

# el Periòdic News

DEBATE FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE OMNIBUS LAW

## The minority tries to stop the “child trap”, without victory

Despite denouncing the lack of mechanisms, the majority defends the viability of the current regulation

LAURA GÓMEZ / ELENA HERNÁNDEZ  
ANDORRA LA VELLA

The General Council approved the Omnibus Law this Thursday with the votes in favor of the parliamentary majority and the rejection of the opposition, which has not seen any of its amendments accepted. The new regulations introduce measures in the field of housing, sustainability and taxation, with the construction of a public housing park as a central element. “In reality we are defending the same thing, but in a different way”. With this statement, the councilor of the Social Democratic parliamentary group (PS), Pere Baró, wanted to highlight the proximity of the positions between his group and Concòrdia with respect to amendments 6 and 7 of the PS and 15 of Concòrdia, referring to the so-called “child trap”. Despite this coincidence, the three proposals have been rejected once again by the parliamentary majority.

On behalf of Concòrdia, the general councilor Núria Segués has denounced the lack of control mechanisms over evictions:

“Since there are no control mechanisms, there have been families who have had to stay on the street, seeing how their home had become once again on the rental market”. However, the Minister of Housing, Conxita Marsol, has defended that “currently the penalty is doubled”, while the Head of Government, Xavier Espot, has assured that a balance has been sought between speed and legal certainty. Finally, the amendments have been rejected with a maximum of 9 votes in favor and up to 19 against.

On the other hand, amendments 1 and 8 of the Social Democrats, which proposed limiting real estate investments by non-residents to avoid speculation, have also not prospered. “This will not be the law that will solve the housing problem,” lamented Baró, who called for urgent measures: “Measures must be taken now.” However, the non-attached councilor, Víctor Pintos, has labelled the PS proposal as unrealistic: “This amendment is a fantasy.” This has ignited the debate, and Baró has accused Pintos of defend-



The social democratic councilor and spokesperson, Pere Baró, detailing his contemplations.

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“This will not be the law that will solve our housing crisis. Immediate measures must be applied and tools provided to protect tenants”

ding the interests of investors over the population: “If you come to do business with housing, you don’t have to come.” The PS has also seen its proposal to increase the tax burden on non-resident real estate rejected. Baró has thus defended that the objective was to tax speculative profits, but the democratic councilor, Meritxell López, has re-

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NÚRIA SEGUÉS  
CONCÒRDIA COUNCILOR

“Without control mechanisms for evictions, many families have had to leave their homes”

plied: “You can’t say that we weren’t brave when we raised taxes on non-residents to 25%.

The debate on housing has highlighted the division between the regulation of the real estate market and the defense of foreign investment. Concòrdia has proposed a differentiated zoning between residents and investors to avoid speculation. However, the president of Ciutadans Compromesos, Carles Naudi, has criticized these measures, considering them discriminatory and that they “would leave first- and second-tier residents”. Finally, the amendment on zoning (3) has been rejected with 20 votes against and 7 in favor. ●



## COUNTERMEASURES TO THE OMNIBUS LAW

# Road closures and slow marches

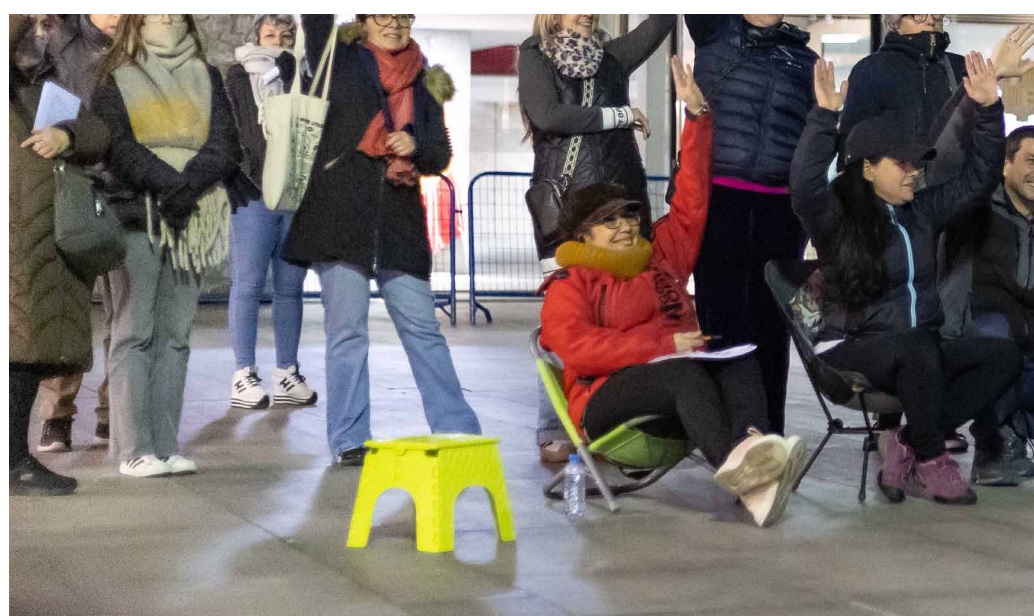
The assembly proposes several protest actions to demand improvements in access to housing

ELENA HERNÁNDEZ MOLINA  
ANDORRA LA VELLA

Coinciding with similar mobilizations in Spain, with the aim of demanding improvements in access to housing in Andorra. The decision was taken during the popular assembly held this Thursday in Plaça del Consell General, just after the parliamentary debate and the vote on the Omnibus Law. The event was attended by around fifty people.

According to the spokesperson for the Coordinator, Rebeca Bonache, the choice of date is not accidental: "The 5th is just after the Constitution Day, which we already know that people take advantage of to leave the country. We believe that it is a feasible date because there will still be tourism, the ski slopes will be open and many people will remain in the country waiting for the next long weekend". In addition, Bonache highlighted that the call coincides with mass demonstrations in Spain to demand decent housing.

During the assembly, various forms of mobilization have been



Moment of one of the votes that was held during the Assembly before the General Council.



## REBECA BONACHE

SPOKESPERSON  
FOR THE COORDINATOR

"We believe that it is a feasible date because there will still be tourism and many people will remain in the country waiting for the next long weekend"

en proposed, including border closures, blockades on ski slopes, slow marches and informational pickets. Regarding these actions,

Bonache assured that, although some may be difficult to implement, "they are all on the table". Among the demands of the coordinator stand out the regulation of rental and purchase prices of homes, the stop evictions without affordable residential alternatives, the creation of a property registry to identify the real owners and the end of the so-called 'child trap'. This practice consists of the recovery of a property by the owner claiming a family need for it and, later, putting it up for rent again at a much

higher price.

**TESTIMONIES OF THE IMPACTS** // Several cases were presented during the assembly that demonstrate this problem. One of the attendees reported that he received an eviction notice when he was paying a monthly rent of 850 euros. "After a few months I saw that my apartment was available to rent again, but this time at 1,900 euros," he explained. Despite having tried to contact the administration to ask for explanations, he did not receive any response until the coordinator intervened in his case.

Another witness explained that he is currently at risk of eviction. "In May they will kick me out of my house," he declared. According to him, after the death of the owner of the property where he lives, his heirs informed him of an increase in rent from 600 to 1,200 euros. Given his inability to assume this increase, he offered to pay 800 euros, but the family warned him that, if he did not accept the new price, the apartment would be destined for a grandson of the owner. ●

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