

Miñana defends that the current text does not have a “consolidated basis”

However, Bartumeu recognizes the lack of information and defends accession as a necessity

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This Tuesday, the Cinemes Illa Carlemany witnessed the conference ‘Two visions on the association agreement of Andorra with the European Union’, organized by the APBI, with the interventions of the notary Joan Carles Rodríguez Miñana and the former head of government Jaume Bartumeu. The event highlighted the opposing points of view on the future of Andorra with the EU, since while the former has warned of the economic risks and the lack of solidity of the negotiated text, the former prime minister insisted that accession is essential to guarantee the country’s progress.

In statements prior to the start of the conference, Rodríguez Miñana highlighted the opportunity to debate the Agree-

ment in an open and critical manner and stressed the need to continue promoting similar debates. “It is a very good initiative that debates are starting to be raised between supporters and detractors, but they need to be brought into the political arena and stop being just part of the noise of public opinion,” he said. Miñana, at the same time, emphasized the lack of solidity of the negotiated text, maintaining that “it does not have strong or consolidated bases” and expressed concern about the impacts that accession could have on key sectors such as foreign investment and the labor market. An aspect that he included in his presentation, stating that this agreement can be summarized in four major freedoms: that of goods, that of people, that of services and that of capital.

Regarding foreign invest-



Bartumeu acknowledges the lack of information and defends accession as a necessity.

According to the notary, the Agreement would be summed up in freedom of capital, goods, people and services

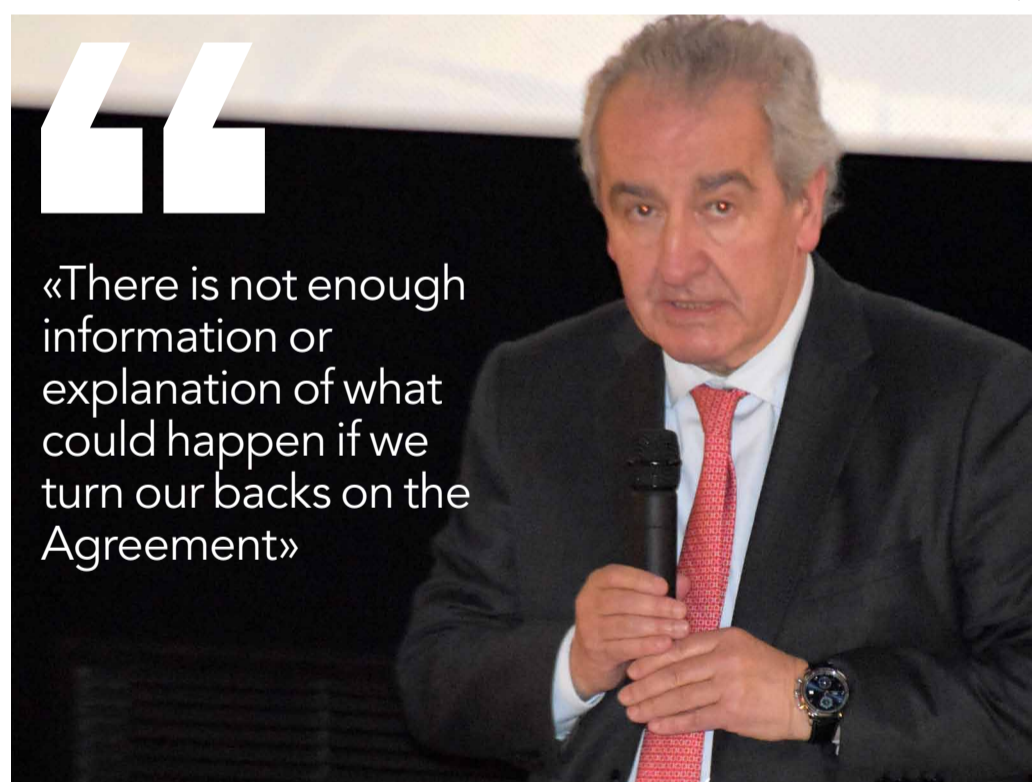
ment, Miñana warned that many investors who have arrived in Andorra looking for a stable environment far removed from community standards could see their expectations frustrated. “Many investors tell me that with this agreement they could find themselves in a situation that they wanted to avoid. It is the icing on the cake to end foreign invest-

ment”, he declared. In addition, he emphasized the precariousness of employment in the country, pointing out that the Andorran system is based on “cheap, poorly paid labor, and the Agreement does not seem to improve this reality, but could worsen it”. In this sense, he compared the economic model of Andorra with the Swiss one, explaining that “Switzerland pays very well to attract qualified talent, while we remain in sectors such as tourism, which require less qualified labor”.

Jaume Bartumeu, for his part and in contrast to this thought, recognized the lack of available information: “There is not enough information, nor enough explanation of what could happen if we turn our backs on the Association Agreement”, he said, referring to the closure of the negotiations a year ago. On the other hand, the former head of government insisted on the responsibility of the institutions to inform clearly and transparently: “It is the responsibility of everyone, but especially the government, to explain the advantages and without hiding the disadvantages”. He also called on citizens and those involved in the text to actively participate in the debate, since as he pointed out later in his speech, Andorra’s ne-



Notary Joan Carles Rodríguez Miñana.



Former head of government Jaume Bartumeu.

gotiations with Europe “began 33 years ago to ensure ties that, for now, are necessary”

In this way, the former prime minister consolidated, both to the press and in his speech, his position in support of the Agreement, arguing that it is essential to modernize and diversify the Andorran economy. “This agreement is not an option, but a necessity to integrate the country into a European framework that guarantees stability and economic development”, he pointed out, highlighting that the work of successive governments for more than 30 years has been oriented towards this objective.

It is worth noting that during the debate, the social and political impact that the Agreement could have on Andorra was also mentioned. Bartumeu pointed out that, although the advantages are significant, the disadvantages must be addressed with compensatory measures and adequate planning. “We must be able to explain clearly what the Agreement can bring, but also be honest about the sacrifices it may imply,” he said. An aspect that the former head of government wanted to corroborate in his speech, stating that if we negotiate with the EU “we must adhere to the rules of the game determined by the European Commission”. ●

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