



ORDINARY CONGRESS

Esport announces that he wants to head the list of Demòcrates again

|| The president of the party assures that the formation is the one with the most expertise to lead Andorra

|| His goal is to be appointed head of government again over the «sorcerer's apprentices»



DEMÒCRATES

►► A snapshot of the seventh Ordinary Congress of Demòcrates held last Wednesday evening.

EL PERIÒDIC
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The president of Demòcrates and current head of government, Xavier Esport, wants to lead the orange party again in the next general elections. «I have not come to close the Congress. I have come to inaugurate a new page in the service of Andorra», explained Esport before the militancy in the framework of the seventh Ordinary Congress of the party, where he openly asked for their support indicating that «today I present my candidacy to head the national list.»

The president shared that his decision has been accompanied by a long process of reflection and also doubts, emphasizing that «I would not be human or responsible, nor would I have the qualities that should be required of me, if I did not have doubts», adding that «if anyone knows better than anyone else the responsibility that comes with the weight of assuming the position of head of government, it is me,

because I have done it for four years. And because I know what it means and how important it is, I didn't want to make a decision hastily or lightly.» In any case, Esport acknowledged that he had already decided to seek re-election at the end of September, although «the announcement was delayed due to the extraordinary circumstances that have forced us to prioritize my role as head of government above that of a possible candidate», referring to the measures on urban growth and energy saving.

Be that as it may, once he is convinced to contest the elections again, the president asks his political formation to «put their trust in me again to lead the Demòcrates' national candidacy», insisting that «I have come to the conviction that the country needs the leadership of a person who already has the experience of having been head of government and having been so in a difficult context such as the pandemic, which I think we have managed in a quite satisfactory way». All in all, ta-



XAVIER ESPOT PRESIDENT OF DEMÒCRATES

«The country needs the leadership of a person who already has the experience of having been the head of government»

king into account that «difficult times will come and we will have to face very important challenges in our country», it will be necessary to count, according to Esport, «with a country headed by people who can do it sensibly, with prudence and with good judgment».

In this way, apart from his personal experience in politics, the president of the orange party wants to strengthen himself in the Demòcrates' own trajectory, highlighting his sense of State and ability to lead the Principality. «Ours is a solid and clear project. We are backed by a record of a job well done. We continue to be the political party that most resembles the citizens of Andorra. We must defend, once again, the best

political project in Andorra», were some of the affirmations that Esport proclaimed during his speech to the militants, where he also showed his ambition to win the elections with an absolute majority, and pointing out that «I think we are better positioned than ever to achieve it».

Thus, the president of Demòcrates will base his action on the new lines approved last Wednesday by the party, where elements such as the fight against climate change, the preservation of an equitable and just society, or the culmination of the association agreement with Europe, among others, in order to define a project that fights against «sorcerer's apprentices». This expression, according to Esport, «is a very

graphic way of saying that there are certain people who are sometimes not aware that carrying out and carrying forward a political project is not a whim, nor can it be the subject of an improvisation, but must obey a process of reflection and a structured fund program». At the same time, he also avoided those political representatives and formations that «feed and drink from the difficulties of Andorra and its people, but are not able to provide any alternative project to resolve these problems and make our country grow».

The next step will be for the party to validate Esport's candidacy or not, although due to the applause at the time of his speech, as well as the words of the general secretary of the formation, Jaume Serra, pointing out that it is «an important announcement that we all expected and wished for», everything indicates that it will go ahead. Despite everything, the head of government also emphasized that he still does not know when the general elections will be. ≡

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PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The Government strengthens the bus lines in the Pas and the inspections of the bus service

The PS regrets that the current situation is «a new example of the bad model of the country and the policies that are carried out»

EL PERIÒDIC
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The Minister of the Presidency, Economy and Business, Jordi Gallardo, announced last Wednesday after the Council of Ministers a series of actions that will be carried out to solve the incidents detected in public transport in recent months. After having assessed the situation, it has been determined that the problem has occurred as a result of the increase in users and the arrival of temporary workers. Although the Government positively values the free bus service, this fact has caused «significant saturation», as highlighted by the minister. In reality, if the initial forecasts indicated that with the free service the number of users would grow by 28%, it has ended up by 118%.

To deal with the «moments of tension» that have been adding up in recent months, a reinforcement of the bus lines that go to Pas de la Casa was presented last Wednesday. In fact, last Monday three frequencies were already increased on the L4, both outbound journey and return. However, as of today, L3 is also being restored, which in the current concession had been removed because it was underutilized. In this way, L4 and L2 are strengthened. This new bus line between Andorra la Vella and Soldeu will have a frequency of every 30 minutes from Monday.

Another of the difficulties that has been detected and that has aggravated this situation, is that the number of vehicles assigned to each line to guarantee the service is occasionally below the real needs, according to the Department of Transport. In this sense, «in some cases the number of vehicles assigned to each line has not been respected», remarked the head of the Presidency, Economy and Business, who added that «it is clear that the lines that have created difficulties to take the volume of passengers have not been strengthened, despite having resources, and despite doubling the frequencies». This incidence, however, according to the bus companies themselves, has been caused by a lack of drivers and, consequently, by the inability to cover with the full service. So, although the concessionaire companies have already an-



► A file image of a bus at the Estació Nacional stop.

nounced the hiring of accredited drivers for the winter season, a file will be opened to find out the real causes of the non-compliance of the concessionaire companies and, at the same time, an investigation will be carried out external audit to find out if the companies are «properly sized to respond to the increase in demand», said Gallardo. At the same time, the solution proposed by the Executive to alleviate these difficulties in hiring staff is to speed up the obtaining of the D permit. Therefore, all drivers who have the D1 will not have to wait a year to obtain the D.

Finally, systematic controls will also be implemented by three ins-

pectors with sanctioning capacity to detect possible anomalies affecting users on the journeys, and three more people will be hired to carry out control tasks anonymously, with the purpose of checking aspects such as quality of the service or attention to users by the drivers. In addition, to facilitate the processing of complaints, since «shortcomings» have been detected because they are processed directly at the companies and often the Department of Transport does not have a record of them, a questionnaire has been created on the department's website.

LACK OF PLANNING // For its part, the Social Democratic Party (PS) has been

surprised by the measures announced in relation to public transport, since «Gallardo has been asserting for months that they are not aware of any impact on bus services», assured the general secretary of the foundation, Pere Baró, when citizens «repeatedly» denounce the problems linked to the number of vehicles, their capacity or frequency of passage. At the same time, he added that «transitional measures have been announced and we will see if they are sufficient, and if they don't work we have a problem». On the other hand, the president of the PS, Pere López, lamented the situation in which many of the people find themselves, «who come with



Jordi Gallardo
MINIST. OF ECONOMY AND BUSINESS



«It is clear that the lines that have created difficulties in taking on the volume of passengers have not been reinforced»

Pere Baró
GENERAL SECRETARY OF PS



«Transitional measures have been announced and we will see if they are sufficient, otherwise we have a problem»

the best intentions» and contribute to «enrich our economy». Thus, he considered that the images seen of staff looking for housing and work are a «new example of the bad model of the country and of the policies that are being carried out». At this point, he recalled that the party will request the appearances of the ministers in charge of Wokr, Jordi Gallardo, and of the Interior, Josep Maria Rossell, to give the relevant explanations. ≡

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