Beat: Politics

Spain prepares for a new state of alarm

To stop the COVID-19 pandemic

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USPA NEWS - Spain is steadily moving towards its second state of alarm in less than a year. Almost half of the regions have requested it from the Government, as the only way to declare a curfew in large cities. Eight months after the start of the pandemic, the Spanish authorities believe that the only way to stop the increase in coronavirus infections is to end the massive gatherings that are organized at night and the consumption of beverages in bars.

"The situation is serious", warned the President of the Spanish Government, Pedro SÃ¡nchez, on Friday in a television address. "We have twice as many infections from COVID-19 than at the beginning of the first state of alarm" in March, he added. Unlike then, this time the population is not necessarily confined to their homes, at least during daylight hours. Unless the new measures that are being adopted do not give the expected result, because the Government does not rule out taking extreme measures to end the pandemic.

Sources from the Moncloa palace confirmed this Saturday that the call this weekend for an extraordinary Government Council to approve the state of alarm throughout the national territory is not ruled out. Regions such as Madrid, Catalonia, Castilla y León, Navarra and La Rioja, with exaggeratedly high numbers of infections, require its approval to be able to close shops and bars between 9:00 p.m. or 10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. the next day. Thus, they affirm, it will end with the "botellones", the name by which mass gatherings of minors are known to drink alcohol on the street because they cannot access bars and discos. According to health authorities, infections in minors are due to the lack of security measures in these uncontrolled meetings.

With the curfew they will also close the bars during the hours when they receive the largest number of their customers. The hospitality sector qualifies as "persecution" the measures adopted by the authorities, which lead them to closure. The economic losses since the pandemic began amount to more than 1,000 million euros (USD 1,186.94 millions) and it is estimated that 30% of the workers in this sector have lost their jobs as a result of the closure of the bars. In La Rioja, Laurel street, the main tourist attraction in a region whose economy is based on wine, is currently studying the possibility of closing, since its bars open at 8:00 p.m. and do not have tables or terraces. This is important because the latest measures adopted by the regional authorities prohibit the consumption of beverages at the bars of the bars. The curfew can give the finishing touch to this symbol of La Rioja.

No less important is that, with the curfew, family or friends gatherings will be prohibited from 9:00 p.m. The Spanish health authorities have been warning for some time that the relaxation of customs in these types of encounters favors the spread of the virus. The only safe environment, they explain, is the one where you live together. And they emphasize that friends and family with whom one does not live are, for health purposes, strangers.

Spanish society seems resigned to the restrictions. The aim is to avoid the total paralysis of the economy which, after a four-month confinement - between March and June -, would mean the economic death of Spain. The country is in critical condition economically, with a debt that is already around twice the GDP, runaway unemployment and a loss of wealth that takes the country back to the nineties of the last century.

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