

The Reasoner warns that the regime in La Comella exceeds the penal limits

Xavier Cañada denounces the isolation, medication and lack of conditions for reintegration

EL PERIÒDIC



The prison center of La Comella.

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ESCALDES-ENGORDANY

In the framework of his appearance, the Citizen's Reasoner, Xavier Cañada, has focused on the living conditions in the prison center of La Comella. In this regard, he has assured that the institution has received, for the first time, direct demands from inmates and has confirmed that a specific questionnaire has been developed to have a clear picture of the situation.

According to him, many inmates spend between 19 and 20 hours locked in 10 m² cells, of



XAVIER CAÑADA

CITIZEN'S REASONER

«This regime goes beyond what is a criminal sentence, because it not only deprives of liberty, but also implies prolonged isolation that can seriously affect the inmates»

«The prison, as it currently operates, is not used to rehabilitate. The activities are disconnected, are carried out on a one-off basis and have no continuity over time»

ten shared with two other people. In addition, meals are taken in the cell and not in the common dining room. Cañada has warned that this prolonged

regime can have serious consequences on a mental and emotional level. "This regime exceeds what is a criminal sentence," he ruled.

Another worrying fact is the high use of medication: in June 2024, 72 inmates were taking antipsychotics. The Reasoner quoted Dr. Carles Mur, who stated during an institutional visit that "without medication, this isolation would be unbearable." Despite acknowledging that there are activities such as workshops, library or gym, Cañada noted that these do not compensate for the excess hours of confinement, since they are subtracted from the time spent outside the cell. "Many young people leave the same or worse than they were when they entered. Isolation, even if it is legal, is not an adequate human environment," he warned.

Cañada defended an in-depth review of Andorran prison policy and opened the door to alternatives such as restorative justice or an open regime center, which focuses on real reintegration. "The prison, as it currently operates, is not used to rehabilitate. The activities are disconnected and have no continuity over time," he lamented. He also recalled the suicide of an inmate that occurred on October 31st, 2024, as a turning point that should make both the Government and society reflect. At the request of the Minister of Justice and the Interior, Ester Molné, the Reasoner visited the penitentiary and presented formal recommendations. ●

Cañada warns of risks in minors under guardianship and demands urgent actions

El Reasoner denounces shortcomings in the protection system

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The Citizen's reasoner, Xavier Cañada, denounced this Tuesday to the General Council body the situation of vulnerability suffered by several minors who live in the country without administrative regularization.

During his annual appearance to take stock of the year 2024, he put the initial focus on children, one of the priority groups for his action.

"We cannot look the other way. This situation enormously affects minors", affirmed Cañada, demanding urgent measures to guarantee the fundamental rights of children who are in an irregular situation. According to him, these are kids and adolescents who are residents in the country, but who cannot be legally regrouped due to the economic conditions required. This group does not have access to meal grants, study grants, nor can it be assessed by CONAVA, and only enjoys the right to schooling until the age of 16.

Regarding health, Cañada has denounced that these children only have access to emergency

services, without an assigned pediatrician or regular medical monitoring. "There are families who go to private insurance or are forced to travel to La Seu d'Urgell," he said. Access to leisure and recreational activities is also limited by the availability of places in the municipalities.

Given this reality, the Reasoner has called for institutional responsibility: "I ask them to act." And he has warned that the absence of official data on these children "is already a revealing fact." In this line, he has framed the phenomenon in a global migratory context that also affects Andorra and has recalled the country's commitment to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. «We are not an island. This migration will have to be managed,» he reiterated, with a specific mention of the children of seasonal workers.

CONCERN ABOUT THE HIGH NUMBER OF INSTITUTIONALIZED MINORS Cañada has also expressed concern about the number of minors under the guardianship of the State. According to data from April and November 2024, 62 children were under guardianship, of whom more than 40 lived in institutions. The Advocate has warned about the psychological impact that this situation can have, especially on children un-



The Citizen's Advocate denounces the shortcomings of the protection system.

«The Reasoner is not just a receiver of complaints, but an active observer»

» In his annual report, Cañada has also highlighted that in 2024, 329 files were opened, 23 of which ex officio. Among these, five are related to children, insisting that the Reasoner's task must be not only reactive, but also preventive. Thus, informative actions have been developed with more than 100 young participants, visits to socio-health centers and awareness-raising activities such as the school literary competition. Cañada defended the improvements implemented in the institution to make it more accessible: free phone, new website in five languages, home care for justified cases and presence in the territory. He also highlighted the work of qualitative analysis of complaints and the willingness to collaborate with other administrations.

der 7 years of age who have been institutionalized since the first year of life.

«What could we have done as a State to prevent separation? How to make family return easier?», Cañada asked, calling for a deep reflection on the protection system. In this sense, he proposed the implementation of the specialized foster care figure, but it has not yet been deployed. The current foster care regulation dates from 1991, before the Constitution, and the Judge considered it urgent to update it.

He also referred to the visits made during the year to the CREI and the CRAE, some announced and others surprise, from which several recommendations have been derived. In this way, he has highlighted the importance of guaranteeing spaces and environments closer to family life to favor the emotional recovery of institutionalized children. ●

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