



## Politics ▶ Xavier Espot, re-elected head of Government of Andorra



▶▶ The new head of government of Andorra, Xavier Espot Zamora, during the investiture session last Wednesday.

# Xavier Espot is re-elected head of government with seventeen votes in favor of his investiture

Espot also had to respond to the interventions of the leaders of the opposition parliamentary groups

The leader of the Democratic Party will take the oath of office at la Vall next Monday, May 15th

ALEX MONTERO  
ANDORRA LA VELLA

[@PeriodicAND](#)

Xavier Espot renews as head of government with seventeen votes in favor. A result that could be surprising in another context, but which this year was a fact practically already known by all citizens of Andorra, after the wide absolute majority with which the orange party won the last elections on April 2nd.

Espot thus reaffirms himself as head of government for the second consecutive term, in an investiture debate marked by the interventions of all the candidates and parliamentary groups, which grew over time and extended throughout the day. Interventions in which the government's promises, as well as a long list of priorities launched by the groups that make up the opposition of this new legislature, took center stage throughout the day, but which could not remove from everyone's imagination the fact the day before with the fainting of Cerni Escalé in the middle of his speech, after suffering a fainting that forced him to postpone the moment in

the early hours of last Wednesday.

Against the seventeen votes in favor of the democratic leader, the other candidate for head of government, Cerni Escalé, was placed with five votes, as the second political force in these last elections. For their part, the other six votes went towards abstention, these being led by the councilors of Andorra Endavant and PS SDP+.

**RESPONSE INTERVENTION TO THE PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS** // Throughout the day, apart from Espot, the leader of Concòrdia, Cerni Escalé, passed through the microphones of the main lectern of the General Council; the leader of Andorra Endavant, Carine Montaner; the president of the PS SDP+ Parliamentary Group, Judith Salazar; the president of the Parliamentary Group Committed Citizens, Carles Naudí; the general counsel for Concòrdia, Jordi Casadevall; and the president of the Democratic Parliamentary Group, Jordi Jordana. Except for Naudí and Jordana, Espot was forced to respond to each of the interventions of the members of the opposition, who did not miss the opportunity to put the new head of government against the ropes

and to respond to the different issues that had been forgot during the last weeks.

«These days it has been debated that there are two different country models: the Concòrdia model or the Democrats and Allies model. Thinking about it, I think that far from that there are many more things that bring us closer than those that take us away». Xavier Espot began his speech with this first statement, with a statement that was a clear shot at the group led by Cerni Escalé and that continued to show that «we all make an almost identical diagnosis of the country and propose solutions to the challenges we face. It is true, however, that when we delve into these proposed solutions there are more differences than similarities, but in most cases they are not so crucial that we cannot come to a consensus on them.»

**The investiture was dominated by issues such as housing or the association agreement with the EU**

**THE SAME ISSUES, PUT BACK ON THE TABLE** // As if it were the first time that issues related to the housing problem or the association agreement with the European Union were heard, Espot and the parliamentary leaders flew over all these throughout the investiture day.

On the issue of housing, the new head of government responded to the one mentioned by Carine Montaner about the 6,000 empty flats in Andorra. «The first studies already showed that this figure is much less high, and we cannot base the argument on an absence or not of electricity consumption. There are many flats that are summer residences and that is not why they are empty», mentioned Espot. Following this line, but moving to health terms, Espot wanted to endorse in a certain way the figure of Josep Maria Piqué, director general of the Andorran Health Care Service (SAAS), criticized by the various opposition groups and who will place in the coming months. «He is a person who has contributed a lot to SAAS, with a key strategic vision. His figure at the head of the Covid-19 era was crucial».

In addition, Espot did not want

to miss the opportunity to respond to one of the most demanded questions of recent months: the association agreement with the EU, which was marked with a completion date of December this year. «The timing remains the same and we must also take advantage of the fact that on June 30th Spain will take over the presidency of the Council of the European Union, which means that it will be more sensitive to Andorra's interests.» Similarly, the leader of DA had no problem in recognizing that «they will be the first to defend the continuation of the negotiation beyond December if the optimal conditions of the state pact do not occur».

**FOCUS ON THE FORMATION OF THE EXECUTIVE** // Once re-elected head of government, Xavier Espot now has his sights set on next Monday, May 15th, when he will take the oath of office at Casa de la Vall. A situation that comes hand in hand with the the imminent formation of the new executive, and is that according to Espot «we have been working behind the scenes for days in parallel with the configuration of the speech. I hope that the major



SFGA/CESTEVE



**Xavier Espot**  
HEAD OF GOVERNMENT

«In most cases, the differences are not so crucial that we cannot come to an agreement on them»

«The vast majority, not to mention the entirety of the Government, can be announced on Monday afternoon after my oath»

origin or political sympathy.

Also asked about the investiture session held last Wednesday, the democratic leader celebrated that Concòrdia and PS SDP+ confirmed their adherence to the health state pacts, the CASS and on the European Union, a fact that Espot considered «a good omen I think today we highlighted our similarities more than our differences and I think we can go a long way together.» Some state pacts in which the one of the European Union takes on special relevance, with the urgency of «formalizing it as quickly as possible, since we have the commitment to give the final approval to everything that has been agreed under reservation when the Government is formed and I would like to transfer the information to the members of the pact before doing so».

Finally, and with reference to the pact on the reform of the pension system, Espot indicated that it will be agile because there is already a specific legislative commission. With regard to Health, the new head of government mentioned that «we will take a little longer, as the terms of the pact and the agreement to be signed are still not yet mature». ≡

## Escalé focuses his speech on housing and foreign investment

The leader of Concòrdia resumed his speech after fainting last Wednesday.

|| ALEX MONTERO/ANNA MENCOS VIÑALS  
ANDORRA LA VELLA

The leader of Concòrdia and general counsel, Cerni Escalé, was able to finish during the investiture session last Wednesday his intervention, originally scheduled for Monday. It should be remembered that Escalé was unable to finish his speech due to a fainting spell due to a fainting shortly after starting his speech, and the General Council was forced to postpone the moment for the second part of the investiture session.

Escalé focused his intervention on the issue of housing and how foreign investment affects the rise in prices. «It cannot be that Andorra has the same number of inhabitants as fifteen years ago, that much more has been built there and that at the same time it is so difficult to find a place to live», the candidate stated that in recent years there have been carried out operations worth more than one billion euros, buying flats and houses that could have been occupied by people from the country. Escalé also recalled that this foreign investment has resulted in greater residential construction in the Principality, but of real estate at a high cost. Escalé attributed the housing problem to supply and demand. Concòrdia's proposal involves limiting foreign investment by establishing a strict quota system that limits the number of properties that can be compared to people who no longer live in the Principality. For this reason, they propose to increase the Property Transfer Tax from the current 4% to a rate of 10%, for all operations in which the property is not intended as a first residence, and at the same time continue to increase the public stock of homes available. In this sense, the candidate stated that another way to achieve a large public housing stock would be by increasing the percentage of transfer and receiving it in form of built flats, or also with soft loans for rehabilitation of real estate,



SFGA/CESTEVE

►► The leader of Concòrdia, Cerni Escalé, during his speech last Wednesday.



**CERNI ESCALÉ**

LEADER OF CONCÒRDIA

«It cannot be that Andorra has the same number of inhabitants as it did 15 years ago, that more has been built there and that at the same time it is so difficult to find a place to live»

«Our country needs an evolution and not a revolution. We must believe in the opportunities for innovation»

te, provided that these are intended for rent for at least ten years following the works, and that the market price is reasonable.

Regarding the reform of the CASS, they defend a «firm and stable» consensus. «It will be necessary to reduce the marginal increases for each point quoted in the highest pensions until reaching an effective ceiling, while increasing the impact of the point in the lowest pensions» said Escalé. Regarding mobility, the candidate explained that «we will do our best in the negotiation with France and Spain for the arrival of the train in the country», in terms of transport and also added support «to the creation of a transport, by rail or similar, between Sant Julià de Lòria and Escaldes Engordany, with frequent stops and a central route». They also support the diversion of Sant Julià and that of La Massana and the development of the airport. ≡

# Government investiture

be sworn in Casa de

...rity, if not the entirety of the Government, can be announced on Monday afternoon after my oath». Today, there are only two pieces left to fit together, the ministries of Social Affairs and Finance. In this sense, and questioned by the possibility that a member of Acció could occupy one of the portfolios following the coalition in the territory of Escaldes-Engordany, Espot emphasized that «there are no party quotas, but they are looking for the best profiles to lead the ministries regardless of affiliation,

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