Internal consumption reduced by 8.6% the first quarter of the year

Government admits the data is relevant but points out that a conclusion cannot be drawn in three months

Internal consumption dropped 8.62% during the first quarter of 2018 compared to the same period of the previous year. This is extracted from the figures from the collection of the General Indirect Tax (IGI) for the first three months of the year. Specifically, from January to March, the report on the execution of the Government’s budget shows that 31.7 million euros have been spent this year, compared to the 34.7 million registered in the first quarter of the previous year, representing a decrease of 2.9 million in absolute terms and -8.62% in relative terms.

The increase in price of tobacco last year has led to a reduction in the rate on foreign trade. This tax records the increase in value of goods and services produced in the national economy, so that its decline is a sign of weakness in the internal market, which could be attributed to a still fragile economic recovery.

In this regard, the closing document for the quarter states that the importance of this tax cannot be disregarded as it represents a substantial part of the revenue from current revenue and, therefore, the behaviour of this figure allows to verify if this trend is confirmed or reverted so that the budgetary forecasts made for the year 2018 can be accomplished. However, the report prepared by the Government makes it clear that a single quarter does not allow us to draw conclusions and the related figures such as imports make it predictable that the forecasts will be achieved.

First quarter data of this year show a drop in real estate transactions in the country.

A woman shopping in a store in the Principality.

High revenue from the beginning of last year is due to the entry into force on March 2 of last year of the increase in the rate on tobacco consumption that led to the operators of the sector acquiring stock before of the rate increase. According to the Government, "if we take into account this effect, we find that the value of the rate of this first quarter of 2018 is similar to the historic ones, for this reason they are around 25 million euros for quarter."

Less real estate transactions. From January to March of this year 2018, tax revenues on real estate transactions have been 475 thousand euros, which means an important decrease compared to 610 thousand euros registered in the same period of the previous year, representing a decrease of 135,000 euros, 22.13% less. As indicated in the report prepared by the Ministry of Finance, "the behaviour of this figure allows to verify if this trend is confirmed or inverted."

The increase in price of tobacco last year has led to a reduction in the rate on foreign trade.
FOREIGN INVESTMENTS

French investment for renewable energy infrastructures

Andorra is a good scenario to invest in renewable energies

The visit by the Secretary of State for ecological transition and solidarity, Sebastièn Lecornu, made this Saturday in Andorra, has served to sign a protocol of intent to strengthen the collaboration between the two countries in the fight against climate change and to agree on the creation of a technical work group that in a period of six months can initiate concrete projects in the field of renewable energies. The Minister of Environment, Agriculture and Sustainability, Silvia Calvó, explained that the objective is to achieve the investment and technological support of French companies to carry out the recent approved energy infrastructure plan that foresees, among other actions, the construction of four new hydroelectric power stations and three photovoltaic energy installations, all in order to triple national energy production by 2030.

In fact, both the Minister and the French Secretary of State have remarked that the energy transition is not possible only with the impetus of the public sector, and Lecornu has emphasized that private energy companies are realizing that renewable energies, although they require a significant investment, they are becoming profitable. “Working with French companies is the guarantee that everything will work”, he said.

Silvia Calvó explained that through this work group, the two types of private investment provided in the law will be explored: on the one hand that Andorra’s Electric Forces (FEDA) can be part of investment companies together with private companies, and on the other that it can grant concessions so that the private ones directly manage the different infrastructures. The head of government, Toni Martí, also stressed that Andorra’s interest is to approach France, taking into account that it is a leader in the fight against climate change and has the best technology in this area.

Lecornu wanted to acknowledge the work that Andorra is doing in terms of energy transition, and has assured that the country’s dimensions are ideal for being successful in this goal. It is also right that the will is to bet on the hydroelectric power stations, which allow the energy to be stored and tracked according to the consumption, as well as the photovoltaic energy, since he considers it has a very good performance. It is creating new investment opportunities and in a short period of time there will be better solutions for its storage. In addition, in this area, it has been celebrated that Andorra has launched the solar land registry, a tool that records the use of the solar resource on roofs of buildings, which places the Principality ahead of leading countries such as France.

Thus, the Secretary of State has pointed out the good state of the French companies to opt for hydroelectric and solar energy, and also added that there is work needed with regard to gas and heat networks. It must be recalled that the Government has already placed the first stone for two new cogeneration plants (in Andorra la Vella and Pas de la Casa), and that the energy infrastructure plan also expects the creation of up to six heat networks and a biomass plant.

Lecornu held a meeting with the head of government, Toni Martí, and a working meeting with all the agents involved in the matter. Later, he visited the small hydraulic power plant in Arcalis, which supplies the entire ski station with renewable energies.

STATISTICAL DATA

9.2% vehicle registration increase during the first half of the year

Trucks and vans experience the highest increase with 20.7%

Vehicle registrations during the first half of the year increased by 9.2% over the same period last year, according to data published by the Statistics Department a few days ago. During the first six months of 2018, 2,401 vehicles were registered, compared to 2,198 the previous year, and the biggest growth was for trucks and vans, with 20.7%, followed by cars at some distance, with 13.5%. Regarding the type of fuel, gasoline vehicles experienced an increase of 20.1% during the first half of the year, in the same way that those that are 100% electric, which grew by 16; the plug in gasoline hybrids, which received seven registrations more than the same period of 2017; and those without fuel, which added a unit. By contrast, diesel cars reduced 4.9% registrations. If we focus on the month of June, registrations experienced a growth of 18% compared to the same month of the previous year. A total of 492 vehicles received new licence plates and the most important increase occurred between trucks and vans, with 33.3%; followed by cars, with 22.4%; and motorcycles and mopeds, with 5.8%. Only the category of other vehicles suffered a decline of up to 18.2%.

Vehicles that are 100% electric and hybrids only add a few units compared to the same period last year

Once again, vehicle registration for gasoline vehicles dropped in June, concretely by 2.4%. At the same time, those of gasoline had a positive variation of 33.8% and the hybrids added seventeen units, eleven more than the same period of the previous year. On the other hand, 100% electric cars grew in eight units, five less than in June 2017, and those without fuel, in nine units, although it means one vehicle less than the same month of the previous year. The data also reflect that in the last twelve months there were a total of 4,755 registrations, which represented an increase of 12.8% with respect to the previous corresponding period, when the figure stood at 4,216. The positive variations are for passenger cars, with 16.3%; other vehicles, with 15.8%; and trucks and vans, with 12.2%; while motorcycles and mopeds decreased by 9.5%. At the same time, gasoline cars grew by 28.6% and, on the other hand, gasoline prices dropped again by 2%.

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Although the Comú of Sant Julià announces that it is committed to national talent, the fact is that the great event of the Festa Major this year, from July 27 to 31, will be performed by foreigners. Not just anyone, but well-known names such as: Georgie Dann, Macaco, Buhos, Roba Estesa and Itaca Band are the biggest stars, but there will be no shortage of smaller format concerts. Regarding Andorran bands, such as The Swing Girls with their song versions from the 50s and 60s they will perform this summer in all the parishes of the country.

The Festa Major de Sant Julià is a well renowned party in the country, especially by the younger generations. This year, the Comú has set out to reinforce the participation of all kinds of audiences. In addition there will be different locations for all types of people and ages since it was mostly aimed for teenagers. Therefore they will create an environment around the square of Sant Roc where the relaxed version of the party will be at. It will also have more relaxed concerts such as the Cadillac Orchestra, on Saturday 28, the Old School, on Sunday 29 or the before mentioned swing girls who will play the following day. In addition, all this area will be surrounded by the Vintage Fair that takes over from the Esoteric Fair held in previous years.

THE APPEARANCE OF GEORGIE DANN

When the rumours started to spread that Georgie Dann would be at the Sant Julià party, the national band Punkers Love the 80s immediately and passionately asked to be the publishers of the artist since the musician is one of their idols, as they declared. «They called us a week ago, when it was already confirmed, organizing the program is a month’s job and making a change was now impossible», said the director of Culture, Elisenda Palomares. On this same topic, the Minister of Culture, Josep Roig, emphasized on the support of national talent that have helped the Comú on numerous occasions but that this time it was not possible: «We are sure that we will find the right moment», he admitted. Palomares explained that she invited the group to send their dossier and presentation to be taken into account in future events but «they haven’t done it yet».

BUDGET AND RETURN

Roig explained that the budget for this year’s Festa Major is of 180,000 euros but he stressed that «we calculate that for every euro of investment the return is between seven and eight euros for the parish». That is, according to Comú calculations, the local bars and other services will receive about 1.3 million euros in five days.

NOT ONLY MUSIC

The list of great names present in the lauredian parish is not the only thing to be excited about. The Festa Major includes a series of activities that also have a very good reception by the attendees. For example, the water slide that last year was very much appreciated and the Comú intends to repeat this year in a location still to be determined because they want to make it even bigger and continue to search for a street with the right width and slope. In addition, they also offer aquatic activities or other small details so that the party can be unforgettable through the photographic cabin located in Plaça Sant Roc that will immortalize great moments.

ORGANIZATIONS AND TRADITIONS

Sant Julià will not forget about its traditions: ball cerdà, passa de solters and gegants.

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Circus: behind the scenes

Going backstage to see the Quebeckers and talking with the artistic directors of "Diva".

Members of the circus are always prepared for any situation, they are very adaptable.

but it’s a car park!” he said. For Budzau, it doesn’t make sense that a country like Andorra that receives 8.3 million tourists a year does not have a venue.

The director of Andorra Turisme wanted to make it clear that, in no case, the Government passed the section of this chapter: “It has not been ruled out or forgotten but there is a tight budget because to do it well requires money.” Budzau was positive about the advances of the multifunctional venue in the next parliamentary term: “There will be elections soon and we will see if the government will support this idea. I hope so. Since we have already witnessed the first years of the Cirque in which people criticized saying that it would not work, now we have seen staggering figures for a low season like July. In addition, Budzak, although he praised the centrality of the current location, did not rule out that the circus could be installed in another parish in the forthcoming editions.

THE CIRCUS WANTS TO STAY At this point, there is another year in the contract signed with Cirque du Soleil and those responsible informed us that they will begin work on the next show immediately when Diva’s performances end, although they could not clarify whether they will follow the same theme, as happened with the five editions of Scala. What was made very clear was that they want to become a tradition on the Andorran summers. “If it depended on us, we would extend the contract and come every year, we are very pleased and excited when we come to Andorra,” said the Deputy Director of Business and Operations, Céline Payelle.

Budzak explained that this year or the next will be the last time the circus will be at Parc Central.

Keeping the good image: new young members will be seen on the main streets

50 informants will be the representatives of the streets of Andorra la Vella.

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Without wanting to pressuring them but with the intention of motivating them and to understand their social responsibility, the counsel of Tourism and Commercial Promotions of Andorra la Vella, Mónica Codina, told fifty young people who will be the image that tourists will take from the capital this summer. These are the new tourist informants that last July and August, both at the Tourist Office and at different points in the parish to resolve any doubts from visitors.

Most informants are between 16 and 23 years old and in the coming days you will be able to see them wearing blue polos or in green, depending on whether they are in the Office or on the streets. The staff will also conduct surveys with the intention of discovering the interests and preferences of visitors.

Thanks to these surveys, they are aware that last year that although many tourists were satisfied with the Historic Center and the commercial offers, they felt that they missed out on nature themed activities. For this reason, this year a mountain guide was arranged that will organize guided tours, “easy routes for four hours”, through the valleys of Madriu and Encar. Codina told them that Marc Pons started out being an informant now he has become an important politician. She wished that these workers will have the same luck as he did.

finalists of Lab Impact work with experts

Young entrepreneurs—The 3 final projects of Lab Impact Andorra a program for entrepreneurs jointly developed by Morallanc and the Ship2B Foundation, participate this week in training sessions. For 3 days, the promoters of Andorra Parl’APP, El beat and Social Miners are being mentored the Ship2B team.

Up to 300 euro fines if a dog enters a pasture

The Government presented the informative panels that the Department of Agriculture will distribute to the owners of pastures. Where it is indicated that the access of dogs or other pets is prohibited. In addition, the owners are reminded that this act can be sanctioned between 60 and 300 euro fine, according to the Law of possession and protection of animals.

BRIEFS

El Diamant: will host three Michelin stars

GASTRONOMY—In autumn Andorra will have a gastronomic space of 700 square meters with 3 Michelin stars. It will be at The Embassy, located at the bottom of the building El Diamant on Avinguda Meritxell 31, where you will find a gourmet market in the hands of three great chefs. Romain Fornell, Bernard Bach, Òscar Manresa and the hotel businessman José Gaspar.

Film director Hugo Stven visits Andorra

CINEMA—The director of «Solo», Hugo Stven, will visit the country on July 13 to make a presentation. On Tuesday the first images of the film were made public through a trailer uploaded to the Internet. The film tells the story of a surfer who will have to learn to live again after an accident.

Finalists of Lab Impact work with experts