

Madrid demands more resources against COVID-19 but rules out the state of alarm

After the meeting with Pedro Sanchez

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USPA NEWS - "Constructive" meeting held this Monday between the president of the Spanish Government, Pedro Sanchez, and the president of the regional government of Madrid, Isabel Diaz Ayuso. Both leaders agreed to create a working group that will be in charge of coordinating the joint response to the coronavirus. This group will meet weekly and will be made up of two ministers of the Government of the nation and two councilors of the Madrid regional government.

On the part of the Spanish Government will be the Minister of Health, Salvador Illa, and the Minister of Territorial Policy, Meritxell Batet; and on the part of the Madrid region, the Minister of Health and the vice president and spokesperson for the regional government. Between the four of them, they will try to set a calendar of actions aimed at stopping the expansion of COVID-19 in Madrid and making the human and material resources necessary to face the pandemic at the disposal of regional authorities. The government of Madrid, said its president, Isabel Diaz Ayuso, in the press conference after the meeting, "has not stopped working since the beginning of the pandemic with all the resources at its disposal, but we need more resources and we do not have the power to adopt certain measures."

Due to this, Diaz Ayuso asked Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez for the collaboration of the Army to disinfect neighborhoods in the capital, and of the National Police to complement the Local Police in surveillance and control of the restrictions imposed. Since this Monday and for fourteen days, six districts of the capital and five municipalities of the metropolitan area of Madrid are isolated, with a prohibition to enter or leave them except for work reasons, to go to the doctor or due to force majeure. The regional president asked the affected people of Madrid to be patient and reminded them that "we have come this far and we cannot lose everything now for not respecting the restrictions."

Diaz Ayuso declared herself willing to do "everything necessary" to contain the spread of the pandemic, but she was blunt in rejecting the application of the state of alarm and a generalized confinement of the region. "Madrid is the economic engine of Spain," said the president, "and a new state of alarm would mean death for the region." However, Pedro Sanchez reminded her, the state of alarm is an instrument that continues to be available to all regions when they need it.

The meeting was "constructive," said the Prime Minister. "We hope that the measures we take bear fruit," he added. And he recalled that during the first wave of the pandemic the average age of infection was 60 years and now it has dropped to 35 years, that during the first wave the mortality rate was 10 percent and now it is only 1 percent. The situation, therefore, is better. "Now we know how the virus works," added the regional president, Isabel Diaz Ayuso, "and we are detecting the positives before they develop symptoms; we have bought two million PCR tests for the detection of the virus and 100,000 teachers have been tested. Sixty thousand classrooms have opened in the region, in non-university education, with all health guarantees." But it will take months of work and sacrifice, until a vaccine is available to the population.

Diaz Ayuso denied that the lack of doctors is a failure of her government. "There are no doctors in Madrid, but neither in the rest of Spain," she said. Days before, she had called for the hiring of more doctors to support the fight against COVID-19.

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