

News in Brief

Redundancy alternative

Shorter working week

• The Canarian government is considering offering incentives to businesses to shorten the working week of employees instead of making staff cuts in response to the recession.

The idea has been floated to employers and trade unions as part of the ongoing dialogue aimed at exploring feasible ideas to lessen the impact of the crisis. The regional employers' umbrella group (CEOE) has already indicated it is in favour of the measure although it wants assurances concerning the type of incentive (lower or

no national insurance contributions, one-off grants etc).

For their part, the unions are rather more cautious and fear the shorter working week may be imposed on employees who are not willing to work fewer hours. "There must be many employees out there who, due to personal circumstances, would be keen to spend less time at work, perhaps on a job-sharing arrangement with colleagues. Firms should look to that kind of solution rather than lay off people," said a spokesman for the employers.

Hashish

Drug arrest

• Civil Guard officers arrested a young man in Chio recently carrying 400g of hashish.

Officers from several local forces cooperated, watching the town square where they believed drug trafficking was taking place. They logged the people and vehicles that came and went and finally stopped the young man, identified only as J.M., at 9pm. They found 300 grams of hashish in the fuse compartment of his car and a search in his home revealed a further 100 grams of the same substance.

People will have to work longer to qualify for a state pension



UNION ANGER

Retirement age proposal

Plans by the Spanish government to raise the retirement age by two years will be "opposed to the death" say the country's main unions.

The controversial measure was announced by prime minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero recently and will affect all people born after 1959, who will not be entitled to a full pension unless they remain in work until 67. It is a move which mirrors actions by

other European countries including Germany and the UK given the drain on the social security system with an increasing number of retirees living longer.

According to Zapatero, the measure is needed as a long-term safeguard for the country's pension system, which experts have repeatedly warned is close to financial ruin and will be unable to support future retirees in its current format. Despite the arguments in favour, Zapatero can expect a rough

passage through Parliament when the Bill comes up for approval. Several small parties, who see the extended working life as a barrier to job opportunities for young people, have already said they will refuse to back the plans, although the government is confident it can negotiate a deal in the coming weeks. Indications have already been given that the pension age limit could be varied according to the type of work carried out by individuals during their working lives.

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