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Natalia Masegosa Codesal explained that the Madrid City Council's telecare service is a key resource to improve the autonomy, safety and well-being of the elderly, especially those who are in vulnerable situations. She stressed that Madrid, as a major European capital, has more than 3.3 million inhabitants, of which more than 20% are over 65 years of age. This demographic reality makes it necessary to plan social services on a large scale and to prepare for a future marked by the ageing of the population.

The telecare service operates 24 hours a day throughout the year. It offers social care, emotional support, specialised counselling and coordination with emergency services. One of the most innovative aspects of the Madrid service is the creation of a multi disciplinary team of professionals, social workers, psychologists, occupational therapists and nursing staff, who work together with the telephone operators. In addition, they have mobile units that move to homes when the situation requires it.

During 2024, the service served more than 150,000 people in 126,000 homes, managing more than 1.2 million calls and making more than four million follow-up calls. There were also 225,000 trips to homes for reasons of emergency or necessity. "The majority of users are women over 80 years of age, who in more than half of the cases live alone and present a slight social risk. This shows the need for continuous accompaniment that combines practical care with emotional support."

In terms of financing, Natalia explained that the Madrid City Council allocates more than 25 million euros per year to the service. The economic participation of users varies according to their income and age. The service is currently free from the age of 88, but it is expected to be free from the age of 85 from 2027.

She also underlined the high valuation of the service by users, who rated it with 9.3 out of 10 in the 2024 Service Charter, which reflects both the technical quality and the human commitment of the team.

Later, Natalia clarified that, in addition to caring for people in a situation of dependency, the service is mostly aimed at people who are not, but who require preventive and relational support, especially in a city like Madrid, where unwanted loneliness is an increasingly common phenomenon. In this sense, she stressed that telecare has become not only a service, but a real lifeline for many elderly people and others with disabilities or mental health problems, who can remain at home thanks to the monitoring and control provided to them.

The digitalisation of the service has been, she said, one of the most ambitious transformative processes in the field of social services. Through an advanced digital infrastructure, analogue technology is being progressively replaced by digital terminals, which offer more stable and faster communication, as well as better integration with other security devices. Currently, 70% of terminals are already digital and it is expected to reach 100% in less than two years. One of the main advances has been the elimination of the need to have a fixed telephone line, thanks to the inclusion of SIM cards in the terminals, which allows more people to be reached.

Likewise, Natalia explained that new devices have been incorporated that increase the efficiency of the service and improve the user experience. Among them, fall detectors, already present in 25% of homes, motion sensors, geolocation devices and smart watches, which are being very well received by the elderly. These allow you to detect falls outside the home and contact the emergency services directly. She also mentioned a specific project aimed at homeless people with cognitive impairment, who are provided with a locator to facilitate their monitoring and care.

"In the domestic sphere, smoke and gas detectors have also been installed in those homes where they are really needed, respecting the principle of personalisation of the service. Other advances include the incorporation of telemonitoring systems for people with chronic diseases, video calls for emotional monitoring, and remote door opening systems for people with severe disabilities." Finally, Natalia stressed that digitalisation must be inclusive, ensuring that people with functional diversity can also benefit from the service.