

Andorra energy conservation

The Principality located in the Pyrenees just between France and Spain takes initiative regarding the environment through projects of various kinds. It is not surprising either, given its small size and its dependence on the landscape and nature. Not only for the country itself, but also for foreigners, the tourism on which its economy depends, the environment is a very important asset to fight for in Andorra.

From educational, sustainable energy and recycling plans to international agreements, and proposals for civil society, with its small but scalable gestures, to contribute and act with conscience, Andorra has opened a multiple front from which to address this highly relevant issue. In this article we summarize all its intentions in these ten impulses taken by this small Pyrenean country to have a healthy and sustainable environment.

The Green School is a project managed by the Andorra Sustainable Center, a facility of the Department of the Environment of the Government of Andorra designed as point of information, training and documentation on environmental aspects for citizens, companies and schools. It began in 2010 and its goal is to reach all students (all schools) in the country. We already knew that the education in Andorra it is quite peculiar and interesting, now even more so.

The operation is simple. First, the centers choose if they want to enter this environmental program and request it. Next, Sustainable Andorra carries out an analysis of the environmental practices of the school, to find out the points where it is weak and determine the issues to be addressed. From here, run a action plan that the educational center must follow until it is completed, at which time the long-awaited title is granted of Green School.

Currently this initiative is applied on the 53% of schoolchildren, with more than 200 students, and it grows at a good speed. The success of the program has made it transcend the school environment and has also been implemented in the vocational training center and in the Spanish and Andorran School institutes.

This we can say is one of the best weapons of the Andorran government to fight for the environment. Although the levels of selective collection in the country are already above the average for the European Union and top several rankings, the public sector has been devising in recent years a definitive plan to increase the selective collection of waste.

To give us an idea, the National Waste Plan prepared by 2020 he intended to get a 50% from rerecycling from selective collection, but that goal was already exceeded in 2018 with 50.4%. Also in absolute values it was a record.

The actions undertaken for such objectives were three: the creation of an environmental label for commerce, the declaration of department stores and supermarkets as unique producers of waste, and the award of

collection and management of organic matter near the large producers.

In addition to this, the National Waste Plan also seeks once again abide by small gestures and habits, proposing measures that affect everyone. Encouraging reusable bags with a new regulation that bans disposable bags is a good example. We can also highlight the placement of innovative mobile collection points to allow citizens to save time and distance and facilitate recycling.

The export of organic matter is carried out in a composting plant in the Waste Treatment Center located in Benavarre, and a return of the generated compost that can be used in gardening is expected and intended. The ultimate goal is to decouple the consumption of natural resources and economic growth so that development is sustainable, one of the keys to this being increased circularity of materials throughout the product cycle.

After the success of the Engolasters lake hydroelectric plant, the FEDA (Electric Forces of Andorra), which is the company in charge of electricity in the country of the Pyrenees, put into operation in the parish of Canillo in December 2016 a cogeneration plant. With an investment of 13 million euros, this power plant produces electricity through liquefied gas, and serves as a supply for the first urban heating network in the Principality.

As the president of the Board of Directors of the FEDA declared, the goal is obtain energies with less environmental impact and avoid the energy dependency that Andorra has with its neighboring countries. The plant in question generates 6GWh of electrical energy and 11GWh of thermal energy, covering 4% of the country's current demand.

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