



Interview with PS + Independents councilor Dolors Carmona ▶ Balance of half of the legislat

PARTIT SOCIALDEMOCRATA

The counselor of the PS + I in the capital Dolors Carmona.



Dolors Carmona

Minister of the PS + I Andorra la Vella

«We must know how to listen to the citizen and not want to go down in history with pharaonic projects»

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The councilor of the PS + Independents in the minority of the Andorra la Vella municipality Dolors Carmona reviews the first half of the legislature in which she calls on the corporation to make the citizen its «axis of action» and focus more on everyday problems instead of planning big works that only benefit «a few».

–What is your assessment of the first half of the legislature?

–We are aware that we are a very active and constantly growing parish, but I believe that we need to remedy some issues that condition and should make life easier for citizens. The parish continues to collapse, and it is becoming more and more expensive to live there, in addition to the housing problem, which is national, but is becoming more apparent in the capital.

–What could have been done better?

–We would like Andorra la Vella to be a parish for everyone, which in addition to being our campaign

motto, means doing politics and management for the whole population alike. We would like it to be a more open, more participatory parish that listens to its citizens. The pandemic hit us at the beginning of the term and we had very productive joint working sessions, open to all initiatives, regardless of the political group that proposed them, and we would have liked that to be the case throughout the term. Now we find ourselves with a selective model that only responds to a part of the citizenry, with pharaonic projects that fail, because there is no prior planning or viability, when what we really want is to launch initiatives consulted to the people to find out what really affects your day to day life.

–Is there a lack of transparency on the part of the municipal team?

–Yes. The municipal management model that is applied is the responsibility of the majority and we are there to oversee it and intervene when necessary, but we have no decision-making power. In addition, we do not always find out about decisions by the majority team, but we do so through the press,

and so after expressing our displeasure, we accepted the proposal of the consuls to hold three meetings to share us the most relevant projects or other topics. Finally, we have done four, but sometimes we are offered a date three days in advance and we, the minority councilors who are equally elected but do not have sole exclusivity in common, cannot always attend and even sometimes they share ideas with us when they are already taken. It seems good to me to have the scoop, but what we would like is to work hand in hand and not get to the municipal meetings and meet with surprises. And if we are already suffering from a lack of transparency, it is even worse for the citizens.

–When they say that the parish is not kind enough to its citizens, what do they mean?

–In order to be able to do good public management, and the communal administration is the closest to the citizen, it is necessary to know what their real needs are. And this is not a matter of people asking the consul for time to be able to contrast a number of issues, but there are other mechanisms, especially

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now that we have so many means at our disposal to grasp reality. In fact, initiatives are sometimes pushed back because there has been no prior feedback from the public.

–Was the removal of free parking for 30 minutes a mistake?

–I don't know if to describe it as a mistake, but I would say that it was an improvisation and, once again, there was a lack of transparency, because it is true that the announcement was made public, but even ourselves had not detailed the most important changes in relation to public price ordinances and tax ordinance. We all trust that the manager will be transparent, will do his best, will respond to all needs, etc., but when you find yourself with this, you think that they have not taken you into consideration. This decision has had an important implication, no matter how much the majority say that the proposal was already endorsed by Mobility and that it is the first municipality to push it forward.

–And why didn't the others do it?

–Because they may not consider it a real solution, because when we

ask what report this measure supports, we discover that the only thing there is, it is a Mobility Power Point that was presented one day at a consuls' meeting and in which it was believed that being able to park for free made it possible for citizens to go from car park to car park to do their homework to save 30 minutes. If there is no more specific data, no initiatives should be taken that could have the opposite effect, because there is no improvement and at rush hour the parish continues to collapse and we have collected more than 6,000 signatures against.

-And considering that you have to pay for parking now, do you think that the municipal bus service should be improved?

-This is the analysis. We are not technicians, but that is why we said more than two years ago to create a mobility board in which there must be coordination with the Government and social agents who can make many improvements. Without a good plan, we will hardly be able to provide a good service because all that is done is to take temporary measures without considering the repercussions and possible alternatives. It is clear that the communal bus does not respond to all areas and neighborhoods of the parish with the current bus and perhaps we could implement the bus on demand, which has been so well received in other parishes, but first we must analyze well and make a good short, medium and long term planning.

-What is the solution to the collapse? The consul has even asked citizens not to take their own vehicle to make room for tourists.

-I think this is to put your head under the wing, because if the aim is to raise public awareness of this issue, perhaps it should be done differently and given an alternative, such as deterrent parking. In this sense, we have already made our contribution by providing proposals, some of which have been wel-

comed. It is necessary to address the whole issue in a global way and not to stick to specific situations.

-The latest plan launched by the opposition deals with the detection of damaged sidewalks. What result are they extracting?

-This is another issue because, as with the elimination of the free 30 minutes of parking, we are very grateful for the citizen participation, which helps us to improve management and provide solutions. If we do not provide the citizen with the tools to be close, he or she will see the remote administration and will not report incidents or, in this case, damaged sidewalks. We still do not see the fruits of the campaign, although I think that there are teams that intervene in very central areas and make the appropriate improvements. The parish is very large, with many miles of sidewalks, and when we go back, we have to plan very well and prioritize the interventions, and here we are unaware that there is an action plan.

-The municipality intends to allocate one million euros to remedy this.

-Yes, although we must also think that there are places where there is no direct sidewalk and we believe that this should be another project, because if part of this million euros is not intended to rehabilitate but to make again, the money will run out soon. It's a matter of safety, we're not just talking about beautification, which is also very important; we talk about avoiding personal injury and that's why we need to do prevention. To date, we have received more than 60 photographs of damaged spaces and will send them for consideration. That is to be by the side of the citizen and give an answer.

-They are also strong advocates of bicycle use, but is the parish really ready?

-No. We are advocates for bicycles, but we are also aware that there must be segregated lanes to ensu-



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re safety in order to promote their use, to be honest. If we really want to get rid of vehicles we have to prioritize and offer the best conditions.

-What do you think about the multifunctional building being installed in the capital? It is necessary?

-Well, this is a project of the Government and what the Andorra la Vella municipality wants is to be done in the capital, and it seems that the Executive has agreed to make it so. What the Consul General wanted was for it to be on the land of the braus square, the problem -and we already said -is that it is a partia-

lly private space and the Government cannot allocate a millionaire project to it if the property it is not public. In addition to the difficulties it would pose for traffic in the city center, of course. Sometimes the municipality makes pigeons fly, announcing big initiatives that have not yet been approved, and not even analyzed. «we will do, we will do, we fly we fly.» Well no. When it is said it is because the variables are already in the bag and well tied.

-And Margineda's option, what do you think?

-We do not have more information than what has been said in the media, but even though the government had the project included in the budget, I find it difficult for it to materialize in this legislature.

-They have often criticized the future reform of the communal stadium. How would you have thought?

-The municipality's project is not a reform of the communal stadium, but to make a new communal stadium, in which it has even been considered to make a 2x1 in which the multifunctional building would also be included, but this is a blunder of money. We have to think about the situation we are living in: it is a very delicate time, nationally but also globally, and spending of this magnitude I do not know if they are really a priority because this type of equipment needs many years of amortization. Of course, we must be proactive, but also cautious and not over-indebted public administrations.

-But it is clear that the communal stadium needs a reform, right?

-Yes, but well understood, being aware that it is a communal stadium and that it needs a specific remodeling. We are not talking about a stadium for events, but the most important thing is sports activities, not to mention that there are federations that depend on it.

-Are they celebrating that, for now,

the project for the cable car at the peak of Carroi is stopped?

-The truth is that yes. We haven't seen it clearly from the beginning, especially because of its environmental impact. We abstained at the time of voting for the tender because we lacked a lot of information about it, and although access to the ski slopes was conditioned, I'm not sure it was the best project. I also doubt that it benefits all the citizens of the country, not just those in the capital, because the natural environment is the closest heritage we have and we cannot damage it.

-Can the municipality do more to solve the national housing problem?

-Of course, much more. In fact, the finance law provides for a portion of the budget to be allocated to it, and urban transfers must be oriented along these lines. It is true that the municipality leased the Borda Nova land to build flats managed by the National Housing Institute, but more policies are needed to promote affordable rent. What we are experiencing today is unbearable for many people, and there are even those who have to cross the border to reach the end of the month. So yes, the municipal could do much more, promoting public-private initiatives with affordable housing. It is also very important to help young people to get better in the best conditions, because it seems that the welfare state is becoming more and more endangered. Escaldes-Engordany is a benchmark.

-In what sense?

-We really appreciate all the work done by the Escaldes-Engordany municipality during the pandemic and I think they have been very careful with public spending. We must know how to listen to the citizen and not want to go down in history with pharaonic projects, but being a public administration that responds to all citizens. And we will not give up and continue to work for all citizens. ≡

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