



ARCHITECTURE

# Construction is growing alien to the effects of the pandemic

The square meters approved for renovations in 2021 are the highest in 10 years

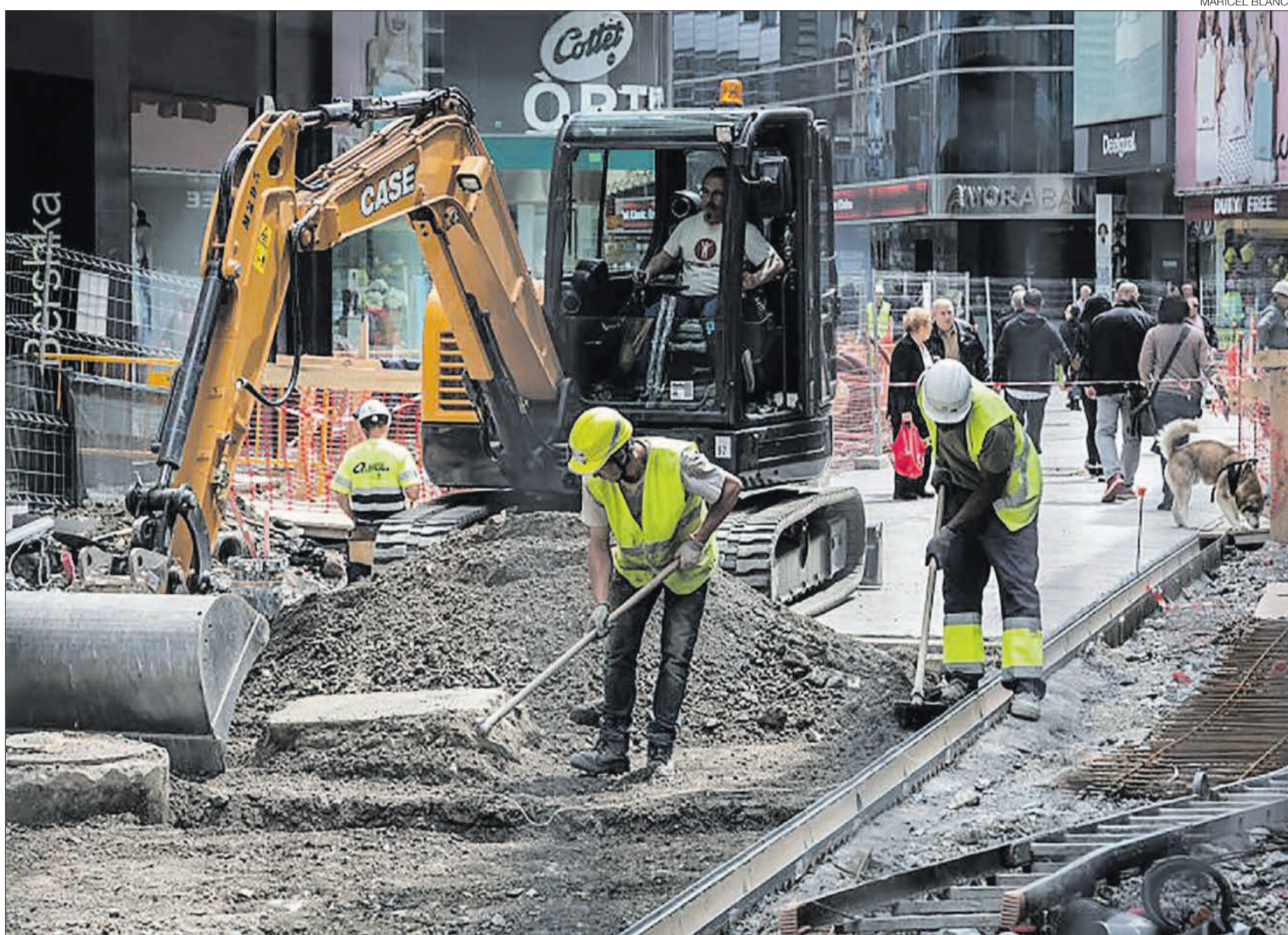
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The assessment of the Official College of Architects of Andorra (COAA) is positive with regard to the activity of the year 2021, since, as the dean, Zaira Nadal, explained to EL PERIÒDIC, «the sector of construction has continued to grow beyond the effects of the pandemic. In fact, during the last financial year, the general figures for m<sup>2</sup> of visas were again in line with the growing trend in the sector since the recovery from the construction crisis in 2016. However, Nadal emphasized that the only period in which there was a significant affectation was during the confinement with the general paralysis of the country. «From May onwards we returned with great force, the builders recovered lost hours and there were no delays with deadlines; This time, construction has been the sector that has best withstood the health crisis» said Nadal.

With regard to the reforms, the COAA reflects in its records that the maximum peak of the last 20 years was reached in 2011, with the emergence of the Renova Plan, which motivated the promoters and led to a total of 148,000 m<sup>2</sup>. In relation to this data, Nadal reported that «after 10 years of ups and downs, last year the peak figures were equal, in fact, this is the second year with the highest figures in reforms since we prepare reports». Such constructions have been «stimulated by the onset of the pandemic, as many people who suffered from confinement began to want better housing, energy savings and increased home space,» said Nadal.

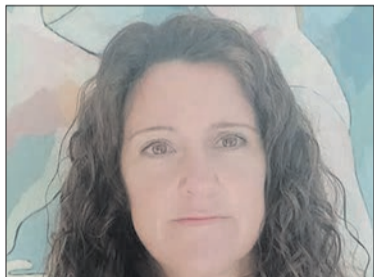
COAA records show that the trend will revolve around the growth of the sector over the next few years, although «like economic crises, construction is cyclical, if an excess is carried out for a year, it will later lead to a drop in activity; therefore, we must be careful,» said Nadal.

Regarding the impact of the new environmental conservation policies, the dean explained that «as usual, when there is political will and the Government takes action, there is an improvement in the conservation of the environment and the quality of the building». The appearance of the energy efficiency law in 2010 meant a «substantial» change in the mood of the construction companies and, according to Nadal, «it has been largely reinforced by the Law



MARICEL BLANCH

► Archive image of construction workers in a work in Andorra la Vella.



**ZAIRA NADAL**  
DEAN OF THE COAA

«Activity is cyclical; if there is an excess of construction for a year, there will be a drop in work in the future»

«The sector has made progress on sustainability through the Energy Transition Promotion Act»

to Promote the Energy Transition and of climate change. In addition, the dean added that «the communities of owners and developers are aware of the benefits of sustainable actions in relation to the reduction of the ecological footprint and the reduction of energy costs».

In relation to this point, the COAA explained that the technicians and engineers of the Principality have had to carry out a process of continuous training to meet the new quality requirements of the buildings.

On the other hand, Nadal addressed the issue of building regulations stating that «it would be positive to establish, from the municipalities, a maximum of allowed square meters taking into account the characteristics of each parish.» One of the proposals of the COAA is to establish an average of the m<sup>2</sup> approved for the last 30 years and from there, «set the minimum and the limits for the promoters», said Nadal. ≡

## The COAA argues that the association agreement includes Catalan as a compulsory language

►► The association agreement with the European Union will make it easier for architects from different countries to practice in the Principality. Regarding the linguistic aspects that will affect this new measure, Nadal stated that «we need to understand each other perfectly among the members of an architectural project», therefore, he defends that Catalan is «obligatory and a priority». In any case, the position of the architects contemplates that if the official language is not spoken in specific cases, «there will be a margin of time for Catalan to be learned». Nadal cited other sectors such as healthcare in order to justify the language requirement: «If someone goes to the doctor, they need to understand you perfectly with all the nuances needed to make the best possible diagnosis; because

se the same thing should happen with architects». In fact, this is a demand shared by most members of the Council of Colleges, which brings together all the professional associations of the Principality to discuss with the Government the points of the association agreement in regular meetings. On the other hand, Nadal recalled that there are currently mechanisms in place to be able to work in European countries, but «what really worries us is that professionals who come from abroad do not have to prove their qualifications or have insurance; because if they make a mistake, they will be held accountable. «In this way, the dean demands that the agreement include these guarantees and that «the same conditions be required of workers from other countries as those affecting Andorran architects».

PROMOTION

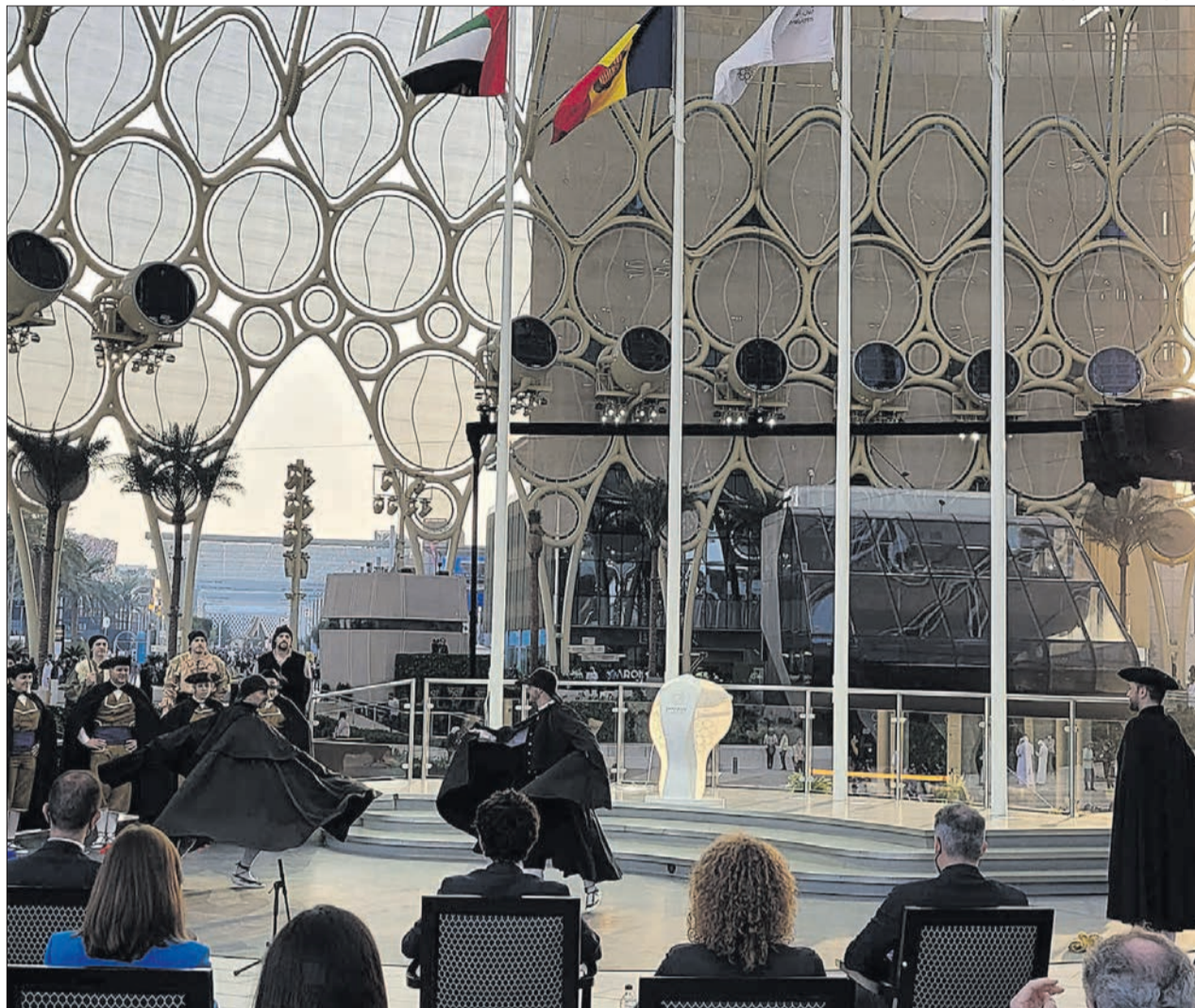
# Andorra explains foreign investment opportunities at Expo Dubai

Espot describes the meetings as tools for developing common interests

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Andorra announced the opportunities for foreign investment in the Principality during the institutional events of the National Day of Andorra at the Expo Dubai 2020. In this sense, the Head of Government, Xavier Espot, described the meetings as tools to develop common interests in which not only have the objectives of the Executive been met, but «far exceeded expectations.» The meeting was also attended by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Maria Ubach; the Minister of Tourism and Telecommunications, Jordi Torres; and the Secretary of State for Digital Transition and Strategic Projects, Cesar Marquina. Espot thanked the United Arab Emirates for their support and assistance in celebrating the National Day of Andorra, which served to «show the visible and invisible face of the country in the forum.» However, he indicated that Andorra and the United Arab Emirates share some challenges such as sustainability, the energy transition and the defense of innovation; and therefore have the tools to develop common interests. «The Expo has also served to show that we have these instruments at our disposal and that from here we can make efforts and deepen the application and development that allow us in economic matters, attracting residents and exchanges cultural and tourist activities», explained the head of government. Finally, he added that one of the goals of Andorra and the United Arab Emirates is that «small countries should play an exemplary role. We cannot change the global reality, we can only do it in a sensible way», a fact for which he considered that we can be an example for the biggest countries that produce much more pollution than us.

As for the events that took place during the National Day of Andorra in Dubai, after the hoisting of the Andorran flag and the interpretation of the anthems of the Principality and the United Arab Emirates, Espot wanted to address a few words to the audience to present the Andorran project: «our participation focuses on three axes: the



►► A moment of the performance «Terra» to commemorate the National Day of Andorra at the Expo Dubai 2020.



**Xavier Espot**  
HEAD OF GOVERNMENT

«Small countries need to play an exemplary role. We can't change the global reality, we can only do it in a sensitive way»

«We can be an example for larger countries that produce much more pollution than us»



promotion of the country and Andorran companies, positioning ourselves as a living lab of open innovation and presenting the sustainability strategies of the Andorran economy». In this sense, Espot was convinced that the Middle East is a territory with which many new synergies and business opportunities can be created, the government said in a statement.

As for the cultural representation of Andorra, a group of about twenty people made up of members of the country's five groups performed an adaptation of the performance Terra, which narrates the 600-year history of the «Consell de la Terra» and the Advancement of Andorran society to modernity through dance and music.

**BILATERAL MEETINGS** // Simultaneously with the day of the National Day of Andorra, a series of institutional events were also held with the ot-



►► Andreu and Cadena in Dubai.

## The CEA wants to promote economic diversification

►► The President of the Andorran Business Confederation (CEA), Gerard Cadena, stated at the Dubai 2020 Expo that the CEA wants to promote economic diversification while preserving traditional lines. Cadena insisted on wellness, fintech and biotechnology as some of the elements for the reactivation of the Andorran economy that would allow «to not depend so much on tourism» and stressed that «the future of the country must be a link between public and private authorities. The meeting was also attended by the director of the CEA, Iago Andreu, who recalled that the role of the confederation is to «facilitate» and «act as a bridge» to help Andorran business to «find the links that can be translated in business opportunities». However, he pointed out that «there may be synergies» between the professional interest and the business community resident in the Emirates, especially for the «new digital economy companies» that are just emerging in the Principality.

her members of the Andorran delegation. According to a statement, Foreign Minister Maria Ubach met with the head of the Culture and Youth portfolio, Noura bint Mohammed Al Kaabi. At the meeting, they talked about the edition of the Art Camp festival that will take place in Dubai between March 14th and 21st and will host 20 artists from the Middle East and one from Andorra.

The Minister of Tourism and Telecommunications, Jordi Torres, met with the High Representative of Economy and Tourism, Helal Saeed Al Marri. At the bilateral meeting, the leaders agreed that tourism is the key piece for both countries and created synergies to encourage visitors from one country to go to the other and vice versa. ≡

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