Landry Riba says the EU will be «understandable» to specificities

Secretary of State says they will try to get the best deal on the free movement of people policy

Fifty people attend the first village meeting in Canillo for the future agreements with Brussels

The Secretary of State for European Affairs, Landry Riba, assured that if Andorra is capable of having «the maximum of arguments and the maximum of proposals» during the negotiation process of the association agreement, the EU will be «understanding and permisable in certain specificities», although he also acknowledged that «we cannot introduce exceptions to all the rules».

In this regard, Riba said that «the EU does not know us well enough to make proposals that suit us well» so he said «a certain margin that we will try to use 100%» to respect the free movement of people or goods, some of the concerns expressed by about 50 people attending the town meeting on the association agreement in Canillo, the first meeting of the 11 that the Executive has scheduled in the coming weeks.

During the citizen participation session, the public also expressed doubts regarding the absence of precedents when negotiating with the EU through the association agreement formula, something that Riba explained that through a study commissioned to a German consultancy it has been concluded that the countries that make the most profit in the internal market are precisely those that have not joined the EU, but that the revenue is expressed more through instruments used by Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein. Despite that, Riba excused himself for not answering the more specific questions given that «there are details that I cannot advance because they would compromise Andorra’s negotiating strategy».

In this regard, Riba explained to those present that the association agreement is the most favourable option for both sides and ruled out other scenarios such as EU accession «too high commitments», belonging to the European Economic Area «because it is not a member of EFTA (European Free Trade Association) or continuing bilateral agreements «for extremely complex management».

One of the other questions that the public referred to the Secretary of State for European Affairs is about the census that will be able to participate in the final referendum, to which Riba admitted that despite not having dealt with this situation in depth that the Government foresees that the framework of voters will be limited to «Andorran nationals».

«The political outlook in the EU as a whole is not the easiest nowadays» answered Riba when asked about the instability generated by Brexit. «This inevitably affects us. The elements that can be included during our negotiations are likely to be used in the negotiations that end up taking place in the United Kingdom» said the head of the negotiations, who hoped «to be able to progress without the disturbances that this situation generates».

«We need a new model of relations with the European Union because we depend on a fragile economy based on trade, tourism and the financial sector. If one of these suffered a recession we would find ourselves in a complex situation. That is why we have to look for an alternative to diversify the economy and increase confidence in Andorra as a place of business» argued Riba during the theoretical explanation part of the meeting to justify the need to reach an agreement with Europe.

On the other hand, Riba referred to participation in European programmes such as Erasmus, Life or Horizon 2020 as one of the «major counterparts to the effort that Andorra will have to make» during the negotiation process.
The SAAS receives 4.4 million more and closes 2018 with a surplus

The entity, which had an expenditure of 63.8 million euros, obtained 7.7% more in public funding than last year.

Public funding to the SAAS in 2018 was 48.8 million euros, four million more than last year, when it stood at 45.3 million and private funding also increased from 14.2 million euros in 2017 to 15.1 million euros last year. Thus, total revenue amounted to 63.9 million euros, while expenditure was 63.8 million euros and therefore, the SAAS achieved a positive annual budget result. Expenses were divided into personnel (39 million for 1,078 workers), general (23 million) and investment (1.8 million). All this comes from the annual report of the body made public a few days ago, coinciding with the 25th anniversary of the inauguration of the Nostra Senyora de Meritxell Hospital. During the celebrations, both the Minister of Health, Joan Martínez Benazet, and the general director of the SAAS, Josep Maria Piqué, said their major challenges are “tearing down the walls of the medical center, as well as the reorganization of the Emergency Department.”

The SAAS said that works are planned to extend the Emergency Service, the general director of the SAAS said that works are planned towards minimal hospitalizations. The idea, then, is to modify the structure and Benazet proposed two possible ways: either increase the medical stays in the time slots in which more people come to the Emergency Department, or incorporate a family doctor in the Service who visits the Emergency Department, or incorporate a family doctor in the Service who visits.

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT In reference to a possible extension of the Emergency Service, the general director of the SAAS said that what works are planned towards 2021. The goal is to improve the care of all patients while prioritizing emergencies. Today, banal problems are put in the same drawer with real emergencies, and that means that we are not efficient enough, said Piqué. The idea, then, is to modify the structure and Benazet proposed two possible ways: either increase the medical stays in the time slots in which more people come to the Emergency Department, or incorporate a family doctor in the Service who visits the Emergency Department. The challenge is to tear down the walls of the medical center, as well as the reorganization of the Emergency Department. The general director of the SAAS, Josep Maria Piqué and the Minister of Health, Joan Martínez Benazet.

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Public sector expenditure dropped by 18% in 2018

The surplus was 28 million, with a reduction in income.

The figures

- 1,460 million euros is the total public sector expenditure in 2018.
- 1,488 million is the revenue figure, which was reduced by 17.3%.
- 28 million euros is the surplus with which 2017’s financial year closed.

Politics

Francesc Camp will be DA’s candidate for Mayor in Canillo

The former Minister has made the decision to run for the position in Canillo. This is the first time a member of the local elections, DA has already made its decision clear.

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department d’estadística

EL PERIÒDIC
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Public spending fell markedly last year by 17.7%, according to budget implementation data published on Monday by the Statistics Department. In total, aggregate expenditure in 2018 was 1,460 million euros, compared to 1,774 million in 2017. The reduction in spending was in parallel with the fall of 17.3% of revenue, which were 1,488 million, a much lower figure than the 1,800 million collected in 2017. Thus, the public accounts closed with a surplus of 28 million euros, although reducing expenditure and revenue, whereas in 2017 the surplus was of 26 million, that is to say, lower than last year, despite the fact that revenue was much higher. According to the note sent by the Department of Statistics, the decrease in these two sections is mainly motivated by the lower clearance in financial assets and liabilities related to the financing of public debt.

Without taking into account financial assets nor financial liabilities, the settlement of the aggregate expenditure of the public sector was 1,122 million euros and that of income, 1,214 million. In the public sector, items increased by 3.7% for personnel and 6.4% for investments. Meanwhile, the State collected 377 million euros in direct taxes, 8.5% more, but in terms of indirect taxes it received 1.5% less. The settlement of expenditure at the central administration, which includes the Government, was 672 million, with a decrease over 2017 of 29.8%. This reduction was due to the fact of having a lower amortisation of public debt for 2018 compared to last year. The settlement was also reduced by 20.3% at the AREB (State Agency for the Resolution of Andorran Banking Institutions), due to the reduction in expenses related to legal advice, and the AFA (Andorran Financial Authority), with a decrease of 20.3% due to the fall in financial asset expenses related to public sector debt over the previous year.

CAPITAL’S EXPENDITURE / The settlement of the local administration amounted to 153 million euros. Four of the seven comuns managed to reduce spending during 2018. These were the corporations of Canillo, which spent 11.4 million euros (3.9% less); Ordino, with 10.5 million (2.4% less); la Massana, with 14 million (2.6% less); and Escaldes-Engordany, with 27.5 million and a decrease of 4.3%. Meanwhile, Andorra la Vella, Encamp and Sant Julià de Lòria increased their spending. The case of the capital, which spent 50.6 million euros, is the most important increase, a 43.5%, and is mainly due to the investments made for the remodelling of Meritxell avenue. In Encamp, the increase in expenditure, of 27 million, was increased by 5.6%, while Sant Julià spent 12.2 million, reiterating an increase of 7.6%.

The surplus was 28 million, with a decrease of 19.6% compared to 2017. As for the telecommunication company, the reduction during last year is mainly due to the decrease in financial asset expenses related to public sector debt. Expenditure on personnel earmarked for the company increased by 5.2%, with 16 million euros. In the case of FEDA, the item for personnel expenses was the only one that increased, in this case by 7.8%, with an expense of 6 million euros.

The minister has made the decision «for of the support received»

POLITICS

With barely a month to go before it has to present its candidatures for the local elections, DA has already made clear who its candidate for mayor in Canillo. This is the former Minister of Tourism, Francesc Camp, who confirmed the decision through a Twitter tweet. In the same tweet it was pointed out that on Sunday 4th of October, would give my approval to lead the candidacy and thanked «the party members for the trust they have placed in me. Thus, he assures that «from today we start working to draw up a list that encourages voters».

In fact, Camp submitted in statements in EL PERIÒDIC, that «of a month ago I had been told that I would be a candidate for mayor. I would have told them that in no way, but in politics, you know, you can never say never. During these months there have been many people related to the party, friends and acquaintances who have insisted a lot for me to introduce myself, he explained, and finally, in the committee held on Sunday they were chosen as the first option.»

The aspiring mayor details that in Canillo, there are many challenges. «The situation of communual finances will completely condition political action, although he is clear that the coffers are currently in better health than a few years ago and therefore more important investments could be made.»

The former minister did not yet reveal who could accompany him as a candidate for consul minor nor if the list will see many new names or if others members that are already in this mandate to the corporation. «Now we have begun to work, it is still very premature, he said, adding that it also should the work done in the last four years to make decisions.»

However, Camp encouraged young people to take an interest in politics «because I have always said that there is a relief and it is a good time for young people to get involved and gain experience to take over from us.»

OTHER CANDIDATES / Although no other candidate has been confirmed, Camp pointed out that it would seem that there are other groups working to make a list in the parish. This would avoid the situation of the last two elections where DA had no rival.»
FOOTBALL ▶ NEW BOARD

FAF assembly approves maintaining last year’s budget

The lawyers of the defendants explain to the clubs the situation regarding the ‘Case Cautxú’

De la Casa ends up in second position last race

Gerard de la Casa finished second in the car category in the 34th Subida a la Santa, which has been the penultimate round of the Spanish Mountain Championship (CEM) calendar of rally motorsport competition, behind José A. López-Fombona. Therefore, the Pujada als Revolets d’Ibi will be the final test that will decide the professional driver’s fate, as well as López-Fombona’s. ‘Whoever wins the race, he will be the car champion of the current edition of the Spanish Championship this year, in this last race we cannot be short in anything, he clarified.

Thus, with respect to the accounts he wanted to emphasise that ‘those investigated have been the natural persons’. ‘I have made a comparison and, explaining as best possible, you can see an incidence that may result from malpractice in the annual accounts with respect to operational’, he said and remarked that ‘it seems that they are correct’. ‘The claims that exist are focused on Tomàs Gea, José García and Víctor Santos, but the federation has not been charged’, he reiterated.

In this sense, the assembly had lawyers who defend defendants of Operation Cautxú. ‘We have made them come to explain and reassure the clubs, there are not many new things but they will explain that we have appeared in the cause’, he said and said that ‘at the moment there is no news and no new statements are planned’. Álvarez also commented that ‘there has been a lot of work on the subject of pitches, something forced because we find ourselves with the change of turno of the National’. ‘At the moment it seems that it has been solved, the only detail that is missing are the blachers that have put in Encamp, we are trying to negotiate with the Government to see how we resolve it so that the rugby pitch does not fit and should be withdrawn a little’, revealed and assured that ‘the Encamp project will move forward. ‘We wanted to know if the proper continued with the agreement, he has been told that yes and we have recovered the project that had done’, he explained and stressed that ‘we have to talk to UEFA and see if economically we can afford its’. ‘In fact, it must be remembered that the news about the Encamp pitches alerted the Batllia, since this is the last race of the championship, commented De la Casa.

Edgar Montella, who has some difficulties this season in the rally competition, on the other hand, arrived in Totana with the objective of recovering from the problems he had in the last event, but, even though his problems had been continuous throughout the season and he still has some option to recover from the situation, he was finally able to surpass his last results and end up in fourth place in his rally category. ‘The third position of the podium is assured, however we are going to be with the intention of continuing to improve’, commented the professional driver.

The Andorra Swimming Federation (FAN), which has the support of Andbank, made a very positive balance of the season, after the successes achieved by the swimmers of the entity, especially in the Games of the Small States of Europe Montenegro and by more than 40 national records achieved in long pool and more than 50 in short pool. They also highlighted the achievement of the possible pitch in Encamp.

The ordinary assembly of the Andorran Football Federation (FAF) experienced an apparently calm day in which the closing of the 2019 financial year was approved and the same budget was maintained for next year, although these are the subject of study by Operation Cautxú.

In this regard, Félix Álvarez, recently elected President of the entity, explained before beginning the assembly to the media that the budget we already had from the previous board has been maintained because we haven’t had enough time to work with the issue either, as there are several projects such as a possible pitch in Encamp. ‘However, as do not have it closed, foreseeing the budget has seemed a bit bold and we preferred to be prudent and wait for the negotiations to move forward. This we would put it into the next budget’, he revealed and noted that ‘the talks have gone very well, both with Encamp and la Borda, where we plan to make a car park area, as we were being asked. ‘These were all follow-up conversations’, he clarified.

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On the other hand, the entity presented the objectives for the upcoming season, which will be to be able to go to the Olympic Games, at least with a swimmer. He will also compete in the European LEN in Budapest, in the championships of Spain and Catalonia and in the Mediterranean Cup in Kavala (Greece), tests that will serve to prepare the Games of the Small States of 2021, which is the great objective of the federation. As a novelty, it was also announced that Hocine Haciane will incorporate as the second technician of the entity along with Xavier Torralldon.

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