



INCIDENTS

# A fire in the lobby damages the Laureadian congress center

Mayoral celebrates that there were no victims and predicts that the space will not reopen until March

The ground floor has been destroyed and the first floor badly affected, in addition to other areas



ANA/M.P.



**Josep Majoral**

CONSUL MAJOR OF SANT JULIÀ

«We will try to relocate all those activities that we had planned to other spaces in the parish»

Majoral's goal is to have the cultural center «already rehabilitated and in full performance by March or April at the latest», but he hopes it can be sooner. For this reason, he stated that the procedure to deal with these works «is extremely urgent», and that they have already met with the intervention part of the Municipality of Sant Julià de Lòria to look for a company that can lead to finish the works in the shortest possible time. The consul emphasized that «it will take more or less [time], but culture does not stop».

It should be noted that the University of Andorra (UdA) was also affected, in this case only due to smoke and soot. As a result of the events, their facilities remained closed during the last Wednesday, but resumed their activity yesterday. The only space that will be closed this Thursday is the Assembly Hall for cleaning tasks.

Finally, the Government announced on Wednesday that it does not plan to provide financial aid to promote the rehabilitation of the center. The Minister Spokesperson, Eric Jover, recalled that this «is a municipal space» and that, therefore, the obligations to adapt the infrastructure correspond to the municipal corporation, since «it is not a competence of the Government».

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A fire that started during the morning from Tuesday to Wednesday in the lobby damaged the Laureadian Cultural and Congress Center. According to the senior consul of the parish, Josep Majoral, the positive part of this affair «is that there were no personal victims» and that the system against fires worked. The negative was the material damage that the building has suffered. The zero floor was «destroyed», the first floor had «a very affected part», and other small spaces in the center were also damaged.

The firefighters were alerted at around 04.00 hours, and the extinguishing work ended at 07.00 hours. Afterwards, they continued to work on cleaning tasks and carbon monoxide detection. As for the rest of the damage, neither the Claror auditorium nor the Rocafort were visu-

ally affected. Majoral, however, took it for granted that «the entire electrical installation must be redone».

The specific causes are not yet known, and it will be the technicians or experts who will determine them, but the Fire Brigade official, Josep Ribera, indicated that «the focus was on the right side of the center» near the bar. In addition, he added that «it spread very quickly through the roof». However, the totality of the damage was not caused by the fire, as the water from the automatic sprinklers and the smoke played an important role. In this sense, the exhibition of paintings that was there from Unesco did not burn, but it did get wet, because it was cornered due to another activity that took place. What is certain is that the works «have been affected by the dust and smoke generated by a fire», said the Consul Major of Sant Julià de Lòria.

As a result of the events, the staff working at the center «will be reloca-



► Above, an image of the interior of the center after the fire. Downstairs, the senior consul of Sant Julià de Lòria talking with some operators.

ted to the same building of the municipality», explained Majoral. In the same way, the Theater Season and The Shepherds will try to relocate to other places. In relation, the consul clarified that «all those acti-

vities that we had planned we will try to relocate them in spaces of the parish, despite the fact that it is clear that the quality of these will not be the same». In addition, contacts with insurers were also initiated.

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EQUALITY

# The Chamber affirms that there are still employment differences based on sex

A manual urges small and medium-sized companies to carry out a series of actions to avoid discrimination

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There are still inequalities and discrimination based on sex in the Andorran business fabric, explains the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Services, which with the purpose of fighting against this cycle has drafted, together with the Andorran Women's Association (ADA), a practical manual that guarantees effective equality between women and men in companies. Specifically, this text forms a frame of reference for all companies with less than 50 workers, which are not obliged to implement an equality plan by law, but which must also guarantee non-discrimination in the job. «We have created this guide with the largest number of companies that make up the business fabric of the country», assured the president of the ADA, Mònica Codina, who also explained that in order to be a useful tool, it presents examples and situations that com-

**The guide provides information on how to prevent and address sexual harassment and promotes inclusive communication**

panies may encounter, and proposes solutions that can be applied in all those aspects that are required by law. This series of actions and practical measures show in an easy and comprehensible way what are the obligations determined by Law 6/2022, a piece of legislation that aims to recognize the efforts of women in all areas and facilitate coexistence at work in all companies. «We all need to reverse discrimination based on sex, and certainly in the business sector there is a long way to go», Codina assessed.

To achieve employment equality, the guide urges companies to draw up a data register on the wage gap with specific indicators. At the same time, it provides information on how to prevent and address sexual harassment and harassment based on sex, «which is often not identified as such or is not given importance», as specified in the text. In addition, it promotes non-discriminatory advertising on the basis of sex, in order to put an end to gender stereotypes, the objectification of women and sexist language. It also prevents companies from being able to discriminate in the provisi-



► Pilar Escaler and Mònica Codina during the presentation of the new practical manual.

on of a service or the delivery of a good on the basis of sex, and foresees that there is a balanced participation of women and men on the boards of directors of commercial companies. Finally, the manual indicates that companies must carry out inclusive communication in the professional world and, therefore, presents a series of tips on how to make gender visible or not, as required by each communication situation. For her part, the director of the Chamber, Pilar Escaler, remarked that «through knowledge, awareness and education we will achieve an egalitarian Andorra society».

Labor inequalities are evident in the professional gap that exists. In 2021, in Andorra, women received 19.9% less salary than men, as a result of direct discrimination or due to other factors such as the low presence of women in positions of responsibility, the greater presence of these in low-paid professions or the greater percentage of women with part-time working hours or in a situation of unemployment due to



**Pilar Escaler**

DIRECTOR OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

«Through knowledge, awareness and education we will make Andorra an egalitarian society»

**Mònica Codina**

PRESIDENT OF THE ADA

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difficulties reconciling work and family life. Likewise, incorporating measures to obtain equality brings benefits for companies, assure the Chamber of Commerce and the ADA, such as increasing the commitment of the workforce to the company's objectives; improve the working climate; generate a positive impact on staff performance; give more credibility and corporate reputation; and increase the company's ability to attract and retain talent. In this sense, Codina pointed out that «any company that is looking for staff needs to adapt to the new times». However, the Chamber and the ADA recalled during the presentation of the practical guide that it is necessary to create an Andorran Women's Institute to be able to develop the equal treatment law and, additionally, a women's observatory, since there is a great lack of data in the country. However, «the steps must be taken little by little, it is worth starting here and we will see what is done in the future», concluded Escaler. ≡

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