

Push the shock plan ahead with rising costs ▶ Commitment to quality and sustainable tourism

The General Council approves the law on measures for purchasing power

Terçeravia votes against it and goes through the procedure as a matter of urgency and the PS abstains because it sees shortcomings

EL PERIÒDIC
ESCALDES-ENGORDANY
@PeriodicAND

The first of the two sessions held last Thursday in the General Council, with the sole point of debate and vote on the Law of measures to improve the purchasing power of citizens, approved the text with the favorable votes of the majority coalition. On the other hand, the Social Democratic Party (PS) abstained, as the non-attached general councilor Carine Montaner did, while Terçeravia + Laurediana Union + Independents voted against it, while presenting an appeal to the Syndicate for the entry of the text by way of urgency and extreme necessity, considering that it was not appropriate and that it had not been used correctly.

The first interlocutor of the debate was, on behalf of the Government, the Minister of the Presidency, Economy and Business, Jordi Gallardo, who stated that «this price escalation makes it necessary for the Government to be on the side of the citizens, as it has done throughout the current legislature», at the same time as he considered that it is a series of actions that will contribute, without any doubt, to increase the purchasing power of the citizens. However, Gallardo said that «the government will continue to make the necessary adjustments to improve the situation of the population», opening the door to new measures in case of need.

However, the minister's statement did not convince opposition parliamentary groups, which did not support the text. First of all, from Terçeravia, Josep Pintat denounced the doubts they had about the management and processing of the law by way of extreme urgency and necessity, to the point that they had entered an appeal to the Syndicate. «This group understands that if this text is approved in this way, the processing of a series of resources by the citizens can begin, and it is not good to encourage it», said



▶ A moment of the debate on the Law of measures for purchasing power.

Pintat. Gallardo reaffirmed in this issue that in the pandemic period, all groups approved different texts with urgent aid without the need for reports prepared by the Economic and Social Council, as noted by Terçeravia, while Carles Enseñat -Democrats- did reference to the articles by means of which coverage was given to this procedure.

On the other hand, Pintat remarked that since its formation, «we have been on everyone's side», alluding to the fact that the measures discriminated against certain people, and that a sufficiently limited observation had not been made to take these actions. Regarding the last element, the head of the Presidency, Economy and Business remarked that «this Government, above all, is acting», noting that the



Jordi Gallardo
MINISTER OF ECONOMY AND BUSINESS

«The government does not rise one day and says that wages should be increased, but it was a demand made by the CEA itself»

urgency justified that they could not first develop «a macroeconomic study to take action». Also, on equality in the application of the actions, he pointed out that «you say that everyone should be helped equally, because maybe not, because we cannot help those who earn 24,000 euros a year the same as in who earns 80,000». Finally, he reaffirmed that «the government does not stand up one day and, as a result of its inspiration, says that wages should be increased, but that it was a demand made to us by the CEA itself».

AGAIN, HOUSING // For his part, from the PS, Pere López reiterated that «Andorra is experiencing its worst moment of purchasing power and the worst crisis in recent history in

this matter» and claimed that the main defect of the proposal was the lack of solutions regarding housing, blurt out to the Executive that «the failure of its housing policy is completely obvious». He also rebuked them for not wanting to discuss their measures.

In response to these arguments, Gallardo accused López of «dusting off the issue of housing because he has no more proposals» and insisting that «we accompany and provide quick and necessary solutions for the citizens». He also stated that «you say we are taking neoliberal measures, but the ones you are suggesting are communist», referring to the «interventionist» measures that according to Gallardo, the PS recommends. Following this comment, López mentioned that «we have found him outright and a little overacted», and emphasized the fact that «they do not understand what is happening in the country», encouraging them to carry out a study of the cost of living in Andorra to understand the reality of the population. He also stressed the need for a commitment to reach a minimum wage of 60% of the average as recommended by the European Social Charter; commitment that, according to the minister, they cannot now assume because if the negative trend grows, employers could not assume it.

For all this, Gallardo criticized that both Pintat and López relied on the question of form and substance, but «I have not heard any criticism of what this law provides because there is none and they cannot do it», reaffirming that «measures are in the public interest». Actions approved last Thursday include lower wages, reduced IGI on basic necessities, increased economic and social benefits, and free public transportation. Earlier, the government approved the increase in pensions and the minimum wage, the relaxation of various public aids, the partial refund of fuel taxes and a special Renewal Plan. ■

Your leading real estate agency in Andorra.

Our experience guarantees results, realtors since 1988.



(+376) 353 424 / (+376) 379 769

(+376) 747 747

laportella@andorra.ad

Casa Nova Olivet 10 · Ordino

www.laportella.ad

The PS regrets that part of the tourist tax is not allocated to the green background

The board of directors of Andorra Turisme will have three representatives from the hotel sector



►► Image of Meritxell Avenue last weekend.

EL PERIÒDIC
ESCALDES-ENGORDANY
@PeriodicAND

The Social Democratic Parliamentary Group (PS) abstained last Thursday in the vote on the Bill regulating the Tax on stays in tourist accommodation, general of tourist accommodation, and amending the law on the creation of public society Andorra Turisme for not feeling «satisfied enough» with the lack of an ecological component of the text. According to Councilor Roger Padreny, «most of our tourists arrive in a wheeled vehicle; tourists have an impact on the management of our environment and this must have consequences». «We consider it essential that a percentage of this tax be allocated to the fight against climate change», he said, adding that his proposal was around 33%. In this sense, the Democratic General Councilor Maria Martisella, representing the parliamentary majority, assured that they share the concern of the Social Democrats, but that the law already ensures «sustainable, responsible and inclusive tourism». «Tourist resources are not the same as natural resources», said Padreny, who insisted that the only

way to ensure this protection is through a fixed percentage that goes to the green funds.

Non-attached General Councilor Carine Montaner, for her part, said that she would vote in favor, as «tourists are used to paying this tax around the world and I think that using the volume of tourism is the way to avoid harming our citizens».

The Minister of Tourism and Telecommunications, Jordi Torres, who had to intervene electronically to be positive for covid, stated that this is a finalist rate, in the middle strip of the surrounding countries, which will vary depending on the stay and the category of the accommodation and that has been agreed with the hotel sector and the travel agencies. Its aim, then, will be to combat deseasonalization, improve the competitiveness of tourism, as well as its quality and sustainability. Martisella added that the money raised will go to staff training and alarm and emergency situations. «We need to have resources to help the sector in the event of an unforeseen event that directly affects it, such as the landslide that closed the border with France for weeks in 2019», he said.

The councilor of Terceravia + Lau-

rediana Union + Independents, Joan Carles Camp, focused his criticism on the fact that before approving this law, the land law should have been modified to establish that any new tourist infrastructure should be built on public land. Camp was specifically thinking about the multifunctional building, which we «hear a lot about, but know very little about», and accused the government of not having a roadmap and going astray. He also said that this is a «basic» work for the country, but with a «very important» economic investment and a «very long» repayment period, so it is advisable to choose its location very well to not have surprises then and to be trapped».

All parliamentary groups will ask the Court of Auditors to sanction it

Regarding the part of the text that modifies the law of creation of Andorra Turisme, Martisella reported that the Board of Directors will include the representation of three managers of the sector - the Association of Tourist Accommodation, the Hotel Union and Authentic Hotels - which will allow the public and private sectors to «work on joint policies» and comply with an old demand.

For the Social Democrats, this inclusion is not enough, as they called for a debate on the whole organization and not just on how it works. Terceravia, on the other hand, warned of the legal limits that are being changed for the entity, such as the debt permit, and lamented that «the easiest path has been chosen». «Andorra Turisme is one of the bodies that always violates the demands of the Court of Auditors and instead of enforcing them, we change the law», said Camp, who showed his support in the vote, but warned that «we will be very attentive to all movements».

Other points of the Council / In another order of things, the chamber also gave the green light to the liquidations of accounts of the General Council, of the organs linked to it, of the Constitutional Court, of



JOAN CARLES CAMP
TERCERAVIA

«It is advisable to choose the location of the multifunctional very well so as not to have any surprises and to be trapped»



ROGER PADRENY
PS

«Tourists have an impact on the management of our environment and this must have consequences»



MARIA MARTISELLA
DEMOCRATS

«We need resources to help the sector in the face of unforeseen events that directly affect it, such as the 2019 landslide»

the General Administration, of the parapublic entities, public law and other bodies, as well as public companies, for the financial year 2020. A point not without debate, as Terceravia once again denounced the court, while the PS demanded explanations as to why AFA employees did not lower their salaries during the pandemic as they did all public office, including general counsel. However, all parliamentary groups called for the Court of Auditors to have more powers and to be able to apply a sanctioning regime.

Finally, the creation of the Official College of Optometrists of Andorra, the modification of the law of the «saig», the bill of mountain resorts, the one of the measures for the security of the networks and information systems and the consideration of the Youth Forum Bill were also approved. ≡