



Interview with the Consul General of Encamp, Laura Mas ▶ The corporation will work hard to



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The Consul General of Encamp, Laura Mas, in here office.

Laura Mas

Consul General of Encamp

«We're starting to reverse the image we had of Encamp City Bedroom»

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With more than half a term completed, the government team of the Encamp Municipality, led by the Consul General, Laura Mas, has get on with it to try to make all the initiatives planned in the electoral program a reality. A series of projects and actions in order to consolidate the growth of the inhabitants of the last years and to offer to its neighbors the best version of the parish.

-What is your assessment of the first half of the term?

-It was a very tough mandate for the management of the pandemic. And then, once we stopped being confined to our homes and the measures were eased, the Encamp municipality began working on the projects we had planned for this term. The thing is, it's been a year

and a half, so now we have to force the machine a lot because what we haven't been able to do in that time has accumulated for 2022 and 2023.

-What projects in the electoral program have taken shape?

-One of the most important points of the program is the new park in the town of Encamp, and it will start running at the beginning of March. In Pas de la Casa, we beautified Sant Jordi Street last year and this year we will do the second phase from April. In addition, in April and in the same town, we will start the works of the new park, a point that at the end of the previous term we considered and it was an execution that we had to do in this legislature. On the other hand, we have been able to carry out the citizen participation part, and then we have promoted a series of actions that have to do with giving more qua-

lity to the services for the citizens. The first example would be the expansion of the Encamp Sports Center, which begins in March, in addition to all the improvements that have been made, such as the investment of 400,000 euros for the pool. And in the case of the Pas de la Casa center, we will have saunas and a cold water pool, just for the athletes' stays, and there will be new machinery for the gym.

Finally, another very important point that we were also able to make effective was the nursery school in Pas de la Casa, a service that urgently needed new facilities. I know it's been a long time coming because the weather in Pas de la Casa is very complicated for construction, but the truth is that now that we're done, I feel like it's worth it because it's fun.

-Has any project been affected by the impact of coronavirus?



«The Pas de la Casa nursery school was a service that urgently needed new facilities»

-The premise we have set ourselves is that, at the moment, we do not rule out any project. What we want is to know how many projects we can make a reality this year 2022, with the 11 million euros budgeted that we will allocate to the investment, and next year we will decide which proposals we can finish executing, which we can start, and which they will have to be finally postponed. It is true that in the first year we were not able to make an investment because everything was stopped and we only executed everything that had started in the previous term. So now we have to work with these investments that we have had to concentrate from 2022, and the goal is to start the works and projects that we have thought of, which are very relevant for a parish of the future.

-Last week they presented a carnival program with few restrictions,

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because the pandemic seems to be remitting. Are you optimistic about that?

-I think we have to trust what the specialists tell us. From the beginning, epidemiologists said that the pandemic would last about two years and we are already at this point, apart from the fact that the omicron variant has also been shown to have milder symptoms. So we are starting to have a pandemic and a virus that is not so aggressive and I think we will get better and better. I hope and wish that this 2022 will be the last year we live in a pandemic and that we can return to absolute normalcy, because now we are beginning to call it normal to have few restrictions, but that was not the norm. I look forward to it, but it's very difficult for me to see the glass half empty.

However, we remain alert as we have always done and continue to adapt to the situation every day. Carnival is just one example, because at first we designed the program as if it were a normal carnival, then we removed the night part due to the restrictions on nightlife, and once they got up we re-added the night acts. In fact, what has perhaps led to the most wear and tear during this time is that the administration has a slow process due to the requirements of the Public Procurement Act, and what we are constantly doing is adapting and rectifying every 15 days. It's not so often now, but at first it was really exhausting.

-Encamp has been one of the places where real estate transactions grew the most in 2021. What do you think? Do you feel there is more interest in living in the parish?

-This is what all the projects that are entering the parish tell us. We are very pleased because we are noticing, with all the people coming to ask for information from the common technicians, that there is an interest in coming to reside in the parish. I think one of the important things that make investors decide to come to the parish is the bonus for newly built rental flats, which in one year have put projects on the table with more than 200 new construction rental flats. We are delighted that Encamp is growing and that it is a parish where people want to come and live, because precisely one of the goals for

the town of Encamp is to make it a center of quality and tranquility, and with all these initiatives that we are carrying out, we are beginning to reverse that image that we had of Encamp of city dormitory to be a place of residence of quality.

-Refer to 200 newly built flats for rent. Do you know when they will be a reality? And while waiting for that to happen, how do you feel about the state of the rental market in the parish?

-In Encamp, as in the whole country, there is a demand for flats for rent, although it is true that we are not in the situation they may have in the center, with much higher rents. But we are convinced that making available new rental flats will also release other types of property and this will cause today's flats to end up falling in price, because the new ones will have quite affordable prices, already that is what we are talking about with investors. We do not want apartments of 1,200 euros per month for rent, but we are talking about two and three bedroom apartments between 700 and 900 euros. We also hope that as these flats begin to become empty, they will be remodeled so that they will also be of good quality, even if they are not new.

-In this case, it's about private investment. Do the Encamp municipality has on the table to promote any public project as other corporations or the Government are doing, be it construction or remodeling?

-We do not have any buildings to remodel for rent, although Encamp was the first parish to do such a project in Pas de la Casa, many years ago. We are committed to facilitating private investments and letting them rent out flats, and it is working for us. So at the moment we have no plans to do anything else.

-Another important project is the refurbishment of the Prada de Moles, although an extension has now been requested. What is the reason?

-I don't have information to be able to expose it. This is part of the bidding process and we cannot make it public. The only thing we can say is that the only company that was there has withdrawn the bill and asked for a two-month extension,



«The new rental flats will be quite affordable. We don't want them to be 1,200 euros a month»

«The sporting position of the parish is one of the strategies of reactivation and revitalization»

and it has been granted in accordance with the law. There is nothing more to tell.

-In any case, what is the common goal for this infrastructure?

-We have already mentioned it before: for us, the sporting position of the parish is part of one of the strategies of reactivation and revitalization. Football is one of them, but we're not just talking about a football project. What the fold made very clear is that it had to be a project that went beyond football, with cultural, musical and other events. We explained that we wanted the parish to revitalize beyond a party every 15 days. What we see clearly is that when the common people are doing events like the Spartan, the treks, or also the football when FC Andorra was here, the parish was alive: the restaurants, the supermarkets, the hotels, the tourist apartments, everything was full. And this is the aim of the Encamp municipality, to invest so that the activity in the Prada de Moles reverts to the citizens and the business fabric. We are hoping that, when this opening takes place in two months, we will have a project that will really position us in the future and make Encamp a very important point of dynamism.

-Another of the initiatives discussed recently is that of the on-demand bus. Where is it?

-It is in proceedings. The service has already been awarded to the transport company and we are now working internally with the application we will use, which is L'Ucllic, the same one they use in Canillo. In addition, we will also be within the FEDA Mou_T_B platform. At the same time, the image of the service is being developed. That way, once we have everything ready, we'll get it up and running. In principle, the deadlines were to put it into operation by the end of February, but we will surely have everything ready by March.

-In relation to snowfields, they have recently commissioned a study on Saetde society. That is?

-It is not a study, it is an advice to the Encamp municipality, because in order to get the new concession we have to know when the Saetde company is worth today, the rescue

of these 16 or 17 years that are missing from the current dealer, determine the value of the shares of the municipality, and to be able to make the new specifications. This is what we hired and we are working on, sooner we will have the results.

-You previously referred to the works in the new Bany de l'Ossa park. What is the planned schedule?

-The winning company has 21 months to complete all the works from the start, which will probably be the first or second week of March. Meetings have been held with the architects of the project and the engineers and technicians of the Encamp municipality to determine the first phase, which includes the bar, the recreation area, and the side road. We hope that by the summer of 2023 everything is over and we can enjoy the park.

-It seems that they want to build on the old land of El Prat Gran. Have you already received a work permit application?

-I can't provide license information so I can't tell if the permission has been entered or not. But obviously we are aware that we want to make a real estate projection there and we are satisfied that there are projects to build quality flats. In this case, I don't know if they will be for rent or for purchase, but in any case, they are making nine homes available in the parish, and this is also leading to the release of rental flats.

-At the last meeting of consuls, it was fully confirmed that they will take the Government to the Mayor's Office for the transfers of 2017. When will the demand come in?

-We decided last Tuesday, so it will take time for the lawyer to complete the paperwork to file the lawsuit.

-What is your position on this?

-Obviously, the position is in favor of going to discuss it in the Mayor's Office. We have come across two different perceptions on a legal scale and the only way to find out what the right solution is, it is to go to court, and that is what is being done. But there are no other readings or confrontations between the government and the municipalities in any case. ≡

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