



## Interview with Judith Pallarés ▶ The Acció candidate reviews the pre-electoral scenario and

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Acció, the split of Liberals Andorra (L'A), is one of the new proposals of the electoral board, with Minister Judith Pallarés at the head, together with the general councilors of the Independent Parliamentary Group. Having just been introduced, the party is positioning itself and trying to make a place for itself among citizens, not without having to face some challenges.

**–President or candidate?**  
–I don't know, better Judith.

**–Do you sell more politically?**  
–President sounds very big.

**–On the day of the presentation they were defined as a movement. Is it pretentious in a small country like Andorra?**

–I had not done this reading. The name of the party, Acció, indicates movement, so that people can join and because we already have a dynamic of being active. It would be great if we embraced a lot of people, but far from being pretentious we want to be consistent and starting from scratch means getting yourself known, but the mass movement is slower. We link it to the idea of being active and visible, and doing things directly.

**–Is there room for another party?**  
–I think that there is a place, and this diversity of parties is largely due to the great diversity of opinions that affects everywhere. Societies are dynamic, very well informed, we have access to everything, but we are also the least informed. This global diversity means that there are more and more different positions.

**–Can't diversity be married within the same party?**

–You can marry in the same party, in coalitions, in pacts, in many ways. Sometimes within the parties it is not easy. We have gone through an experience that has proven it. If it can't be, nothing happens, you have the option to present yourself, since in Andorra you don't even need a party to make a candidacy. And between now and the elections, we'll see if there aren't more of us. There are several ways to contribute, but presenting yourself gives more visibility to the project.

**–What did you do wrong in the L'A elections?**

–On my part and other colleagues, we thought that it was not necessary to hold elections. In the end we left the game and we are glad we did, we are excited and we really like the new project. Things have gone as they have, now we cannot change what happened. Surely we made complex decisions at a time that was not valued enough. However, finally there were two very clear movements and we saw that it was not possible to go together.

**–Wouldn't it have been more logical to stay and join if you lost some elections?**



JORDI PUJOL

## Judith Pallarés

President and candidate of Acció

«It can be a difficulty to have a different project from the Government to which you belong»

–It's what we did initially, we didn't make that decision after losing. If the difference has been of a single vote, it is supposed to be added, but there was no gesture in this direction, quite the opposite: we understood that we had no place.

**–What is the difference, right now, between Acció and Liberals Andorra?**

–I like to say that we are a much more progressive movement with an eye on the future. Although time will tell, there will be a difference in programs and proposals, and also with the way of doing it.

**–Can you specify what «much more progressive» means?**

–In the end everyone will have to show what they want to defend and that will make the difference, but we will have to wait. At this moment, we talk about looking forward and the others talked about the past and looking back. This was a realization that we did not see things the same way.

**–They said that from the first day they wanted to make proposals. What proposals have you made?**

–We believe in the idea of working from the bottom up, from proposals or complaints about things that don't work to be able to solve them.

If from Acció we have the ability to do something today, because I am a minister and we have four general councilors, we will not wait for the elections. Some questions keep coming up in the few meetings we have had with people who have approached us, for example about the elderly. In this sense, as I said, there is misinformation, because the administration already does many things that the citizen is not always aware of. If there is something we can do now, we will do it, and the rest we take note of for the electoral program. We will not wait or leave things for tomorrow if we can do something today.

**–In other words, rather than proposals, will they take advantage of the current party positions in the institutions?**

–If we can take actions right now, we will do them, and if some cannot be done now, we will include them as a proposal for the next legislature. We will have to talk about housing, sustainability or pensions, since the elections will be affected by inflation and the energy crisis. The difference between the parties will be how to approach it, then we will have to make proposals and maybe we will meet some of them.

**–The PS has asked the Government to do everything in its power to lower inflation.**

–That's why we have different political proposals. Inflation is always a consequence of something that has happened previously. There has been an impact and you will need an economic cycle to see what measures you can find to reduce the impact, but we would like to have the magic wand.

**–Is it difficult to combine the fact of launching proposals as a new party and, at the same time, being part of the Government and the majority?**

–We are not in elections yet. We know they are coming, we are preparing internally because we are a new formation and the proposals must be agreed with what we want to defend as a political group. The Government wants to comply to the end with H23, a consensual project that has worked because we have not entered into a debate between the parties, but instead there has been a coalition of shared values.

**–The fact that the Government and the majority, with DA and CC, are compact and that Acció presents itself as progressive, do you think it is a value or a problem?**

–I understand the approach because we are a very small society, where the idea of cohesion was reinforced during the pandemic. The unitary image is a widespread will in the country to have political stability, it is desirable, but this does not mean that we have a single thought. If we want to defend projects that work with coalitions and not with absolute majorities, we will have to get used to having to negotiate. If you don't get here, you can hardly make an impact. This Government has taken a step forward by maintaining a stable coalition throughout the legislature, it is clear that we do not think the same about everything. There is an internal debate, a consensus, a work and that's how it should be. At the end of the legislature, these pacts end and the political game is open again for everyone to make their proposals, we will see if they are more or less similar to the current partners. Can it be difficult to say that you have a different project from the Government you are part of? There will surely be added difficulty, because there will be things on which we will agree and others not. We will present ourselves with different projects, but we will agree on certain aspects, and this is what should facilitate the pacts later. Right now, what we would like is to work to have parliamentary representation and influence Andorran politics.

**–How will they be presented, as a continuation or an alternative?**

–On the constructive part. Fortunately, we are not in a culture where every time a government changes, everything has to be scrapped, as it is a waste of effort, money and has a brutal social impact. There are many things we have worked on and, in this sense, we will continue, while in other matters we will try to make them different.

**–With whom does Acció feel more comfortable, with new parties like Concordia or with the old ones?**

–It is too early to talk about this. It is true that the relationship with Concordia is good and surely in the coming months we will have the opportunity to exchange opinions. At the moment we don't know each other much, we follow each other, we see how they position themselves, just like we follow in the rest of the matches.

**–Is the intention to explore scenarios similar to the Acord formula?**

–To run for elections alone and being new, without pacts in the territories will be very difficult. Having a territorial option that can be a winner gives you many numbers to have more strength in the General Council. We and other parties also have the idea of forming territorial coalitions, and even more so the more options there are.

**–If they define themselves as progressive and center-left, are they perhaps closer to the PS or Concordia than to the DA?**

–We define ourselves as liberal, open and progressive. If we have to put it in a line from left to right in a world

in which this axis works very little, it is difficult to locate. Our liberal idea is less State and more people, we like less interventionist State models. However, it is difficult because with the inflation situation, responsible governments must intervene. Finding ourselves in a center policy that can allow us to make the best decisions at every moment is important. The idea is progress, construction and positivism, we don't like conspiracies, which do so much harm to politics. We want to work with great transparency and clarity. In this sense, the pacts will be as transparent as possible.

**-How do you want the future relationship with Liberals Andorra to be?**

-We have just come out and there is a way of doing things that we do not share, but the political scenario will be able to draw many alternatives and we must always act responsibly.

**-What is the Acció proposal to address the housing problem?**

-A single measure will not solve the issue. We share the Government's idea of investing in affordable housing. We do not like the drift that on-

ly four will live here and the others will have to leave, which is already happening, and it is becoming more and more difficult for young people to find housing in the country. The Government helps, but prices are still a problem. We want there to be a public real estate park, since at the moment it is practically non-existent, if we compare it to other countries. If we want a sustainable model in all areas, it is very important that all actors remain at the table, especially the municipalities, who must be very involved. In addition, a lot of work must be done to recover closed homes and in the rehabilitation of the old ones before building more. But these are measures that will take time to have a direct effect, so it is important to continue giving the help we give from Social Affairs.

**-What is the position of Acció regarding the Co-Principality and abortion?**

-The utmost respect for the institutions, we defend the Co-principality. As a Government, we have experienced how important it is to have the support of the co-princes in border management or vaccines. Without a

Co-Principality it would be difficult.

**-It should be possible without breaking the Co-principality, right?**

-We must continue to work to find a model that allows us to maintain our history and, at the same time, advance women's rights, even though we are guaranteeing this outside the territory, since we are going to Barcelona or Toulouse to apply this right, just like we do for heart surgery. However, I don't want to be frivolous; we must advance in this sense. Decriminalization is necessary and is the first step. Then we will have to see how it is regulated, and this is where the legislative and institutional architecture presents this difficulty. Until now it seemed like a taboo subject, now it is on the agenda and we have international demands that we must be able to respond to, and in this sense the episcopal co-prince is very aware of it.

**-In any case, it must be taken into account that on the French side there has already been pressure in the opposite direction.**

-We must advance in the defense of women's rights, be able to equate

ourselves with our environment and that everyone can make their decisions in full freedom and without coercion. It is true that it is in the penal code and that is why the first thing we have to do is to decriminalize it and then we have to find a way to fit it without losing our institutions.

**-From a progressive perspective, should the tax model tax those who have the most at a higher percentage than 10%?**

-Being progressive does not mean being on the left. From the liberal perspective there are many other things. The tax framework still has room within the 10% we have today, as many companies still do not reach it. Therefore, it must be maintained and optimized, and we must also see the impact of inflation on the state's finances.

**-In the triangle of inflation, wages and rents, what is your proposal?**

-It must be consensual. We believe that wages should be increased. If we don't do this so that people can cope with inflation, we will have to put in more social assistance that will come out of my ministry. If we don't

expand the tax margin, we won't have the money. It's a fish that bites its tail, we all have to be aware of it and find a way to gradually reduce the impact. If everything goes up and wages don't, the State will have to answer for the lack of initiative by the private sector.

**-And the rents?**

-We must try not to raise them. From Acció we think that the increase in the CPI for next year should not be applied in the case of rents. If we raise rents the same as wages we will stay the same and the impact on the purchasing power of families to deal with inflation in things you cannot intervene in, such as the shopping basket, which has increased considerably, will be very complicated. And if in the end everything ends up going up, or everything goes up in the same way and we stay the same, it will be an insufficient situation. Since the evolution of the CPI will be high, we propose to raise wages progressively.

**-The owners won't be very happy about this...**

-I won't say anything. ≡

UNESCO

# The Government postpones the request to become a Biosphere Reserve

The deadline for submitting candidacies has closed and Andorra has not aimed for

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The Government has postponed the procedure to get Andorra declared a Biosphere Reserve by Unesco. This is what sources from the Andorran National Commission for Unesco (CNAU) have explained to EL PERIÒDIC, who assure that the candidacy should have been submitted before September 30th and the Principality has not participated. This is a decision that is being communicated in drops to some entities that, mainly, are interested on their own initiative in the state of the procedure or are directly involved in it, despite the fact that it has not been officially informed by part of the Ministry of the Presidency, Economy and Business, which is the one that has led the pro-

ject. In fact, not even the common people -or apart from them- would have been made aware of this decision by the Government, as well as the general citizens.

One of the reasons that would have pushed the Executive to reject the candidacy this year and move it to 2023 is that a complete dossier would not have been reached to address Unesco in order to opt for the badge. An insignia that, as the Executive has remarked, would be unprecedented, since there is no country that has been recognized as a Biosphere Reserve. From the CNAU itself they indicate that they offered specific advice on some issues and it seemed that this document was quite advanced, but finally, it may have been considered insufficient and it was necessary to complete it. For this reason, the Commission does not believe that the Government has decided to reject the project, which they value as «very important» and



►► Minister Jordi Gallardo, at the town meeting in Andorra la Vella.

**One of the reasons** that would have pushed the Executive to move the candidacy is that a sufficiently complete dossier would not have been achieved

for which «a lot of work has already been done». This task carried out, in terms of the public spectrum, began in September 2020, when Minister Jordi Gallardo, who has led this initiative, presented the project to the press. In June 2021, the logo contest to represent the candidacy among the country's students was completed, and in December of that year, a

meeting was held headed by Gallardo himself with all the consuls. But the highest level of public communication was the tour of town meetings in all the parishes to explain the project to the public, which took place over the course of last spring.

Now, Unesco will have to deliberate between the proposals that have been presented for the various qualifications that the body grants in order to present a verdict, a procedure that can be extended for more than a year. Likewise, it will be at the end of the first quarter of 2023 that the calendar for the presentation of new candidacies will be restarted, which requires several steps until the September 30th deadline. However, it must be remembered that this procedure coincides with an election year, and the very development of the campaign and the elections, as well as the result and a possible change of leadership in the portfolios, could again influence the candidacy. ≡

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