



Interview with non-attached general counsel Carine Montaner

<<<

«The court could consider opening a research on Ferran Costa»

CARINE MONTANER Non-attached General Counsel

NATALIA MENA
ESCALDES-ENGORDANY
@PeriodicAND

Non-attached General Councilor Carine Montaner has been silent for the first time since the pre-trial proceedings began by Liberal parliamentary group chairman Ferran Costa and explained the political game that could be behind the complaint.

–What do you think of the fact that the president of the Liberal Parliamentary Group, Ferran Costa, has filed a criminal complaint against you?

–We are living in a state of law and Mr. Costa is exercising his right by filing a criminal complaint against me for slander, defamation and disclosure of secrecy. There are two things that surprise me. First, the written content of the complaint. He talks more about the accusations of the Social Democratic Party than about me. Second, let me attack now that we are one year away from the general election.

The accusation of slander and defamation lies in the word candy I said on the radio. What was he talking about with the word candy? Of the «public awards» that come out in the BOPA, but Mr. Costa interpreted it as if he had called it corrupt. I told the National Radio program that he «received a lot of candy from the public administration with his company, and that he should not teach anyone any lessons.» It must be said that, during this legislature, I have received complaints regarding the awards received by Mr. Costa, which I told the Court. Some citizens have told me that they do not see it clearly. I think a general counsel should not submit his companies to public tenders to avoid suspicion from the public. These awards may be legal, but for me and many people, they are unethical.

Finally, the charge of disclosure of secrecy. Amazing, too. We're talking about something that happened almost two years ago. This is the issue of Mr Costa's supplementary salary awarded by his Liberal Parliamentary Group. Salary paid with the endowment of the parliamentary group fed with public money, that is to say, with the money of the citizens. Salary that he ended up rejecting in June 2020.

–What exactly do you accuse him of revealing secrets?

–I am accused of revealing secrets for public salaries that can be consulted on the General Council's website since the controversy over Mr. Costa's supplementary salary. It must be said that there has been



► The non-attached general counsel, Carine Montaner.

a step towards transparency in this matter. I congratulate the General trustee for proposing the publication of the salaries paid to the councilors for the endowment of the parliamentary groups on the web site www.consellgeneral.ad. I also congratulate the Board of Presidents, of which Mr. Costa is a member, for having unanimously agreed to publish the public salaries and allowances of the directors on the basis of transparency. We must remember that we, the politicians, are the employees of the people and that we must be transparent. Transparency is one of the pillars of democracy to build the trust of citizens.

–What sentence is Mr. Costa looking for with the support of the Liberal side?

–First of all, I think they have acted for the image, because all this media uproar has done a lot of damage to the Liberal side. I repeat. Something can be legal and unethical in the eyes of the public.

Secondly, they could seek, with the sanctions stipulated by the penal code for this type of accusation, my disqualification from my position as general counsel and a sentence that would make it impossible for me to run in the next general elections scheduled for March 2023.

Third, I am the discordant voice on many topics and I ask too much about sensitive topics. They must see me as a stone in my shoe. I called

for accountability for the Cedar deaths at the beginning of the pandemic and for transparency on soft loans. I pointed out the shadow areas of the project for the implementation of the P3 laboratory in Grifols and I took legal action in the Mayor's Office. I fought against the health passport by making administrative appeals and a lawsuit. I asked about the conflicts of interest, with the pharmacists, of the advisor for the vaccination strategy against covid ... All these issues have led to a repeated disrespect of some members of the majority against my person and an intense media harassment. Malcolm X said, «The media can make you hate the oppressed and make you like their oppressors.»

It is also known that a criminal complaint steals energy, time and money from the accused person who has to prove his innocence. They know full well that as a non-attached director, I cannot have a full-time salary. They know that I am receiving half my salary and that I have an incompatibility by law that requires me to be in a vacancy at the University of Andorra without being paid. They also know that my non-attached membership of the General Council for my term as a Member of Parliament is so low that hiring a full-time secretary all year long would absorb my entire annual budget.

To continue serving the Andorran people after the political sepa-



«All of these issues have led to a disrespect of some members of the majority against me»

«We are talking about many political figures in the Liberal Party if we look at the BOPA. The court will decide»

ration with Terceravia, I am making a personal financial sacrifice, as a non-attached councilor, earning 1,100 euros less each month with 13 payments compared to the salary I received at the university, ie 14,000 euros less per year. In my case, no one can tell me I do politics for money, no one.

–Is there an attempt at conciliation?

–Initially, Mr. Costa was very interested in the presentation of the complaint in the media. During the process, the possibility of reaching a conciliation on slander and defamation was raised in order to avoid a media uproar around Mr. Costa. In proof of my good faith I opened the way to conciliation. In fact, it was negotiated that I withdraw my written parliamentary question regarding the amounts awarded to one of Mr. Costa's companies in exchange for him removing the charges of libel and defamation. We were about to sign the conciliation pact when Mr. Costa broke this possibility with his performance because he went to a program on the National Radio talking about me: «The political debate must be confined to the political field and there are lines that should not be crossed. «We need to think about whether the political class wants to imitate the bad practices of other countries.»

He will understand that it is the drop of water that makes the glass spill. First, the Liberals mediated the case with a parallel media trial at the beginning of the trial, when neither me, the defendant, nor my lawyer knew the content of the lawsuit. Despite this, I apologize and shake hands for a conciliation. and then Mr. Costa hints at the radio show when we were about to sign. It can not be. In the face of this arrogance, I decided to turn my back on conciliation.

–How do you see the trial ending?

–In accordance with the principle of Exceptio veritatis, the court may consider opening an investigation into Mr. Costa to verify my innocence and to verify that there has been no influence peddling and corruption in terms of the awards received. In this case, the court could force all the people in charge before the ministries and with key positions in the municipalities, in close relationship with Mr. Costa and in relation to the awards published in the BOPA granted to their companies to testify before the court. In fact, we would be talking about many political figures in the Liberal Party if we look at the publications in the BOPA. The court will decide. ≡

HEALTH

The PS proposes a dialogue table for socio-sanitary tariffs

López points out that new users of the residences may end up paying more for «inferior service»

EL PERIÒDIC
ANDORRA LA VELLA
@PeriodicAND

The Social Democratic Party (PS) proposes to open a dialogue table to discuss the increase in service tariffs and the stay of social and health centers approved by the Government «behind the associations and the rest of the political parties», according to the president of the PS, Pere López. In this sense, the Social Democrats consolidate their position on the motion they presented last Friday on the withdrawal of the decree of the new prices «asking a question about whether the Executive really believes that these new tariffs should be established,» said López.

Following the same line, the general councilor Judith Salazar added that «it is advisable to put the agents concerned in this modification of the regulation in order to check whether or not it conforms

The standard user will have to assume between 7,500 and 9,000 euros per year for the costs of stay and service

to the social reality of the country». Thus, the representatives of the PS agreed that organizations such as the Federation of the Elderly of Andorra and the Andorran Federation of Associations of Disabilities (FAAD) «reiterate their rejection of a measure that acts to the detriment of income and the savings of the relatives of those affected», pointed out López. In turn, Salazar stated that «groups of the elderly and people with functional diversity do not deserve the Government to give explanations after making decisions, but to make decisions based on the prior assessment of the affected».

The Social Democrats believe that, in any case, this decree will lead to an increase in the amount that individuals will have to assume instead of the CASS. Thus, Salazar stated that «co-responsibility



►► The President of the Social Democratic Party, Pere López, and the General Councilor Judith Salazar.

already existed before the approval of this decree and everything was working properly, so we do not understand this unilateral decision of the Executive that burdens the individual even more.» López charged the government with stating that «the family of the standard user will have to contribute between 7,500 and 9,000 euros a year and we fear that this drift will spread to other sectors; we do not agree that the public sector should provide less and less resources».

On the other hand, the Social Democrats assure that on March 31st, the date on which the parliamentary debate on the motion of the decree will take place, they will expose to the political parties that «a participatory process is opened with the citizen entities to find a

“

PERE LÓPEZ

PRESIDENT OF THE PS

«We fear that this drift in which the user contributes more than the public part continues to spread»

JUDITH SALAZAR

GENERAL COUNSEL

«Collectives deserve to be explained before making decisions and not the other way around»

consensual solution, balanced and adapted to the social reality of the country», according to Salazar. In turn, the president of the PS pointed out that new users of the residences may end up paying more for «inferior service», as it is only an increase in the part that the user has to pay without to ensure an increase in the provision of services and facilities in social and health centers». He also added that «if the centers do not receive the relevant resources, there will be a worsening of services, which indicates that the government has not followed any technical or legal criteria to carry out the measure, only its will.»

The General Councilor addressed the Executive, noting that the Andorran constitution states that

«this is a welfare state and the declaration must be honored without neglecting the citizens». In fact, he added that «this is a change that was not included in any electoral program of the three parties in the coalition, neither before the elections nor in the H23 roadmap for after the pandemic.» It should be noted that the PS does not currently have any alternative proposal to the co-payment system of social and health centers. Thus, López emphasized that «we do not have the will to modify the financing channels, but to withdraw the decree and open a debate». Salazar, in turn, concluded that «we are in the worst moment of global purchasing power of the citizenry and these privatization drifts do not bring any improvement». ≡

Your leading real estate agency in Andorra.

Our experience guarantees results, realtors since 1988.



(+376) 353 424 / (+376) 379 769

(+376) 747 747

laportella@andorra.ad

Casa Nova Olivet 10 · Ordino

www.laportella.ad