



Interview ▶ The councilor of the opposition in the Municipality of Ordino takes stock of the c

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He has been a councilor in Ordino since last October for the Movem Ordino party and replaced Sandra Tudó. During his opposition to the municipality, Jean Michel Armengol has spoken out on the Grifols project asking for a public consultation and also against the location of the geriatric center in the parish which it considers not to be the right one.

–How has the arriving been in the Municipality of Ordino?

–I've been there for a quarter, since October. We finished the year with closures, budgets, it was quite interesting and I must stress that it was welcoming when it came to sharing topics, dossiers. As for the welcome, it has been good, there is a good atmosphere, I can't complain.

–Has your position changed with your presence compared to Sandra Tudó's?

–The main position that has changed and that has surprised everyone, has been with the subject of the Grifols laboratory. My position was radically opposed to that of Sandra Tudó, but it was argued on the same day of the change of position as councilor in the municipality. I explained to the press why and they were obviously surprised from the media, I think they shouldn't be surprised that I had a different position from that of Tudó. The issue has evolved over the past year and I wanted to emphasize my position, since it is more than doubtful, taking into account the elements of the agreement signed by Minister Gallardo or the Head of Government with the Grifols company and a whole series of parameters that we presented on the day of the presentation to the public in the parish with Enric Dolsa. I think it's pretty clear that there are a lot of dark areas and lack of transparency that still go on.

–What goals do you set for the remaining year of the legislature?

–Now that I have started to take the marks in the municipality, I want to make as many contributions as possible and maintain for the moment this good dialogue that exists in all the commissions. It is clear that as a member of the opposition council I want to participate actively in the work committees that are there, I try to do it in the best way and above all I want to be able to contribute with the decisions, but we must not forget that I am in a minority, where the majority is all one and sometimes it is difficult to influence.

–What is your assessment of the information meeting about Grifols? Will there be more?

–There was a good attendance, it was especially interesting, people came from all the parishes. We had the evidence that it is not an isolated problem of the parish of Ordino, it is a concern for all of Andorra. People came from all over concerned about the installation and



J.M.A

Jean Michel Armengol

Counselor of Ordino

«I'm afraid that we are changing the appearance of the town of Ordino»

the way in which this 36,000 square meters of land had been agreed to a private company without any adjudication. Seeing the public concern makes one question the security, whether it is well prepared or not. The idea emerged that all this can only be moved if there is a mobilization of the citizens and not of an Enric Dolsa or a Jean Michel Armen-

gol, the citizens must take a position and explain their anger. From here arose the proposal of the assistants to form groups to hold meetings like those held in Ordino, but now move them to the other parishes. I think there must be an important issue of information, many doubts are created by people who do not have the correct information and are

speculating about what is going on. The most important thing is to provide all the elements and explain how the entire development of this project has gone and where we are now, which is already 2023. According to the documents we found, that is when the construction phase should begin of this laboratory.

We can't go to see all the parishes,

I think they should be set up from the point of view of local interest and that the history of the Grifols laboratory should be explained to all the interested public. There were people who were talking about doing a mobilization before Christmas, but it could not be done. Apart from that, Enric Dolsa and I are planning to make a request to the Municipality of Ordino so that a public consultation can be held, where we will add Terceravia, the other government list from the last municipal elections. In this sense, it would be the three opposition groups that would ask the Municipality of Ordino to hold a popular consultation.

–What is your main concern regarding the laboratory?

–It was done in a very strange and ambiguous way. What I highlighted on the day of the presentation is that these ambiguities that are being revealed as information is gathered make us think that this process is not ideal. In essence, I am not against there being a research center in Andorra, but what cannot be done is a 25-year transfer of such an important piece of land in the



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parish. It is a legacy that has fallen from the sky to the Government and the fact that they can give it directly to a company without any international competition, is not a good way, just so that some minister thinks that it is the best company in the world and can make Andorra appear on the world map in terms of research. It is a phenomenon that generates uncertainty, fear and, moreover, the post-covid climate makes people think about it a lot when you are talking about doing experiments with a P3 category degree that is quite high, they can generate a lot of concerns.

–Where should the parish geriatric center be located, according to you?

–I have made the proposal to build the geriatric center on the land they have allocated to the laboratory, be-

cause here it would be an ideal place for the elderly. I don't like the place they have chosen at all and it has also been granted in a dubious way, it was supposed to be done at the end of the summer and they have slowed it down. There have been discrepancies and this causes people to think that things have not been done well and at this point we don't have the answers either. We don't know if the geriatric center would meet all the social requirements, how many people from the parish it could accommodate, if there will be reserved places, if it would be private... We don't know if it will be a geriatric center that will add something to the parish, if not what it would be a place to do business, in this case with the elderly.

-What opinion does the transfer of the quarter to the Government and the community of the Casamanya hotel deserve?

-There was a proposal to make a geriatric center also in this area, in the end it did not succeed. I believe that things should be done with good thinking and not impulsively and with the benefit of a few against the majority. The fact that this emblematic building, listed as an asset of cultural interest, can be rehabilitated is a great step forward. It had been closed for many years and to place the Ministry of Environment, Agriculture and Sustainability I think it is a good idea if the integrity of the site is respected.



«If rental prices rise more than salaries, a grievance is being created especially for the most vulnerable population»

- Is there insecurity in Ordino? More and more money is allocated to video surveillance cameras.

-I don't notice it, I don't know if it has been analyzed or on what criteria it is based to say that more cameras are needed, if it is because they have detected an increase in insecurity in Ordino... Personally, the feeling I have living and walking there is not unsafe; the question of the cameras may be to control more. Some part of the population will surely feel safer, but I don't know if putting cameras is the solution. I think that the parish of Ordino so far is a good example of the free world.

-How do you think the new Technology Center should be? What will it bring to the parish?

-Considering all the modifications in this area, and especially the high-rise construction that is being done, the final project scares me, because many housing buildings are being built, with such a high density with so little space and little time. I am afraid that we are radically changing the face of the town of Ordino. Regarding the Technology Centre, I understand that it is an expansion of the structure that currently exists. Two swimming lanes and other sports facilities will be built so that all the country's federations can train. It can bring a plus, we are talking about sport, good practices and good facilities for sport, I see it well. The expansion will give more prestige to the co-

untry, and it will be able to position itself as a point of reference in the sporting field.

-Has the urbanization in Ordino gotten out of control?

-Very much, we have seen that last year a modification of the town planning plan had to be made, reducing it because the sustainability of construction in Andorra and Ordino must be ensured. They have approved the projects, but there are cranes everywhere. They make such beastly buildings... I am afraid of the density and intensity with which it is built and with very little time in such a limited territory as is the case of Ordino. We are used to buildings that respect the environment, the landscape and the surroundings, suddenly you see huge mushrooms growing that are really scary.

- Are you worried about the housing situation throughout the country? What should be done?

-If we look at the surveys of the Institute of Andorran Studies, we see that housing comes first in terms of concern. In Ordino it is becoming more and more complicated to stay there, because there is a lot of speculation, more demand than supply and people who own flats evict tenants so they can re-rent them at double price. The fear generated by housing is palpable and can be seen throughout Andorra, it is a general problem, we live in a very limi-

ted country and if you concentrate so much on the population and only do promotion aimed at a public with a high purchasing power, it generates a problem in housing. I know many people who spend more than half of their salary on housing and this is a clear indicator of the lack of coverage and social concern of our Government. Since so many homes are being built and so many very high-priced buildings should be forced to ensure that there is a percentage of these dedicated to affordable apartments, we are talking about the constitutional right to housing.

-Do you agree with the increase in salaries and rents that has just been approved?

-The positioning here is divergent, because it depends on which increase we are talking about and the price of the rent. There is pressure from landlords that rent prices can be raised, but obviously if you raise rents more than wages you are creating a grievance especially for the most vulnerable population, more measures should be taken to protect the population sensitive.

-What are your predictions for the general elections? Will it appear on any list?

-We haven't talked about it yet, the year has just started, we're having meetings and I guess in the long run we'll know what the forecasts will be, I can't tell you right now. ≡

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