



## RESPONSE TO CRITICISM

# The pressure of the covid makes some health care providers consider changing the sector

Psychological aftermath is one of the effects of the pandemic on many workers

Nurses warn of unconscious opinions circulating on social media

EL PERIÒDIC  
ESCALDES-ENGORDANY  
@PeriodicAND

After several criticisms of the «fatigue» expressed by health workers in various media, the president of the Official College of Nursing of Andorra (COIA), Isabel Vallejo, said that many professionals are considering changing of sector by the pressure of the covid. One of the reasons for this decision is one of the effects that many of them suffer from: the psychological consequences. She also warned citizens of the unconscious opinions circulating on social networks and that they are unaware of the casuistry and working conditions carried out by health professionals.

«They think we're a superhero because we've studied a profession and we have to put up with anything, and that's not the case,» said the COIA president, who stressed that the pandemic has been a new experience for everyone. In this sense, she indicated that the closest they have experienced is the threat of Ebola and bird flu, but stressed that they have never faced such a situation of such magnitude. «Obviously, if we didn't like what we were doing, we wouldn't have been able to hold on, and unfortunately we wouldn't rule out a career change,» she said, while others said they would stop



MARICEL BLANCH

► Archive image of some health professionals at the Hospital Nostra Senyora de Meritxell.

working in a specific area. The COIA president explained that they are often so focused on caring for patients that they forget to take care of themselves.

However, Vallejo said that the re-

percussions for the covid, such as families in ERTO or without work, were not «his fault», but, nevertheless, «they made them feel worse». On top of all that, many health professionals had to deal emotionally and

perform at work while they had sick relatives or were losing their lives. «Outside of our work environment, we are people and we have family. It's not all work,» she said, warning that many workers may have side ef-

fects that need to be addressed. She also said that the health sector has had to endure bad words, confrontations and even threats, situations that, according to Vallejo, «have had an impact on character and demotivation for work».

She also stressed that the pandemic has made them grow in personal and professional life, as well as learning to work in a team, an aspect that «used to be difficult».

**HEALTHCARE** // On the other hand, COIA spokeswoman Gemma Ballester, who works in health care, defended Vallejo's statement that «being healthy does not mean that we cannot have time to rest. Many have not taken a holiday since the beginning of the pandemic, and have had to work many more hours than usual, «recalling that» we are human beings and we have the right to rest. «In this line, she insisted on the psychological sequelae and those caused by first-person covid, two situations that many health professionals have been experiencing for some time.

Finally, Ballester said that many times they have been consulted by patients who have not been able to resolve them due to bureaucratic reasons or because it does not correspond to their department, and that they «take it as if we do not want to solve their concerns, when we always try to do everything we can.»

## The SAAS is cautious when it comes to lifting measures in the hospital

The number of people who can visit patients remains limited

EL PERIÒDIC  
ESCALDES-ENGORDANY

Despite the low incidence that the omicron variant is having on the hospital, the director general of the Andorran Health Care Service (SAAS), Josep Maria Piqué, was cautious in the face of a relaxation of the measures internally. «We are going to be a little more cautious with the hospital,» he said. It is for this reason that the «rigor» of screening patients and professionals today is maintained, and the number of people who can visit patients continues to be limited.

Asked about the fatigue of health professionals, Piqué explained that it is something «logical and normal», as they have been fighting the pandemic for two years and, therefore, the exhaustion has been accumulating during this time causing some of them to give up. However, he hoped that this situation would «take on another dynamic» once the sixth wave was over, although «no one knows what the future holds for us and whether a variant of the virus can put us back in situation like the one we have been so far». In this regard, he recalled that the SAAS has a psychological support service that can be referred to health professionals. In relation to the complaints of professionals about working hours, as many of them have

become infected and have had to seek relief, he acknowledged the difficulties that have been encountered in covering certain jobs and that had staff who were not properly qualified. In particular, it has been difficult to find doctors, because «they have hired them everywhere» and it is also difficult for a person with this training to decide to move to Andorra. «There are some kinds of professions that are easy to cover, but we have had a lot of difficulty with doctors,» he said. Despite the problem, he recalled that since the beginning of the pandemic, the hospital has spent more than a million euros on staff reinforcement, so «no financial resources have been saved».

He then made an «objective» assessment of the situation and poin-



EL PERIÒDIC

► The director general of the SAAS.

ted out that the outcome of the pandemic, compared to neighboring countries, has been quite positive, as

he said that there was no one who by age or condition has been denied assistance. ≡



## COMPANY

# Passenger transport is approaching pre-pandemic activity

Andbus is starting a two-week pilot test with an electric bus on some of the communal routes

EL PERIÒDIC  
ANDORRA LA VELLA  
@PeriodicAND

The passenger transport sector is starting to see the light at the end of the tunnel. As the owner of Andbus, Dani Vinseiro, declared last Tuesday, «it seems that in 2022, the trend should definitely be in the recovery», leaving behind a 2021 that was «hard» and during which «losses were recorded». Thus, although at present «we are not yet at normal levels of pre-pandemic, all indications are that we will soon be in those figures». Specifically, the company estimates that the volume of activity in February will be «only between 10 and 15% below February 2020», the last month of fully normal activity before coronavirus, a percentage that where we come from is a success. In short, the sector is seeing a good evolution this year, as long as the pandemic does not frighten them.

However, there is another current issue that hinders the proper functioning of the sector, which is the increase in the price of fuel. In this sense, the owner of Andbus acknowledged that they suffer «significant damage», which is precisely what makes them «persevere» in the search for other energy sources. For his part, the director of the Office of Energy and Climate Change, Carles Miquel, said that the increase in fuel prices has been progressive since November 2020, and the main reason is «volatility of the market», thus ruling out a significant impact of the green tax. «There has been an increase of around 40% since November 2020, when we are talking about the impact of a green rate with percentages between 1 and 3%», said Miquel, who assessed this impact on the overall price. In any case, the director of the Office of Energy and Climate Change explained that «I am aware that there have been contacts and that solutions are being sought with the sector to this problem».

**NEUTRAL COMPANY** // These statements were part of the press conference organized by Andbus on the occasion of its achievement in carbon neutral-



► José Gismero, Dani Vinseiro, Carles Miquel and Josep Lluís Pujol, at the time of the delivery of the certification to Andbus.

## The company becomes the first to achieve carbon neutrality in the country, reducing and offsetting emissions

lity, being the first passenger transport company in the Principality to obtain it. «Public transport companies are one of the cornerstones of the strategy to improve the climate situation», said Vinseiro, who explained that Andbus's desire to improve took a step forward in 2019, analyzing its data for «design and implement a plan to reduce CO2

emissions».

As revealed by the head of projects of BMS Consulting Strategic, José Gismero, from the study of the data of 2021 it is extracted that the carbon footprint of the company was around 1,000 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>, caused by 97.3% for vehicles. However, according to the owner of Andbus, between 2019 and 2021 the oldest buses in the fleet were replaced by newer and more efficient ones, reaching almost half of the more than 60 units that have been replaced. As a result, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per kilometer traveled fell by 12.5% last year compared to 2019.

In addition, in order to offset emissions, Andbus has been involved in the project of a rice cogene-

ration plant in India, recognized by the United Nations. «All the initiatives presented to us by emission reduction plans, and also to offset the surpluses, are welcome», said Miquel, who was hopeful that this would be «the first of many». In fact, Vinseiro agreed with this goal, stating that «we are pioneers, but we would like to create a domino effect in order to achieve common goals». At the same time, the company also has a project on the table to produce electricity through photovoltaic panels that would be located in its facilities.

**HORIZON 2035** // Attendees also pointed to the progress that still needs to be made in terms of sustainability in



**DANI VINSEIRO**  
ANDBUS OWNER

«Public transport companies are one of the cornerstones of the strategy to improve the climate situation»

**CARLES MIQUEL**  
ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE OFFICE

«All initiatives that present emission reduction plans and offset surpluses are welcome»

the passenger transport sector, due to the fact that the purely electricity supply is still limited and inefficient. Vinseiro and Gismero blamed the few technological advances that have been made in this market, but even so, today is the start of a pilot test with a 100% electric vehicle. For two weeks, this bus will serve some frequencies of the communal bus services that the company has in concession in different parishes, in order to collect data regarding the efficiency of the journeys and the autonomy of the vehicle, a «valuable» information by them and the bus manufacturers.

In this way, while waiting for the relevant developments to take place, the owner of Andbus set the horizon for a total electrification of the fleets «around 2035», although he stressed that «this depends on many external factors». «The evolution of technology and the public support that can be given will determine whether this is going faster or slower», he said. Regarding this issue, the director of Business, Trade, Industrial Development and Transport, Josep Lluís Pujol, assured that from the Government «we will continue to strengthen the Engega Plan and we will evolve it to support these initiatives».

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