



## Interview with Josep Majoral ▶ The Major Consul of Sant Julià de Lòria reviews the current situation

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The Major Consul of Sant Julià de Lòria, Josep Majoral, explains the needs of the parish, the progress being made in matters such as urban planning and transport and evaluates current aspects such as the arrival of temporary workers or housing, at the same time explaining the news of the Cultural and Congress Center after the fire that occurred on November 9th.

**–To start, could you review the current situation in the country?**

–Well, the general situation of the country is not easy, seen from a global point of view. Mention temporary workers, I even dare to talk about jobs. Construction is overcrowded, catering too, and everywhere is understaffed. In the area of housing, prices are what they are, therefore it is difficult to obtain a home with a relatively affordable cost. There is a lack of supply, so prices are rising. Beyond all this, there is an energy crisis, at least on a European scale. And we have come out of a pandemic that left the coffers quite affected. Right now, we are in a complicated situation, and I think that in the immediate future we will be too.

**–What effect does the arrival of temporary workers have on Sant Julià de Lòria?**

–The impact in Sant Julià is less than it could be in Canillo or in the upper parishes that have ski resorts. In the end, let's remember that temporary workers, for the most part, come for the winter season. As a result, they look for housing close to their place of work and, therefore, here we escape more of this problem, although due to the size of the country it ends up affecting, but to a lesser extent.

**–What do you think of current politics, with the birth of so many new political parties?**

–It is a difficult political situation for a country of our size to understand. It must be remembered that not a few years ago there were only two parties. At that time, there was the liberal party, I dare say a center-right, or clearly liberal; and a social democratic party. So, it was bipartisanship. This center-right has now transformed into eight or nine parties, so it is difficult for me to understand so many political ideologies all coming from the same place. A funny situation, but difficult to understand.

**–What is your relationship with Concordia?**

–At a common level, the relationship we have is no different than in any other party. We are not here to do politics, but to govern and manage a parish. Therefore, whether it is called Concordia, social democrat, democrat, liberal, Action, or whatever you want to call it, here the treatment is the same for everyone.

**–They have urged the Government to maintain the secondary roads. What is your current status?**

–Sant Julià is the parish with the



## Josep Majoral

Major Consul of Sant Julià de Lòria

«It was clear that we were a supportive town, but the fire has shown it»

most kilometers of secondary road. All of us, from the first to the last parish, are selling that it is the cycling country par excellence, and I think it is, because we have ideal landscapes, but to continue to be so, you have to have the things in good conditions. The maintenance of the secondary roads corresponds to the Government, and what the municipality is asking, and even for safety reasons, is that the secondary roads are taken care of, and this will allow us to save money in the future, because it's the moment to maintain it, otherwise, tomorrow we will have to re-do it. It's not that we have disastrous roads, but there are already cracks and some areas are beginning to show as if they are sinking. We are not asking, I think, for anything that is not common sense.

**–Has the Government given any response to this demand?**

–No answer has been given, but I don't expect one either. What I hope is to see the trucks fixing these damages. In any case, the Government's situation is not excellent, and I can already understand that. We are not asking for all the roads to be fixed in one month, but we are asking for an annual maintenance plan and to make a probably more global assessment and say: maybe we don't need to invest everything somewhere else, let's split it up, and we are fixing sections everywhere.

**–How do you feel about the vial of Sant Julià, this eternal country project that always ends up being discarded?**

–As a lauredian, I don't feel treated

differently than a person who lives in Andorra la Vella, because in the end, everyone always points to Sant Julià avenue, but it's not Sant Julià avenue, it's the entrance road to the country. Therefore, like Andorra, and with common sense, I believe that the road brings seven million tourists into the country. That unfortunately they don't stay in Sant Julià, but go to the whole country in general, but I think that what we should keep in mind is to keep the tourist happy, since this would surely also make life easier for the resident. But in any case, it is a matter of knowing what is the priority, whether to take care of this tourist or to have, for example, a motorway that goes up to the slopes of Arcalís. My priority would have been the entry road into the country.

**–The municipality wanted to reform the Fourth Bus. How is the improvement going?**

–The reform that has been made and is about to be implemented is that public transport has been put in place via the Fourth Bus in the Certers sector. There will be three trips a day: morning, noon and night, which is what some of the neighbors have asked us. The purpose is to continue serving all the people who live up there and who cannot get around by their own means, either because they are elderly or because they do not have a vehicle. It will be limited transport to these time slots, but, in any case, it is better than there was, because there was nothing, and we hope to be able to satisfy the demand as much as possible. At the same time, we continue to provide service to the rest of the quarters as we have been doing until now, in Aixirivall and Juberrí.

**–Do you have a date of entry into operation?**

–It is already adjudicated. Now we are finishing preparing all the signage for the new stops with the new timetables, and also the communication part. In principle, it should be completed by the end of this week, and the idea is to put the bus with the new system from, at the latest, the beginning of next month.

**–And with respect to the Rabassa landfill?**

–In this sense, we have two lines of work. The first, to finish filling the current landfill, which I seem to remember still has 40,000 square meters left. Right now, it is in a public tender for construction companies to apply for dumping capacity. On the other hand, and regarding the expansion, we have been asking for an engineering project for some time to define what this landfill should look like, of which a first validation has already been done. Now, from the same engineering office, they are developing the entire environmental impact project and everything it entails, so we are waiting to receive the reports.

**–Is there any news about the heat network project?**

–It's going very slowly. On behalf of the community, we commissioned an executive project that we presented to the Government, which as a concept seems to fit perfectly. We took one more step, which was to start preparing a technical basis to be able to obtain a concession, which is just being drafted, and when we have it, we will ask for an appointment with the head of government to present the project to him, so that they take the decision and is placed in concession. From here, you will have to decide if you want to do it, or if you stop doing it forever and we don't need to talk about it anymore.

**–Recently, a firewood collection pilot test was installed. How is it working?**

–The truth is that we were pleasantly surprised, because we won the public tender last week, and as of today, we already have five lots occu-

ped. We are considering, due to the fact that it is a pilot test, whether we should put five more batches, but we would not want this to go out of hand either. The demand is there, and in the end I always say that when something benefits everyone, people flock to it.

**-Changing the subject. How could Naturland be made profitable?**

-Naturland is not doing well, but it is doing better than it was. When we arrived, the corporation put in a million euros. As of today, it puts 400,000. We are always in the same discourse about what Naturland brings to the parish, and the truth is that there are two ways of looking at it. The first is: Naturland fills the streets of Sant Julià in terms of tourists who stay, buy and sleep in the parish? No. Some probably do, but it is not what Meritxell avenue could be. But there is the other part, which we always ignore, either out of interest or because it is not meant to be said, which is still the case that Naturland is currently bringing in between four and five million euros, which is returned to them to spend. This expenditure goes to Andorran companies, from Sant Julià de Lòria, to payrolls for families living in the country. Therefore, when they tell me that Naturland has no impact, I always say that it does have one, four and a half million on Andorran society.

**-What does the change of brand you have made represent for the parish?**

-I always say that the internal

functioning of a company is also reflected externally in terms of image, and I say this honestly and without wanting to criticize anything. But in any case, the image we gave was one of debauchery. Each department used a logo, others did not, and this image of neatness and well-managed I think reflects a little the internal workings of the company itself. What we want with this is to try to tidy up, and now it's time to give the image that represents the municipality.

**-How do you rate the fire at the Laureadian Cultural and Congress Center?**

-At the outset assess it from the point of view of anger, because to receive a call at 04.00 to tell you that the cultural and congress center, which is the emblem of Sant Julià, has burned down... When I got off the bed and put my feet on the floor, the first thing I

said was: no, what anger. Afterwards, and this is the positive part I stay with, a feeling of solidarity. I have been very surprised by the calls and emails that both the consul and I have received from ordinary citizens making themselves available for whatever is needed. In complicated moments, this call is appreciated. There have been some municipalities who have even offered themselves personally in case we needed help. It was clear to me that Sant Julià was a supportive town, but I had never been faced with a situation like this, which really shows it. Otherwise, we were clear that culture must continue, it is one of the main pillars of our parish and we could not be without the cultural center. Thanks to the technical teams, it has been easy in quotes. Now everything is on the rails, the machine is running, and this is starting. In a week we have already found a new location for everyone, starting with the library, passing through the art school, the Catalan classes, the Esbart or the Pastorets, everything continues to take place, be it in the schools, the church or in private spaces. In addition, during the coming week, the workers will be able to return to the traffic office, and we will probably also open the car park not only for users, but for everyone.

**-How do you feel about the fact that Minister Eric Jover said that the fire was a municipal problem and that the Government would not help?**

-Honestly, I have not seen these statements, but if so, I can only say that there are visions and visions. If Mr.

Jover said it was a municipal issue, we are very aware of that, but there are other municipalities who have called in support. He hasn't done it, nothing happens.

**-What do you think of Sant Julià being valued as the university parish?**

-It feels satisfying to be able to advance a parish around education. When we entered the municipality, there was a public university, and in three years of the mandate, three new universities have landed in the parish. Therefore, I'm proud to have been in the corporation in this mandate. It is not only thanks to the municipality, however, that may have put in the most will for the private to come here, but in the end it is thanks to a series of factors.

**-Recently, they started the participatory process. What do you think of this**

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**initiative?**

-I think we were the first municipality to do a participatory project and change the way we do politics. I will only talk about Sant Julià, and in the parish it is the first time that a municipality calls on the citizens to make decisions jointly. This process improves democracy, helps to make the right decisions and also makes it easier for citizens to see things differently, since in this way, when decisions are taken together, it ends up being seen that they are not taken without any reason.

**-How do you rate your position up until now?**

-A position like this has two parts, the white and the black, and I will focus on the white. It is positive to be able to work for your town with a relevant decision-making position. As a person who loves a town or a country, it is the best thing that can happen to you, because you can decide, listen to the people, manage the town the way you think it should go. If you want to feel fulfilled, I think this is the ideal position.

**-Finally, in an electoral environment like the current one, do you have any predictions as to whether you will run for re-election?**

-Here I should talk about the black part. There's still a year left, and a lot can happen. Even so, it doesn't just depend on me, it depends on a team, a match, a family, many things. At the desired moment, everything will have to be put on the scale and weighed. ≡

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«I always say that the internal functioning of an enterprise or municipality is also reflected externally in terms of image»

# El Molí building could be autonomous

This is the corporation's proposal to achieve energy independence and decarbonize municipal spaces.

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The Municipality of Sant Julià de Lòria is launching a «very innovative» project, as indicated by the Major Consul of the parish, Josep Majoral, which consists of achieving that El Molí building, where the corporation is located and also an administrative building that belongs to the Government, be fully autonomous. As Majoral explained, the electric cables could be disconnected and the diesel fuel removed from the property, which would be replaced by hydro-

gen.

Although it is a project that is still on the table, the Major Consul assured that, soon, they will request an appointment with the Head of Government, Xavier Espot, to present the proposal to him. «Our purpose is to provide solutions as far as possible from our community, which are few, but we want to do our bit for the energy independence of the country and to decarbonize the municipal buildings», he pointed out, at the same time that he regretted the current problematic situation in relation to energy.

So, once the idea is proposed to the head of the Executive, it will have to be decided if it is declared a project of interest. Since the building is cohesive with the Government, it is necessary that the latter has the will to take the Molí autonomy forward. «We need the OK and that to go hand in hand, because in the end it's a project that we have to take forward together», reinforced Majoral.

On the other hand, Sant Julià is working so that another public tender can soon be held for the concession of a new photovoltaic park in the Fontaneda area. What the muni-

cipality intends with this action, informed the major consul, is to make some public land available so that a private person, at his own expense, can get a part of the business and the municipality as well. «It is no longer just a business, but the generation of electrical energy in this case, given the emergency crisis situation», he added. However, Majoral highlighted that «we had always said that we wanted to be a reference in the renewables issue, and when I say renewables, I mean the environment in general, since climate change has always worried us». Along these lines,

Sant Julià has not only joined in following the energy measures established by the Government, but has also carried out initiatives such as carrying out the mobility of personnel marked by the Energy Transition and Climate Change Act (Litecc); the installation of photovoltaic panels in the cultural center; or calculate the carbon footprint in 2020 to have an X-ray and assess now at the end of the 2023 term how it has evolved. «It is not because there is a Government decree that we will change our way of thinking and doing things», he concluded. ≡

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