



«A NEW COVID»

Benazet puts non-vaccinated bags and autumn as a risk factors

The minister hopes to continue lifting restrictions, but is in favor of maintaining the use of the certificate | The Executive highlights the opportunities that arise from the pandemic and through the research center

EL PERIÒDIC
ESCALDES-ENGORDANY

@PeriodicAND



«We finished a phase of the pandemic. Omicron is another covid. « With these words, the Minister of Health, Joan

Martínez Benazet, was «optimistic» about the horizon now drawn by the coronavirus pandemic, during his appearance before yesterday in the Health Legislative Commission, despite the fact that acknowledged that there are two elements that can twist this positive line: the unvaccinated groups and next fall. In relation to the first aspect, the Minister stated that «the virus continues to vary, but it does not seem to change and we believe that we are moving towards a model of less aggressive variants», although pointing out that the concern lies in what may be cooking the large unvaccinated masses of the population. « Thus, he referred to the territories with low vaccination figures, and shared that from Andorra a proposal has been made to Covax to buy and sell vaccines to third world countries, approximately 20,000 units, and also send there is a team of professionals to support its administration. «This mistake of the international community could be expensive. It is a vision that is not very supportive and risky, because there are points where a variant can appear that puts us in danger », warned Benazet, who pointed out that they are waiting for an answer. On the other hand, the head of Health stated that «we think that next autumn we may have a new critical moment», due to the characteristics of the disease, although he stressed that «despite the uncertainty, we believe that the future must be better». «There are many unknowns with the covid, but we are sure that better times are coming,» said the minister. In any case, Bena-



SFGA / CESTEVE

► Democratic General Councilor Sandra Codina and the Minister of Health, Joan Martínez Benazet, last Tuesday.

zet was cautious in considering that the pandemic was over, and stressed that the end point would be dictated by the WHO. «Right now, it is believed that it will probably evolve into an endemic disease, but we need to maintain strong structures for what may happen,» he insisted.

IMMEDIATE SCENARIO // With regard to the management of coronavirus in Andorra, the Minister assured that the will of the Executive is to lift some of the current limitations. Thus, in addition to the reopening of nightlife, the government has on the table to relax the measures in scho-

ols under «a criterion of prudence». In this sense, the first action would be to eliminate the screenings, and then remove the mask in the classrooms. At the same time, parents will be able to choose whether to vaccinate their children between the ages of 5 and 11, although they point out that «we don't have to run a race» and point out that «if we talk about it a lot, there may seem to be pressure». On mental health, Benazet announced that the Pisma is still in the last weeks before its approval, and highlighted the efforts of the Executive in this matter, as is the case of the reduced price care service by the covid, which before yesterday had 18 attached psychologists and 47 users.

The Minister also pointed out that the Covid Office will have to be maintained, although it will undertake different functions and a monitoring character, with the possibility of being endowed with more resources if necessary. The covid certificate

will also remain in force, as Benazet «still has its usefulness», although he stressed that «when the wave of omicron goes down frankly and we consider it under control, it will have to disappear». As a last resort, the head of Health recalled that the Executive wants to promote legislative action so that «health professionals who contract the disease by treating it, can acquire the benefit of 100% sick leave», is to say, it is considered an occupational disease.

OPPORTUNITIES // Finally, the Minister of Health took advantage of his appearance to take stock of the weaknesses and strengths that the Principality has presented during the almost two years of pandemic, as well as the threats and opportunities that may still arise. Regarding the opportunities, Benazet remarked that Andorra has been able to position itself in the international environment thanks to its good image due to the «differential management» of coronavirus, facilitating the start «of a new sector: that of research, knowledge and innovation in health». The highlight is the Pyrenees Immunology Research Center (PYRC), which will be a model of public-private partnership between the Government and Grifols. A project that would have attracted other actors such as Hologic, a company that integrates health and diagnostic services while conducting research; Illumina, a company that applies innovative technologies to the analysis of genetic variation; and the Carreras Foundation, which promotes leukemia research. «Several organizations have shown us their interest, but this is an initial thing,» said Benazet, who celebrated that this framework could contribute to the return and retention of talent in the country, as is the case of young Andorran researchers working there and it has generated interest in them» this path initiated by the Principality. ≡

Active cases are close to 3,000

►► The 829 discharges granted in the last 24 hours in Andorra, out of a total of 32,926, contributed to the decrease in active cases in 621 people, which yesterday amounted to 3,095. This was reported by the Government, which also detailed that 208 new positives had been diagnosed - 36,166 people had been infected in the Principality since March 2020 -. As for the Hospital Nostra Senyora de Meritxell, the number of patients with coronavirus increased by three yesterday. Specifically, the-

re were 12 people admitted, nine of whom were on the ground floor and three in the ICU, all of them under mechanical ventilation. In relation to the school population, the incidence decreased slightly with 58 classrooms in active surveillance and 113 in passive. And over the vaccination campaign, 153,953 vaccines had already been administered. Ultimately, the death toll remained at 145, and the number of infected with the omicron was 4%, according to the wastewater analysis.

Your leading real estate agency in Andorra.

Our experience guarantees results, realtors since 1988.



(+376) 353 424 / (+376) 379 769

(+376) 747 747

laportella@andorra.ad

Casa Nova Olivet 10 · Ordino

www.laportella.ad

GEOLOGY

Experts predict a scenario of «seismic crisis» in the Principality

Tuesday morning's earthquake in the Os de Civís area is a replica of last October's earthquake

EL PERIÒDIC
ESCALDES-ENGORDANY
@PeriodicAND

A magnitude 3.8 earthquake shook the principality at 3:02 a.m. Tuesday. According to Andorra Research and Innovation researcher Natàlia Gallego, «we could be facing a scenario of seismic crisis due to the repetition of plate movements in recent months». In the same way, many citizens were warned on social media, in which many of them expressed that they woke up to the fright caused by the tremor. In addition, a total of 15 subsequent aftershocks were recorded, the strongest of which reached a magnitude of 1.7.

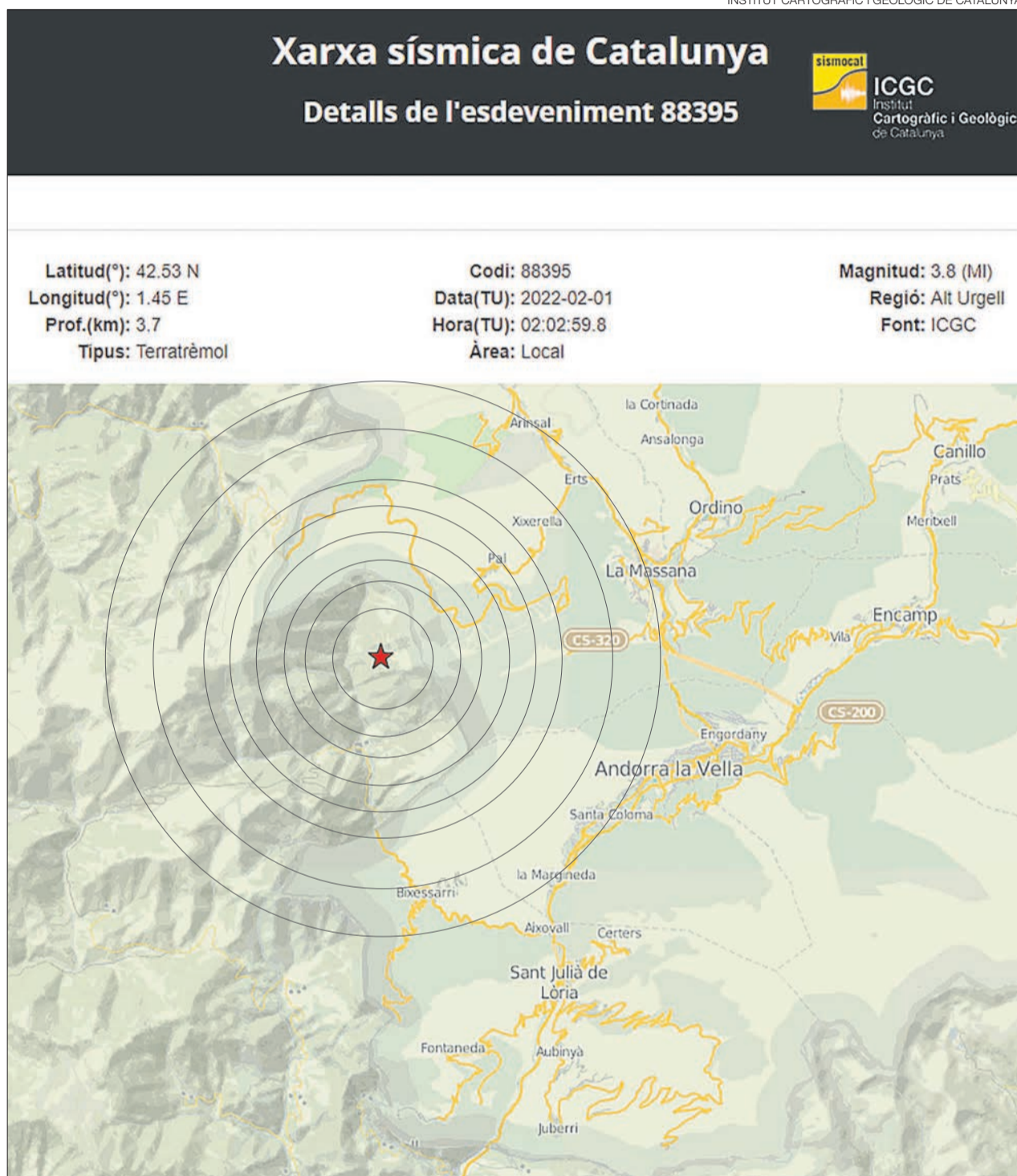
This earthquake is a «replica of the energy release that has been taking place on the tectonic plates of the Pyrenees since October, when we detected the 3.6 earthquake in the same area», declared Gallego. She also stressed that the depth was 3.7 kilometers, «a fairly shallow distance». The intensity maps showed that it was an earthquake with an intensity of between four and five out of 12. «If the intensity reac-

More than 500 population warning surveys were answered

hes level five, light damage can be caused to the weakest buildings in the area, but not it would cause no structural impact», said Gallego.

Seismic surveys for the population began to be broadcast in the early hours of the morning, which will remain open throughout the week and, starting next Monday, the results will be analyzed, and conclusions will be drawn by geological risk technicians. Yesterday, there were more than 500 surveys answered by citizens, which is a significant increase over the last earthquake in which 100 responses were counted during the 48 hours following the movements.

Despite the fright, the ARI researcher stressed that «these geological incidents are normal in an area of moderate seismicity such as the Pyrenees». She also explained that these alterations were not recorded in a «period of time so short since the earthquakes of the 1970s, in which earthquakes were detected with a slightly higher intensity».



►► Map of the epicenter and the area of incidence of the Os de Civís earthquake.

Natàlia Gallego
ARI RESEARCHER



«An intensity of five out of 12 could have caused minor damage to buildings, but nothing serious at the structural level»

«These incidents are normal in an area of moderate seismicity such as the Pyrenees»

Finally, Gallego recalled that «the action protocols disseminated by the Civil Protection must be followed, since, for the time being, no significant damage has been regretted, but a prevention exercise must be carried out». In the same vein, the ARI wants to work from now on, informing the general population and not just students with school activities. Forecasts are not accurate, but «geological movements are likely to continue, as a lot of energy was released in October; however, we will study the seismic series of recent months to be prepared for the future», said Gallego. ≡

tweets



MARTITA

@martatuka3

«I have a family of mummies ... I'm the only one who woke up from the earthquake, and it was strong, eh»

ALEXBY11

@aLexBY11

«Has there just been a mini-earthquake?» But he has been big enough to be a humble European»

TXELL

@txell05455238

«I heard a shock wave approaching and then the floor shook with the impact»

JOAO DE MELO

@JoaoQueiros13

«I've been warned by Os de Civís that all this is a consequence of the start of the calçots season»

JAS SANDHU

@jasman15

«Well, it's been an hour since I woke up from the earthquake in Andorra and I still can't sleep»

ANNA MATA

@annamatap

«The best thing about Twitter is coming in and seeing that the house has shaken and it hasn't been a dream»

Don't miss any special editions of **El Periòdic!**