



SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

The CASS will cover assisted reproduction from next year

It is expected that 150 women will take part in the process, with a public cost of between 120,000 and 250,000 euros

The practice will have to be carried out abroad, although medical follow-up will be the preferred route



SFGA/JAVILADOT

►► The Minister of Health, Albert Font, and the Secretary of State for Health, Helena Mas, during the presentation.

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The State will finance the techniques of assisted human reproduction (RHA) from January 2nd next year. As explained last Thursday by the Minister of Health, Albert Font, and the Secretary of State for Health, Helena Mas, this is a long-standing demand by society, which «despite everyone having their own opinions, it affects us all». And it is that in the words of Font, «there are certain pathologies that, if they are not achieved by natural means, force us to act». For this reason, the first thing that has been done has been to limit funding to all those women or couples who want to have a child, but are infertile, a disease recognized by the World Health Organization

(WHO). In other words, it will not be an option for, for example, female homosexual couples who simply want to get pregnant or single women who want to be mothers. «This has been a difficult debate. We don't value people's lifestyle, we won't ask them who they live with, but we are concerned about their health problems», stated Font, while acknowledging that «it will only be implemented in women, because that is the physiognomy».

As the minister explained, last year in Andorra 130 women received ovulation-stimulating medication, which is why it is estimated that, from 2023, around 150 women will start the process, with a cost for the Andorran Social Security Fund (CASS) of between 120,000 and 250,000 euros per year. «It would not be realistic to think that the amount



ALBERT FONT
MINISTER OF HEALTH

«We don't value people's lifestyle, but we care about their health problems»

HELENA MAS
HEALTH SECRETARY OF STATE

«Spain and France have public and private centers and we have based ourselves on their quality and cost»

will be lower, taking into account the current situation, in which children are increasingly being born at later ages and there are more difficulties», admitted the minister. The profile of the people who will be able to benefit from it are women over 18 and under 42, without any previous children or with couples without any previous children in common, and all those people who have indicated pathologies or with a history of health.

THE TECHNIQUES // As for the techniques that will be used, Mas pointed out artificial insemination, in vitro fertilization, preimplantation genetic diagnosis and cryopreservation, all of them for therapeutic, preventive and other special situations purposes. Methods with different economic costs that also depend on whether the center in which they are carried out is public or private. In this sense, CASS will reimburse 75% of the cost in the first case and 20% in the second, possibly reaching 90% when there is an ovarian puncture and, therefore, hospitalization is required. Be that as it may, it will be necessary to go abroad to do it – the Secretary of State pointed to the Hospital Clínic de Barcelona or the Hospital de Tolosa – since there is no center in Andorra that carries out the reproduction assisted: «Both Spain and France have public and private centers and we have based ourselves on their quality of care and the cost», indicated Mas, who confirmed that from the Principality medical follow-up will be carried out by the preferred route, as with any other disease. Also, Font added that the Government has decided to follow the same rates that are reimbursed in countries that also have this benefit. Finally, regarding the number of attempts, the decree contemplates a maximum of two because «after a couple of failed cycles it is almost impossible for the third to be successful». In addition, although it is a very «legitimate» initiative, Font recalled that it is «public money» and for this reason, precisely, people with medical contraindications or who have previously undergone voluntary sterilization are left out of the funding. ≡

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GENERAL COUNCIL

PS and Terceravia name the budget for next year «inadequate»

The opposition groups consider that the Government's accounts are not adapted to current needs

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A budget «totally inadequate for the time and circumstances» that can be experienced next year or «excessive and out of tune with the environment that is looming». This is what the parliamentary groups Socialdemòcrata and Tercavia+Unió Laurediana+Independents think about the budget bill and this is what they stated last Thursday in the defense of their amendments in their entirety that did not succeed.

Thus, the social democratic president, Pere López, regretted that in the face of problems such as the cost of housing, the loss of purchasing power of families, the loss of competitiveness of companies or the high inflation, this project does not foresee solutions. What's more, once

López believes that the IPC must be «the enemy to beat» and regrets that «we have sold the country to speculation»

again he denounced that inflation is «underestimated» and that proposals such as the general reduction in the price of hydrocarbons are not taken into account. He also emphasized that despite the fact that the Executive maintains that inflation is an «exogenous» issue, there are actions that can be taken, such as the one mentioned on the price of hydrocarbons that would have an impact on the finances of families and also in transport and logistics costs. «The IPC should be the great enemy to beat», he stressed. In addition, he criticized that nothing is being done to limit rent prices and there is talk of an increase equal to that of wages, when it should be a maximum of 25%, because «not doing so will mean more inflation, more loss of purchasing power and more loss of wage competitiveness». In the field of housing, the president of the Social Democratic Parliamentary Group emphasized that «we have sold the country to speculation» and this has



▶ A moment of the plenary meeting of the General Council held in which the budget for the coming year was debated.

been detrimental to the «insecurity» of the working class. In this sense, he evidenced a «double failure» of the Government in «budgetary and housing policies».

López also pointed out that there has not been «adequate» monitoring of the energy infrastructure plan and that there is no response to the needs of sectors such as education, health and safety and health protection. «Andorra deserves a budget in which families and the competitiveness of companies are a priority», he claimed, remembering that the Government must avoid «triumphalist speeches».

In turn, the president of the parliamentary group of Terceravia, Josep Pintat, considers that this budget should strengthen the sustainability of the public accounts in

Pintat complains that the announcement of a surplus of 15 million euros «evidences the lack of foresight and rigor»

order not to fall into high indebtedness and regretted the «high levels of deficit» (of 182 million between in 2020 and 2021, that 30.3 million is expected in 2022 - a figure that the Government has corrected to a surplus of 15 million - and that in 2023 the forecast is a negative closing of 31.4 million). Pintat also explained that while the debt, which «worries them», grows, the increase in revenue is not taken ad-

vantage of to «balance» the accounts for 2023 and instead «there is more spending». The fact that the Executive now announces that it will close in 2022 with a 15 million surplus «evidences a lack of foresight and rigor» in the budget. The president of the Terceravia group pointed out that the new tax rates to sustain the indebtedness represent a «burden» for economic growth and called for a «comprehensive» revision of the tax system in such a way that there is «greater efficiency and economic growth». And just as López did, Pintat also asked that «FEDA be allowed to work» and that it can make the investments it has planned.

For his part, the Minister of Finance, Eric Jover, reiterated that this is a budget that «returns to normal», as it is added to the sustaina-

bility law of public finances. Thus, he reaffirmed that public debt will be below 40% of GDP and the deficit below 1%. In fact, he said that this will already be fulfilled in 2022 and that it is «a message of rigor». Jover touched on the uncertainty in which the budget had to be drawn up and pointed out that the CPI included in the document is 4.5%, but that it could be above 5.3% that has indicated by the International Monetary Fund. The head of Finance recalled that the budget foresees revenues of 522 million euros (12% more than in 2022) and expenses of 554 (13% more) and defended certain «strategic axes» that they include, such as a greater allocation to the CASS (18% more than in 2019) and the SAAS (114% more than in 2019); that social benefits be increased by 44% compared to 2019 and that education is also taken into account with the expansion of the UdA, and justice, with the allocation of, for example, 25 new places. Regarding purchasing power, he recalled that the Government «did not wait» until 2023 to act and that this summer measures have already been taken such as more aid, free public transport or the increase in wages.

Jover also referred to the improvement of mobility foreseen in the budget with projects such as the diversion of La Massana (with an item of 2.7 million next year); free public transport or the heliport. Regarding Pere López's inflation proposals, Jover emphasized that aid has been given to the transport sector and that the widespread discounts that are being applied to other countries are even being «back off». As for FEDA, he highlighted that its forecast «has protected us» from the light increases that have been recorded in other places and praised its «sanitization» and its good management. Likewise, he considered that if his capital is increased it is so that he can continue to carry out the planned investments.

On the increase in wages, he emphasized that it is true that there is a reevaluation of public wages with the CPI, since the Government believes it is necessary, and added that it should serve as an example for the private sector, according to the ANA reported. ≡

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