



GENERAL COUNCIL. END OF SESSION PERIOD BEFORE SUMMER.

The new family code goes ahead with consensus of majority and opposition

It facilitates separation and divorce, unifies forms of civil marriage, and regulates the change of name and gender of trans

EL PERIÒDIC
ANDORRA LA VELLA
@PeriodicAND

When there are representatives of a group involved in the guest gallery, some important law must be passed. As happened a few months ago with the equality law, last Thursday the last plenary session of the General Council before the summer holidays gave the green light to the qualified bill of the person and the family with the favorable vote of the entire parliamentary arc, with the exception of two articles, 77 and 91, to which the Social Democratic Party (PS) called for a separate vote to make its rejection evident. In this case, the group present was Diversand, which displayed two flags just after the vote, and which the general trustee, Roser Suñé, moved away immediately.

The new family code brings significant changes. First, the elimination of the terminological difference between civil unions of people of the same sex and civil marriages of people of the opposite sex. From now on, they will all be included under the name of civil marriage, which will be differentiated from canonical marriage. A non-causal separation and divorce system is also being introduced, without the need to «look for culprits» in the couple's crisis or the need to prove waiting times. In addition, custody of minor children is shared, in the event of separation and divorce, provided that there are no major causes that prevent this. Another novelty is the right to financial compensation for a spouse who has worked at home, caring for children or a dependent relative, without pay.

With regard to the rights of the person, the incapacitation or judicial modification of the capacity is suppressed, eliminating the measures that entailed the substitution of the will of the disabled people and offering supports that guarantee the exercise of their rights in equal



► The president of the democratic parliamentary group, Enseñat, in the plenary session of the General Council, with Minister Rossell in the background.



► Diversand representatives unfurl the flag of trans pride.



CARLES ENSEÑAT
DEMOCRATIC GP PRESIDENT

«We have resolved a grievance with guarantees, we have extended people's rights and we have eliminated unnecessary suffering»

JUDITH SALAZAR
GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE PS

«It is a guarantee law that protects vulnerability; in the disabled it marks a millstone»

ity of conditions. Finally, the family code regulates the change of name and gender of transgender people through the Batllia. «We have resolved a grievance with guarantees, we have extended the rights of the people and we have eliminated unnecessary suffering», said Carles Enseñat, chairman of the Democratic parliamentary group.

From the PS, Judith Salazar congratulated the broad consensus, but highlighted the differences, such as the fact that it is differentiated between civil marriage and canonical marriage, and not called marriage in both cases. «It was not a simple text, and in the end it is a guarantee law that protects vulnerability, as in the case of the disabled, which mark a millstone», she said. ≡

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

Interview ▶ Director of the IEEC, Ignasi Ribas

«At 12 years old, I looked behind a telescope and marveled»

IGNASI RIBAS Director of the Institute of Spatial Studies of Catalonia

EL PERIÒDIC
ESCALDES-ENGORDANY
@PeriodicAND

Ignasi Ribas is the director of the Institute of Spatial Studies of Catalonia (IEEC) and a researcher at the Institut of Space Science (ICE) of the Higher Council for Scientific Research (CSIC). He is an expert in exoplanet research and is actively involved in instrumentation projects for the discovery and characterization of new Earth-like planets, such as *Carmenes*, of which he is the principal investigator. Among others, he has published more than 230 research papers in international journals.

–Tomorrow you will take part in the *Serenalla*, in La Massana. What will you talk about?

–In principle, it is a round table with *Sònia Fernández-Vidal* and *Jordi Mompart*, who are quantum physicists. My specialty is astrophysics and space, so I'm sure we'll find topics of conversation that will bring us closer to the infinitely small world of quantum and the enormously large world of space.

–What is your role as director of the IEEC?

–Within the Institute, I spend most of my time managing teams of scientists, engineers and administrative staff. One of the main issues we are carrying out right now is the promotion of the New Space strategy of the Generalitat de Catalunya, which consists of the development of a nano-satellite program that we call *Cubesat* for various applications. Apart from that, we deal with different areas such as talent generation, carry out other research and development programs, and also keep in touch with international relations. Besides, I have my research group, where we look for exoplanets. However, I have this double aspect of management and another part of research as well, which is what fascinates me the most.

–One of the main topics of the round table will be *The most surprising discoveries*. What do you think they are in astrophysics?

–It all depends on the time scale we look at. I am dedicated to looking for exoplanets and, in particular, those that have the right conditions to be habitable. In this sense, one of the most important milestones in the field where I work happened 27 years ago, in 1995, when the first planet was discovered that revolved around another star different than the sun. However, for me, one of the most important recent findings is that a few years ago the first gravitational wave signals were discovered, that is, when two giant black holes fuse into one, and this was detected in an experiment, which is called *LIGO*. In addition, just last



▶ Ignasi Ribas at a conference.



«More efforts and help could be put in for researchers to stabilize before the age of 45»

week came the first images of a space telescope called *James Webb*, also a very important event in astrophysics, which will give us many topics to talk about in the coming years and will mark a milestone in science. These are just random facts from different eras, but which I think are representative.

–When did you become interested in space?

–Now I am 51 years old, and I have been interested in astrophysics since I was 12. When I was little and living in *Manresa*, a neighbor of my block of flats told me that I had built a telescope and invited me to look through. And so I did. So at the age of 12, I looked behind that device and saw the moon, *Jupiter*, and I was amazed. At that point, I decided that what I really needed to do was learn how to do it when I was older.

–You are specialize in the search for exoplanets, that is, those that do not belong to our solar system. Why do you think it's so important?

–With science, in general, we ask ourselves questions that come out of intrigue. In the case of exoplanets it is very clear. We are curious to understand what our place in the universe is. Our Earth is in a solar system where there are seven more planets, apart from us, but we want to know if this is something unique or common, and if among all the planetary systems in the universe, any it has conditions similar to ours for there to be life. This is the basic reason. But in the realm of exoplanets there is a more philosophical or social question, what is it: are we unique? Are we alone? Are there other living things outside? Our job is to answer questions that have a very important social significance, and that motivates scientists to do that.

–What techniques are used to find exoplanets?

–What we would think would be great for us is to take a camera and take a picture of a star and see the planets orbiting it. It's what we call direct detection of planets, but we don't know how to do it, because we don't have the technology in general to be able to separate light from planets that are very faint, from a star that completely dazzles us. So, while we don't see it directly, we've developed techniques that allow us to discover it indirectly, measuring the effect the planet has on its star.

We do not see it, but the movements or characteristics of the star allow us to deduce that it is around it. And we do this by measuring the position, speed, or brightness of the star.

–Has there been a possibility that there is life on other planets?

–Currently, we know about 5,000 planets outside the solar system, of which there are many. Of these, 24 are considered potentially habitable. But you have to know what the two words mean: potentially and habitably. The fact that there is oxygen in an atmosphere is not a prerequisite for life, there may be life that does not need oxygen. What we believe is a prerequisite is the existence of liquid water, rivers, oceans, lakes, and so on. Then, we define a habitable planet as one that has liquid water on the surface. But there are 24 of them potentially habitable, and this potentially means that they are at the right distance from their star so that the temperature at the surface is between zero and 100 degrees, and therefore if there is water, be in liquid form. However, we do not know if there is water, for this reason we say that they are potentially habitable planets, because they could have the right conditions.

So far, we have found a total of zero habitable planets and zero habitats, which does not mean that they are not there, but we have not yet been able to identify them. I would like, if I can say my wish as a human, that life was superabundant in the

universe, but we are still looking at how likely life is to arise in a place, and before I die, I would like to hear the answer to that, I would really like.

–Can you be a scientist and believe in God?

–I wonder about that many times. I can tell you, from my experience, that there are many believing astrophysicists. I wouldn't tell you they are either, but there are a good number. I am a recalcitrant atheist, so I do not believe in any creative deity or any of this, and I find it very difficult to understand how someone with a scientific mindset can be a believer at the same time, but there are those who think so, and he can be a great scientist while believing. In the end, however, the plot that is left to God is smaller and smaller, because we find answers to mysteries that in the past were attributed to a divine action. The origin of the universe or the Big Bang can be explained physically, but there are people who, for their well-being, need to believe in structures that are what religion provides.

–Are resources lacking in the sector and in research?

–In Spain we have resources, but perhaps less than in other countries such as South Korea, USA, Japan, China or Finland. The most complicated thing is that the conditions of researchers here are particularly precarious, in terms of prospects and salaries. There are possibilities to be a researcher, but you have to go through certain hardships because everything is long and the process to get a fixed position tends to be laborious. There are opportunities in the field of predoctoral contracts or young postdoctoral fellows. However, more efforts and help could be put in for these researchers to stabilize before the age of 45, which is the average age of obtaining a permanent job in the sector. It's barbaric.

–Is there misinformation from society?

–There are series, films or documentaries of a very high and rigorous quality, where the knowledge that is disseminated is very good. Even so, you have to be very careful because there is a great fondness for putting out catastrophic or biased news and making a big deal out of it, or trying to confuse people with implausible and wild theories. Now we have seen people talking about the earth being flat or this type of crazy things, which end up being amplified because social networks are a breeding ground in this sense. The advice is that if you have difficulty forming an opinion, ask qualified professionals and get informed, because many people in my field are happy to explain, inform everyone and clarify all their doubts. ≡