



HE RESIGNS DUE TO A HEALTH PROBLEM

# Benazet leaves the post

The incumbent will hold office until March 31st to close some elements of his department

Esport highlights his dedication and assures that the ministry will maintain the current line of action

SFGA / CESTEVE



►► The Head of Government, Xavier Esport, and the Minister of Health, Joan Martínez Benazet, in a moment of complicity before the start of the press conference.

EL PERIÒDIC  
ESCALDES-ENGORDANY  
@PeriodicAND

The Minister of Health, Joan Martínez Benazet, has resigned. As explained last Wednesday by the head of government, Xavier Esport, Benazet will leave office permanently on March 31st, and will be replaced by the current chairman of the Board of Directors of the Andorran Social Security Fund (CASS), Albert Font. «It is a sad and notorious decision», the head of government began, who highlighted the «human and professional qualities demonstrated» by the minister during almost three years of the legislature. «The fight against the pandemic that we have carried out and which we can describe as good cannot be understood without its decisive and authorized opinion», said Esport, who added that «I would like to express my sincere gratitude to him. I wish him many future successes and a speedy recovery». The fact is that, as they explained, the main motivation for this decision by the minister has to do with a health problem.

«This is a job that needs a lot of dedication, and right now I'm suffering from a health problem, which started with the covid I suffered in December, which is not a risk in the long run but needs attention to be able to solve it», said Benazet, who said that «I can't do both», and for that reason, «with a criterion of responsibility,

I have to step aside and leave my post». In this way, the head of Health pointed out that shortly after starting his job at the head of the ministry, «we have encountered an incident, an unprecedented impact such as the coronavirus pandemic», and in fact, he valued that «because of my way of being, I put a lot of dedication into it, and maybe that's why I fell ill», adding that «despite my best efforts, I preferred to be here».

In a markedly emotional appearance, the head of Health took the opportunity to show his gratitude to all the country's political representatives and his ministerial team, «especially to Helena Mas, because her work and dedication has been very important in the management of the ministry and before

the covid-19». Benazet also had words for health professionals, all special forces, volunteers and the media. And, as a last resort, the Minister also thanked the people of Andorra as a whole: «The management of the pandemic has been the result of everyone's struggle. I am



**XAVIER ESPOT**  
HEAD OF GOVERNMENT

«The fight against the pandemic that we have carried out cannot be understood without its decisive and authoritative opinion»

**JOAN M. BENAZET**  
MINISTER OF HEALTH

«we found with a fact without precedents. Despite the best efforts, I preferred to be here»

very proud of my country and my fellow citizens».

Later, the spokesman for the Minister, Eric Jover, also dedicated a few words to the head of Health, who reaffirmed that «it has been a pleasure to work with the minister these years» and noted that «no one escapes luck that we had to have a pulmonologist in this pandemic».

Thus, in recent weeks in office, «Minister Benazet wants to finish closing some fringes and leave them properly concluded», said Esport, who ensured that the other management positions within the Ministry of Health they remain unchanged.

This will allow the department to continue to promote the most relevant issues currently being addressed by Minister Benazet, such as the consolidation of the preferred route and the shared medical history, the presentation of the Pisma, the completion of the Grifols project, or the continuity of healthy aging plans «It's not about breaking down every four years, it's about following a process of health care reform», said Esport. ≡

CONSELL GENERAL / EDUARD COMELLAS



## Albert Font takes over from April

►► Albert Font will effectively join the Government as Minister of Health next April. Prior to his position at CASS, Font had worked as a general practitioner, was a general councilor and held positions of responsibility in the Andorra la Vella Municipality. «He has extensive knowledge in the field of health and extensive experience in public management», said the head of government, Xavier Esport. Now it remains to find a replacement for the CASS.

## GENERAL ADVICE

# Communal and interesting paths are outside the Natura ski pass

Majority parliamentary groups have tabled 14 amendments to the Mountain Resorts Bill

EL PERIÒDIC  
ANDORRA LA VELLA

@PeriodicAND

Communal roads and routes of interest such as access to the shelters will be outside the Natura ski pass, so access to them, even if it means crossing part of a mountain resort, will not cost you. This was explained by the parliamentary groups of the majority in the presentation of a total of 14 amendments to the Government bill which seeks to regulate the rights and duties of users and operators of mountain concessions.

A «very important» concept introduced by the text, according to the president of the Liberal Parliamentary Group, Ferran Costa, is that of a «regulated area of a concession», as this is always marked by technical specifications and is very clear that of the whole domain, the exploiters make only a partial use of it». The rest, in which there is no provision of services (tracks, widgets, catering, etc.) is, therefore, an unregulated area that users can enjoy freely. «The need for the ski pass is limited exclusively to the regulated areas of the concession», especially the downhill tracks, Costa clarified. As he announced, the aim of the law is to «specify a point of agreement on the interests of all those involved, applying a logic of drawers» that determines competencies and defines specific aspects. In no case, however, will there be financial penalties for those who do not comply with the regulations and the stations will be limited to the reservation of the right of admission. In fact, Costa said that the exploiters are not for profit with the Natura ski pass and acknowledged that there are domains that have not yet «requested it once».

«We want to regulate situations that until now were not regulated, or that did not give guarantees to all users, and that is why we think that our amendments have just modulated a bill to continue doing what we already do, but with some rules that all the parties we have spoken to have a good eye on,



► -The majority councilors Raul Ferré, Sandra Codina and Ferran Costa in Wednesday's appearance.

**The text envisages declaring skiing a national sport and forcing the government to encourage its school-age practice**

«said the Liberal president. The fact is that in recent years snow sports, in addition to downhill skiing and snowboarding, have been on the rise and this has led to conflicts of co-existence between different users.

The deputy president of Committed Citizens, Raul Ferré, for his part, recalled that «the concept of a ski resort has evolved into a more diversified facility with a range of services throughout the year, with activities of a leisure and tourist that they don't have to because it's related to skiing». In this regard, he stressed that another of the amendments determines the cases in which an authorization from the operator is required when third parties want to carry out economic activities within their concession. The intention is also to prevent unauthorized activities and therefore unfair competition.

From the Democratic Parliamentary Group, Councilor General Sandra Codina drew attention to the commitment to skiing as a national sport, «ensuring that all children in Andorra practice it as a free subject at school» and forcing the Government to encourage its practice and the exploiters to give it all the facilities. «It's a privilege we can't give up», he said. In addition, Codina appealed to the training of station workers to dignify their profession via a regulation that determines the requirements of staff in the skills of maintenance of ski lifts, safety, rescue, tracks and circuits and entrusted the executive to draft a law regulating the profession of mountain guides.

Both amendments «are the result of dialogue with the parties», which includes directors, mountain guides, the Andorran Mountain



**Ferran Costa**  
LIBERALS

«We want to regulate situations that until now were not regulated or that did not give guarantees to all users»

**Raul Ferré**  
CIUTADANS COMPROMESOS

«The concept of a ski resort has evolved into a more diversified facility with year-round offerings»

**Sandra Codina**  
DEMÒCRATES

«We must ensure that all children in Andorra practice skiing as a free subject at school»

neering Federation (FAM) and the Association of Lifeguards of Andorra, among others. Finally, Costa reported that the majority also calls for a change in the direction of the country's roads so that the section from the port of El Rat that gives access to Arcalís, and that in winter is a ski slope, will move to be considered a secondary road instead of a general one, since the project that was proposed more than 40 years ago through which a tunnel of union with France was wanted to make «obviously will not prosper». ■

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