



ENERGY

Calvo maintains that «we are prepared» in case there are restrictions next year

It states the Government's decision on eventual power cuts and tariff increases for December

It asks for citizens and companies collaboration to fulfill the circular economy strategy



SFGA/JAVILADOT



Sílvia Calvo

ENVIRONMENT MINISTER

«The change in habits must count on the whole of society, and that is why involving the parties in the definition of the objectives is key»

ars. Thanks to the approval of the new law in June, it is planned to move from a linear economy to a more efficient and sustainable economic model that optimizes the use of natural resources, minimizes environmental impacts, promotes efficiency in achieving that products and resources maintain utility and value as long as possible, and avoid material emissions and losses.

The strategic document will make it possible to plan, coordinate and rationalize actions, measures and projects aimed at achieving the objectives defined in the law, which was already worked on in a participatory manner. The purpose of last Friday's session was to accept, propose and define actions to be included in this document, which will be available to citizens. The session was designed to explain it and from there they validated whether the proposed actions were considered high or low relevance or not appropriate and finally they were able to contribute new actions.

As for citizens in general, they will be able to participate through the Visc.ad platform and, at the same time, apply the goals of the strategy in their daily lives. «Water, energy, waste and consuming in a different way is what we ask for citizens and companies», recalled Calvo. In this sense, the ministry will promote communication and aid for the business sector. ≡

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The «extremely complicated» international context, with the war in Ukraine and the inflation, could force the Government and Electric Forces of Andorra (FEDA) to increase electricity rates again and even apply some supply cuts in view of next year. In this regard, the Minister of Environment, Agriculture and Sustainability, Sílvia Calvo, stated last Friday that «we have little long-term visibility, therefore we cannot advance now whether there will be restrictions or not in 2023, but we must «be prepared in case there is one, and FEDA and the Government are,» she assured. Having said that, Calvo added, «from the Executive we expect to take stock in December and make decisions then, but it must be taken into account that other elements come into play apart from the purely economic aspect in the decision to raise rates or apply

restrictions», specified the head of Environment.

Calvo made these statements in a week in which the director of FEDA, Albert Moles, explained that electricity rates will have to rise if consumption is not reduced, both by the administration, companies and citizens individually. At the same time, Moles proposed voluntary stoppages at ski resorts, hotels and shopping centers. In addition, last week the head of government, Xavier Espot, announced an agreement with the municipalities to apply the same energy saving plan as the general administration, and also with the snow fields.

Apart from this, Sílvia Calvo took part last Friday in the day of public participation and validation of the circular economy strategy, which gathered around 60 people from various economic sectors in a central hotel in Andorra la Vella, and also some politician. «The change in habits towards a circular model that encourages the saving of resources



► Above, Sílvia Calvo takes part in the conference on the circular economy strategy. Along these lines, the participants validated the actions.

must count on the involvement of all parts of society, and that is why involving them in the definition of the objectives is key, since the administration alone will not be able to do it», Calvo emphasized. And what are the goals? Exceed 65% in terms

of recycling, save water and energy, that companies bet on this type of economy and reduce food waste to 50%. The ministry's forecast is that the strategy to achieve these goals will be a reality by 2035, although they will be reviewed every five ye-

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INTERIOR

Immigration staff are «overwhelmed» by the flood of applications

The workers point out that they do not remember a month of July with so many extra hours of work like this one

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The Immigration Service has been dealing with an influx of applicants for days that is out of the ordinary considering that the winter season has not yet started and, therefore, the bulk of temporary workers still has not arrived in the country. In this sense, the administrative staff is «overwhelmed» by the avalanche of claimants, according to sources from the Department of Labor. Although the opening hours continue as normal (from 08.00 to 13.00), the staff does not get to occupy all the customer service desks available in the room, which do not even reach the tenth of localities, while users exceeded fifty people in the waiting line.

In the same way, the formalities services offered in the Obac building, at the moment do not include the prior appointment system to regulate the influx of people as is done by the Andorran Social Security Fund (CASS), despite the fact that this is one of the main demands of

Some claimants claim that they have had to wait more than five hours

users attending Immigration. Following this same point in the procedures for service to the claimants, some of them stated that if time slots were established for each type of procedure and the organization was improved, the pace of the queues would move more quickly, and the feeling of stress caused by the accumulation of people in the staff.

As for the witnesses present in the waiting line, Laura Ferreira, a worker at a tourist company in El Tarter, stated that she waited up to five hours over one morning. «I decided to arrive early, because it's quite a while from where I live to Escaldes-Engordany; however, I was there from 09.00 until 14.00 and I still have to do a second procedure again», she explained. On the other hand, Diego García, a mechanic



► The entrance to the offices of the Immigration Service.



DIEGO GARCÍA
MECHANIC

«I had to leave after three hours of waiting to do a procedure that, at most, lasts 10 minutes»

LAURA FERREIRA
WORKER OF A TOURISM COMPANY

«I was there from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and I still have to do a second procedure again»

from Spain, reported that, after three hours of waiting «I had to leave for a procedure that, at most, lasts around 10 minutes».

According to the sources consulted, the Immigration office «falls short to absorb the demand we have». And it is that the workers «do not explain to each other why we are working at a rate that is not normal». Nevertheless, the workforce does not believe that a large increase in staff would be necessary, despite the fact that most of the witnesses who come to carry out procedures were of the opinion that «a service as essential as this requires more human resources». In this sen-

se, many people who go to Immigration receive a special permit from the companies they work in to go to the Obac offices during working hours, but many of them have to repeat the process again for more than a day for the long delays.

In relation to the working days of the administrative staff during the summer period, «there was not a single day that we did not work between 10 and 11 hours, especially during the month of July which was horrible for us», according to Immigration sources. Although the intensive working day states that the employees must finish the day at 3:00 p.m., they claim that «many days we left the offices later than 5:00 p.m.», although the extra working time is correctly paid by the administration. In relation to the month of August, this was managed in a more «calm» way and that corresponds to the «normal» influx of each year, but «suddenly, we have reached September with a huge number of requests».

On the other hand, the response of the Ministry of the Interior to this problem is that the deadline for submitting papers for the summer quota (which extends until the end of October) was September 15th, so which has led to the accumulation of people who submitted it at the last minute with those who had to renew or register the general quota. In the same way, they stated that «the situation should normalize in a short period of time, pending the next peak of applicants expected for when the winter quota opens again». ≡

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