



ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION

The EFA defends public-private partnerships to create housing

Employers are advocating for a sectoral agreement instead of a general wage increase

They also recognize the existence of a Eurosceptic sentiment among some of their members

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The Andorran Family Company (EFA) defends public-private collaboration in housing to try to solve one of the main problems in the country. This was highlighted yesterday by the member of the association Manel Cerqueda during the meeting with the media to analyze the current context. In this sense, he affirmed that the housing situation «is getting stale and, although it is good to offer short-term aid, it is necessary to have a more far-sighted vision and to encourage the proliferation of private initiatives that can find profitability in rental projects».

Continuing in the same direction, the president of the EFA, Daniel Armengol, pointed out that «market intervention by the Government hinders the process of recovering de-

The board of directors believes that the conflicts of competences between the administrations weaken the economy

cent housing at an affordable price». Thus, he emphasized that the formula to fight against the lack of flats consists of a wider land facilitation by the municipalities, together with the proliferation of the projects of the promoters. At the same time, the secretary of the EFA, Daniel Aristot, added that «if the private sector does not ensure a return of 2%, they will not go ahead with real estate rental initiatives». On the other hand, the employers also discussed the issue of wage bands. In this way, Armengol emphasized that the necessary regulations have not been deployed to establish specific agreements for each labor sector. «Without a competent and reliable database of the different economic areas, it is not possible to act efficiently», said Armengol adding that «it is not so easy to grant the same salary increase to everyone; this drastic solution is not what we defend». Likewise, he stated that the current parameters are



A.PONT

► A moment from the meeting of the EFA board of directors with the media.



Daniel Armengol

PRESIDENT OF THE EFA

«Government intervention in the market slows down the recovery of decent housing at an affordable price»

a «nebula» that makes it difficult to calculate average wages and that the EFA prefers the consolidation of collective agreements to the general provisions for wage increases.

Referring to the association agreement, Armengol acknowledged that there is a Eurosceptic feeling between some members of the association and the management. In this sense, he alleged that a sector of the EFA would have preferred a more powerful commercial agreement that accentuates Andorra's area of economic influence and consolidates it as the main figure in the Pyrenees. However, the businessmen's intention is to give a positive view of the relationship with Europe.

Regarding the area of adminis-



Manel Cerqueda

VOCAL OF THE EFA

«Private initiatives must be encouraged so that they can find profitability in rental projects»

trations, the EFA considers that the fact of having eight administrations «penalizes us». Thus, Armengol emphasized that conflicts of competences between public bodies weaken the productive fabric and the economy. Therefore, «we are advocating the urgent creation of a single tax figure to avoid double deductions and misalignment of transfers».

Finally, the meeting dealt with the management of the Andorra-La Seu d'Urgell Airport infrastructure. At this point, all the members of the association agreed on the fact that a greater influence and decision-making capacity is needed in the administrative bodies, given that Andorra is one of the main promoters and stakeholders of this project. ≡

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ENERGY SAVING

The USdA charges the increase in light and the policies of the Government

The EFA endorses the actions of the Executive and defends public-private collaboration in the country's energy market

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The Trade Union of Andorra (USdA) is indignant before Tuesday's announcement about the increase in electricity rates. Its general secretary, Gabriel Ubach, warned about the impact of this measure in a context of «loss of purchasing power of the population», and criticized that «the neoliberal policies of the Democratic Government have brought us to where we are now, almost in ruins, and the middle class and the country are being burdened».

The union is clear about what the first action must be to correct a situation that «has completely gotten out of Xavier Espot's hands», and that is to increase wages. «It's about social justice», claims Ubach, who asserted that «what we cannot pretend is to tell Andorran families that they have to pay 8% more for electricity from one month to the next, and that the cost of living is rising more and more, and to do absolutely nothing». In

The union recommends Espot to call elections soon because «the legislature is completely over»

this sense, the general secretary recalled that at the last meeting of the Economic and Social Council (CES), the union asked for a progressive increase in wages, to achieve a 20% increase in four years, which «the CEA says that the employer could not take it on.» «On a value of 1,400 euros, a company cannot pay 70 more to its worker; but now, he will have to assume 17% more of the price of light. How do you face this?», he questioned.

Ultimately, Ubach insisted that «we are in a country where our wages are far below the standard of living», and he claimed that «if rents cost 1,500 euros, wages must be 3,000 euros, that's right». «We can't continue to pay salaries of 1,200 euros on the one hand and sell flats for 600,000 or 700,000, and I'm not telling you about the 1.2 million», he



►► - Image of the panels that have been placed in the Grau Roig solar park.



Gabriel Ubach

GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE USDA



«On a value of 1,400 euros, a company cannot pay 70 more to its worker; but it will have to take on 17% more of the light»



Daniel Armengol

PRESIDENT OF THE EFA

«The increases were necessary because light is rising all over Europe and Andorra is no exception, and more so when 80% is imported»

ruled, insisting that «salaries must rise resoundingly». At the same time, he explained that «we are very clear: there is a person responsible who is the Government of Democrats, so Espot must take it on». «The Government is to govern for the majority of citizens and not just for a part, and the majority of Andorran citizens and families are having a very bad time,» Ubach lamented. Likewise, he said that «it is shameful that the Executive comes out to say that they will give 150 euros to needy families; people don't want handouts, they want decent wages.»

On the other hand, from the USdA they also pointed out the loss of credibility of the head of government, Xavier Espot, pointing out that «it is not possible for the head of government to take the stage saying that the light will not increase until 2023, and that 15 days later, we find that, by urgent decree, there is an increase of 8% in households and 17% in companies». For this reason, he declared that «we would recommend the head of government to call the elections as soon as possible, because this legislature is completely finished», and he assessed that «Andorra needs a shocker, someone who will put the clock back on time». However, he shared that «we have the Andorra we deserve, because the poli-

es that have been voted in a legitimate election are being implemented» and added that «there are people who live at the expense of others».

MAKE IT EASIER FOR PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS

For their part, the Andorran Family Company (EFA) endorsed the Government's energy saving measures, despite regretting that they are late. «The tariff increases were necessary because electricity is going up all over Europe and Andorra is no exception, and more so when 80% of the electricity is imported», pointed out its president, Daniel Armengol, who detailed that «it would have been more beneficial to start increasing prices gradually over the course of a year and not so suddenly.» «Austerity is sometimes necessary if we want to be competitive in our environment», he added. Likewise, from the EFA they are in favor of facilitating public-private collaboration and limiting interventionism in the market to favor energy production, an action that, according to Armengol, can contribute to the achievement of energy sovereignty. For this reason, he explained that «we defend the private management of FEDA projects, and the tenders that have been abandoned in the matter of solar parks are one of the justifications». ≡

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

(+376) 747 747

laportella@andorra.ad

Casa Nova Olivet 10 · Ordino

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