Minister of Education and Higher Education, Ester Vilarrubla. The text mainly introduces changes in two articles: the establishment of a teaching alternative to the subject of the Catholic religion and the prohibition of ostentatious religious symbols and signs in the Andorran school. In fact, according to the head of Education, making use of these elements will be a serious offense. This element has been established through the special provisions and contemplates this classification with the sanctions included in the Civil Service Law in the case of teachers, although «it will be necessary to speak first with the person involved to try to redirect the situation» before launching the sanction operation. In the case of students, a specific disciplinary regime has also been defined, which includes a first step in the process which will consist of a dialogue with the student and his legal guardians to reach an agreement.

«We argue that it is important to regulate the use of ostentatious symbols to ensure neutrality and facilitate coexistence,» Vilarrubla said, adding that «under no circumstances we are restricting religious freedom». «We are referring to a very specific part: it has nothing to do with belief but with its manifestation,» the minister said. It should be noted that an exception to the rule has been established, and it is for those cases that the exposure of these elements is necessary for the dynam-



► Minister Ester Vilarrubla, at a time of her appearance.

**Vilarrubla reiterates that the text does not limit «religious freedom», and emphasizes that it wants to «facilitate coexistence»**

tics of the activity. Specifically, the text, which is now in parliamentary proceedings, provides for the ban to be applied to kindergartens, primary education, secondary education, baccalaureate and vocational training centers, and excludes adult training centers and universities.

At the same time, the modification has also included a change in the educational system in order to add a teaching alternative to the subject

of the Catholic religion, as currently, students who choose not to carry it out, remain in the classroom doing personal work with the tutor. This offer will be linked to the discipline of «ethics, values and democratic history», according to the minister. Ultimately, Vilarrubla avoided referring to the current situation of the two minors involved in the veil affair in order to preserve their privacy. ≡

## The government regulates the figure of the summer season

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ESCALDES-ENGORDANY

The Executive will launch a pilot test this year to put the figure of the summer season into action. This was stated at a press conference after the Council of Ministers by the head of Justice and Home Affairs, Josep Maria Rossell, who stated that the regulation of this mechanism aims to reduce the tension in the labor market, affected by lack of manpower.

Through the amendment of the Qualified Immigration Act, the Government proposes that temporary work permits submitted in 2021 or 2022 - within the current winter season - may be renewed without the need, hitherto established, to allow five months to elapse before requesting another. In addition to maintaining these workers, the figure of the summer season is created, with work permits valid from June 1st to October 31st, in order to ensure coverage of vacancies in the summer period. Rossell explained that for this first edition, a quota of 500 people is planned.

The amendment has been made in coordination with the CEA, UHA and AHA, and is expected to take effect from the winter season of 2022-2023. ≡

### Hydraulic improvements on the Estret Encamp river

Yesterday, at the proposal of the Minister of Territory and Housing, Víctor Filloy, the Government approved the tender for the phase I hydraulic improvement project on the Estret Encamp river. The work defined in the project will improve the hydraulic conditions of the Estret Encamp river, especially on Hort de Godí street. The works consist of a clearing and pickling of the area affected by the work with masonry walls on the left bank of the Straits River to protect the terrace of the existing building and the street. Bids can be submitted until April 13th.

### 2022 Budget Control Program

At the proposal of the Minister of Finance and Spokesman, Eric Jover, the Executive yesterday approved the Regulations on the establishment of the budget control program for the year 2022. Jover explained that the purpose of the Regulations is to determine the entities which are subject to the budgetary control of the Comptroller General during the financial year 2022 and the modality and scope of control to which they are subject.

This rule applies public law entities and to public companies owned by the General Administration.

### New grants for catering

The Council of Ministers approved yesterday, at the proposal of the head of Culture and Sports, Silvia Riva, the call for the award of grants to promote the integrated conservation, restoration, maintenance and improvement of the cultural heritage of real estate, movable, documentary and intangible, for the year 2022. As stated by the Government, in no case may the subsidy be more than 50% of the cost of works or interventions in real estate, while for movable, documentary, and intangible assets, has delimited the maximum limit to 80% of the intervention.

### Performances at the Montaup CS-240

The Executive agreed yesterday, at the request of the Minister of Territory and Housing, Víctor Filloy, the tender for the actions to improve the CS-240 of Montaup, corresponding to part two of phase 7, in the section between the point kilometer seven and six of this road in Canilo. The work includes about 525 linear meters and will focus on improving the entire drainage system, both wells and ditches, as well as replacing the security barrier and the construction of sections of masonry wall footing. Interested companies have until April 13th to submit their bids.

### Rossell and Moles move to Madrid

The Secretary of State for Agriculture and Sustainability, Marc Rossell, and the Director General of FEDA, Albert Moles, met yesterday with the Spanish Secretary of State for Energy, Sara Aagesen. The meeting took place at the headquarters of the Ministry for Ecological Transition and Demographic Challenge in Madrid. This first bilateral technical meeting addressed the various issues surrounding the impetus for the energy transition and served to get both secretaries to share the environmental agenda and the need to continue to promote sustainability projects.

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