

MENTAL HEALTH IN PRISON

More than half of the inmates at La Comella suffer from mental disorders

Seven of the eight female inmates and forty of the men present pathologies such as anxiety or depression

ALEX MONTERO
ESCALDES-ENGORDANY

The Minister of Justice and the Interior, Ester Molné, responded in writing to the questions posed by the General Councilor of Concòrdia, Núria Segués, about the internal functioning of La Comella Penitentiary Centre, placing special emphasis on the situation of the mental health of the inmates and the organization of the staff. According to the data provided by the Minister, a significant number of inmates suffer from some type of mental pathology. Among the women, seven of the eight inmates present disorders that include anxiety (three cases), depression (three cases), obsessive-compulsive disorder (one case), sleep disorders (four cases) and post-traumatic stress (one case).

On the other hand, among men, the data vary according to the prison regime: of the 31 preventive prisoners, 20 have diagnoses with anxiety (eleven cases), depression (nine cases), attention deficit (two cases), substance use (four cases), personality disorders (three cases), psychotic (one case), paraphilic (two cases) and sleep disorders (ten cases). In the case of convicts, of the 22 inmates, 15 have disorders such as anxiety (nine cases), depression (five cases), substance use (five cases), personality (three cases), psychotic disorders (one case), bipolar di-



Seven of the eight female inmates and forty men have pathologies such as anxiety, depression or sleep disorders.

sorder (one case) and sleep disorders (seven cases). The minister highlighted that “all inmates with mental illnesses receive medical and psychological monitoring” and stressed that the center has a multidisciplinary team to attend to their needs. This team includes a healthcare doctor, a psychologist, two psychiatrists, four nurses and a social worker. The psychologist works from Monday to Friday, while psychiatrists visit the

center two days a week. Nurses work in rotating shifts to ensure 24-hour health coverage. “Constant and personalized monitoring is key to ensuring the improvement of the well-being of the inmates and their stability within the center,” said Molné.

In relation to the internal organization, the Penitentiary Center is divided into several modules to adapt to the needs of the inmates. One of these is the mental health module,

THE FIGURES

20

Of the 31 preventive inmates, twenty have diagnoses such as substance use or psychotics.

22

A total of 22 inmates are currently admitted under the penal regime at the Penitentiary Center.

62

La Comella currently has 62 members, allowing a ratio of 1.27 inmates per worker.

which has capacity for four places but currently only houses two inmates. The other modules include separate spaces for men, women and preventive, in addition to areas set up for educational and therapeutic activities, such as gyms, libraries and workshops. Among the most outstanding programs are the non-violent behavior workshop and the psychosocial workshop, oriented towards reintegration.

In terms of staff, the center has 62 members of the prison staff, in addition to social educators, health and administrative staff. This staff allows a ratio of 1.27 inmates per worker, a figure that the minister described as “adjusted to the operational needs of the center”. ●

CHRISTMAS RECEPTION AT THE EPISCOPAL PALACE

Vives invites to hold a «broad and serious» debate on the Agreement

The co-prince frames his speech in the housing crisis, mental health and the Association Agreement

LAURA GÓMEZ RODRÍGUEZ
LA SEU D'URGELL

The Bishopric of Urgell held the traditional Christmas reception at the Episcopal Palace this Wednesday, an event presided over by the episcopal co-prince, Joan-Enric Vives, who brought together all the Andorran authorities to listen to his Christmas speech. During his speech, the co-prince emphasized the country's major challenges, such as the housing crisis, mental health, the birth rate and the management of immigration.

Vives began by recalling that Christmas is a time to renew hope. "This renewed hope must help us Andorrans to face responsibly and courageously the great challenges we face as a country," he said, highlighting issues such as access to housing, the aging population, mental health and socioeconomic inequalities. He emphasized the need for a dialogue with high aspirations and collaboration between institutions and citizens



The episcopal co-prince, Joan-Enric Vives, and the coadjutor bishop, Josep-Lluís Serrano Pentinat, during the reception.

to overcome these obstacles.

THE RATIFICATION OF THE ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT, A CROSSROADS FOR THE FUTURE // Another of the highlights was the Association Agreement with the European Union, which the Government continues to maintain to be submitted for ratification next year. Vives acknowledged having accompanied the Government in the negotiation process and described the text as "correct", ensuring that it respects the sovereignty

and specificities of the Andorran institutions. However, he reiterated that the final decision lies with the Andorran people and called for a "broad, respectful debate guided by the common good".

The housing crisis was one of the central themes of the speech. Vives pointed out that the construction of public housing, although it will still take some time to materialize, marks "the beginning of an important process" to respond to one of the co-



Joan-Enric Vives

EPISCOPAL CO-PRINCE

"This renewed hope must help us to face with responsibility and courage the great challenges we have as a country"

untry's most urgent needs.

On the other hand, the co-prince celebrated the start of work on the new Alt Urgell Mental Health Center, which is being built in the Seminary of La Seu d'Urgell. "This center will offer services to the various Pyrenean territories, in concert with Andorra and Catalonia, and will contribute to providing a good response to the needs of our population", he stated, inviting the authorities to visit the facilities when they are finished. ●

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