

el Periòdic News

REFERENDUM WITHOUT DATE OF CALL

Espot admits that the text of the Agreement «is not completely closed»

The debate in the General Council leads to reproaches from the president towards the groups of Escalé and Montaner

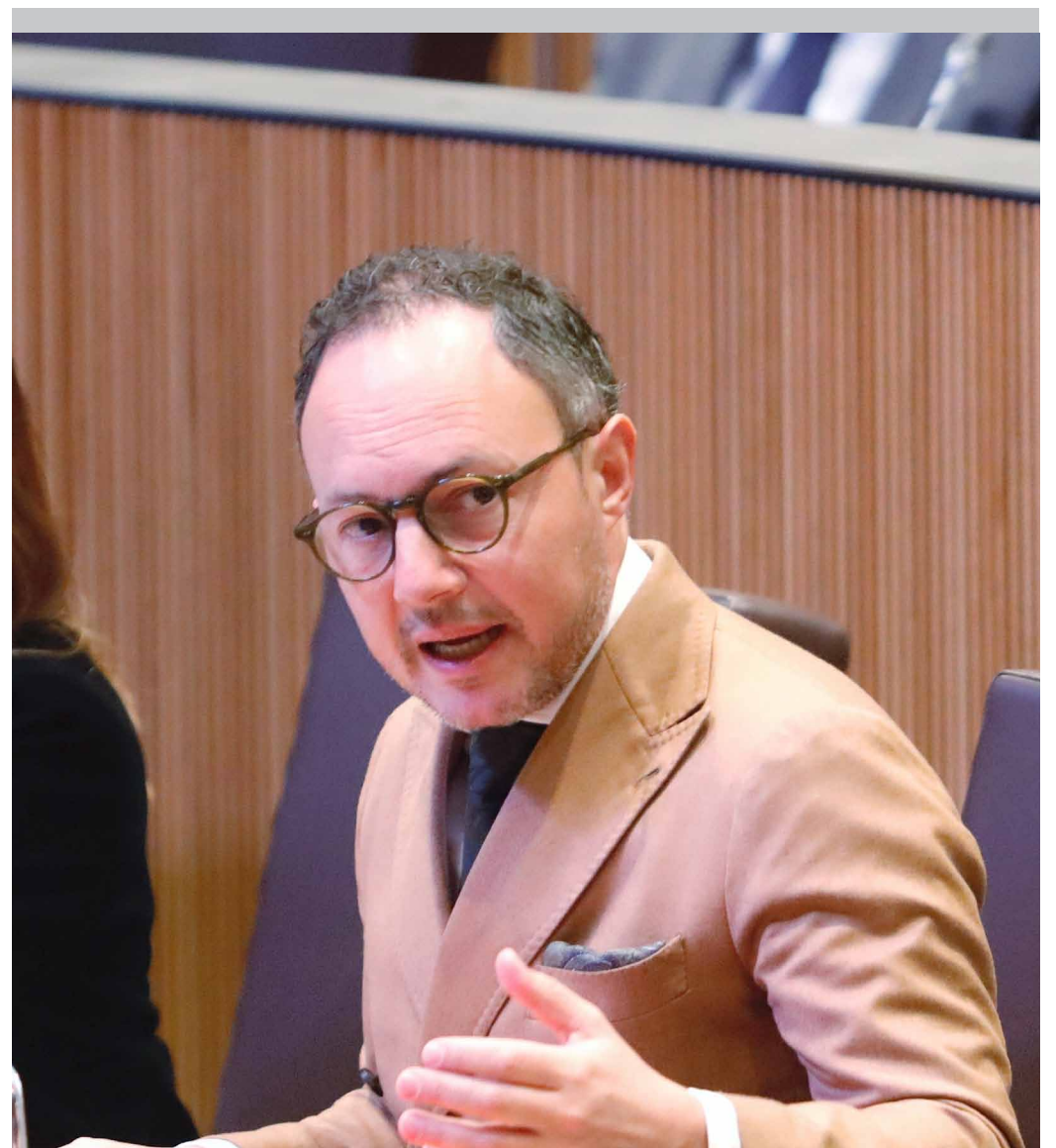
PARIS MAMEGHANI / ALEX MONTERO
ANDORRA LA VELLA

The head of Government, Xavier Espot, admits that the text should be renegotiated in the event that the member states do not accept any of the included articles: «If it were mixed, ratification by all the member states would be required, and if it were not, only ratification by the council would be required, which is why I cannot detail the date». This was ratified in the debate in the General Council regarding the call for a referendum on the Association Agreement with the European Union, in a session that highlighted the lack of clarity of the Government regarding the process of approving the definitive content of the negotiated text. Despite questions posed by Carine Montaner, president of the Andorra Endavant parliamentary group, Espot did not specify whether the Agree-

ment would be considered mixed or not, nor what the implications of this would be for the planned calendar.

Espot argued that it would not be prudent to set a date for the referendum while the Council of the European Union has not validated the text. «What we will not do is call it until the content is fully amended and confirmed,» he declared. However, he admitted that, in a hypothetical scenario in which one of the member states decided to renegotiate an article, specific changes could be made, a statement that raised more doubts about the degree of firmness of the agreed document.

Along the same lines, Minister Montaner criticized the Government's lack of definition, emphasizing that citizens have the right to know clearly what the text to be voted on will be and when the consultation will take place. She also insisted



The head of government, Xavier Espot.



Xavier Espot

HEAD OF GOVERNMENT

«In this parliamentary chamber, what there should be is a little more natural intelligence»

that «there is no reason to postpone the referendum if the intention is to guarantee citizen participation». Espot, on the other hand, replied that bringing forward the referendum without having the final validation would be «imprudent» and added that his Government do-

es not engage in «fear politics», despite accusing the opponents of generating alarmism.

The debate took a tense turn when Montaner pointed out that the Government had used artificial intelligence to evaluate certain aspects of the negotiated text, at a cost much higher than that of its own impact study, which is estimated at 14,000 euros. Espot replied with a comment in which he appealed to «natural intelligence» to suggest that there would be no need to debate issues like this, considering the president of Andorra Endavant, with an ironic tone, a distraction in the face of the lack of concrete answers about the roadmap. This comment generated a palpable tension in the debate, even more so when Espot remarked that

CONSELL GENERAL

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Cerni Escalé

CONCÒRDIA COUNCILOR

«It is absolutely irresponsible here to make people believe that this text can be renegotiated again»

«there should be a little natural intelligence in this chamber». However, he later apologized if anyone had been offended, but maintained that his intervention was framed in a context of intense debate.

Regarding the guarantees offered by the Agreement, the Head of Government reiterated that it had been drawn up with the support of the best advisors and that it represented the best option for the Principality. However, he warned that rejecting it would entail «terrible consequences» for the country. Regarding the possibility expressed by Espot of making specific changes to the negotiated text, this fueled criticism from the opposition, which accused the Government of not having approached the negotiation with sufficient rigor or transparency.



CONSELL GENERAL

The president of the Concòrdia parliamentary group, Cerni Escalé.



CONSELL GENERAL

The president of the Andorra Endavant parliamentary group, Carine Montaner.

However, Montaner insisted that the loss of mechanisms such as selective immigration could have a negative impact, while Espot assured that Andorra does not aspire to be part of

the Schengen area and that it will maintain its current border controls. Finally, the president of the Concòrdia parliamentary group, Cerni Escalé, lamented the lack of a complete

study that endorses the Agreement and accused the Government of generating confusion among the population. In addition, he criticized that «it is absolutely irresponsible to come here and make people believe that this can be renegotiated» and warned that «if your theses succeed, in 10 years we will all regret it». Despite the tense tone of the debate, Montaner wanted to introduce a touch of humor, which helped to relax the atmosphere slightly. However, Escalé and other members of Con-

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Carine Montaner

ANDORRA ENDAVANT COUNCILOR

«There is no reason to postpone the referendum if the intention of the government is to guarantee the citizen participation»

còrdia insisted that «what we are bringing here are the concerns of the citizens» and reiterated their doubts about the future implications of the Association Agreement with the EU. ●

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