

DANGER DUE TO HIGH TEMPERATURES

Andorra suffers the third heat wave in less than two months

Mercury is near 40 degrees in the south over three consecutive days

The stress of vegetation becomes the «ideal fuel» for a fire to start

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Over the last few spring months, and especially during the pre-summer weather periods (May and June), the Principality has experienced two heat waves with the addition of reaching record temperatures over the past month. In line with these precedents, Andorra is facing the third episode of heat since the authorities and scientists announced three days ago the achievement of persistent high temperatures. In this sense, the mercury has been around 40 degrees in the southern half of the country, specifically in the station of Borda Vidal, located in the parish of Sant Julià de Lòria, where yesterday values were recorded oscillating between 38 and 39 degrees. «At altitudes of 1,000 meters it is relatively normal to reach these figures, but we pay special attention to the central valleys and, above all, to the FEDA power plant, where we are recor-

The Fire Brigade has three air means to fight fires throughout the territory

ding an average of 34 degrees over the last week,» points out the researcher of the mountain axis of Andorra Research + Innovation (ARI) Anna Albalat.

Following the same direction, she indicated that, despite the high temperatures, the record during the first days of July was recorded in 1935, «the first year in which meteorologists began to record temperature values and experienced 36 degrees for several days of the month». She pointed out, however, that the technology of 90 years ago «was not the same» and added that at that time decimal values were not reflected.

In order to clarify the concepts, Albalat emphasized that what indicates that we are in an episode of heat wave is the persistence of



►► Archive image of sunlight in the Comella picnic area.

high temperatures for three days or more. However, from Tuesday onwards, the scene could change with an influx of cold air that would calm the atmosphere, but «not much rainfall is expected because the convective clouds that are created by the high temperatures need to cool down to originate the rains». In addition, she also stated that when these phenomena occur, more and more extreme, they constitute a danger to public health related to the «lack of atmospheric dispersion of pollutants in urban areas», especially if episodes such as that of the intrusion of African air with suspended particles.

Referring to the danger of fires, the firefighter in charge of the forestry section, Pere Pons, stated

ANNA ALBALAT
RESEARCHER OF THE MOUNTAIN AXIS OF THE ARI

«The lack of dispersion of pollutants is a danger to public health»

PERE PONS
FIREFIGHTER OF THE FORESTRY SECTION

«Flames are more dangerous upwards. In any case, we are ready to intervene, if necessary»

that «all the ingredients are being put together so that an ignition is easy». Like the investigators, the Fire Department is surprised that three high-temperature warnings were issued in a short period of time. In turn, Pons stressed that «the stress of vegetation for several days in a row at more than 30 degrees becomes the ideal fuel for flames.»

Finally, firefighters stressed that in the event of a fire in the central valleys, the body is «ready to intervene, if necessary.» Despite the difficulties presented by the orography, the special forces have three aerial means to alleviate the fires and «for physical reasons, the flames are more dangerous in the ascending direction and it would be difficult for them to go down the valley,» said Pons. ≡

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SOCIAL INCLUSION

The new digital POS provokes inquiries from traders and blind people

The ACU denounces the APDA because it believes that the devices violate the privacy of visually impaired people

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The new digital POS is being rolled out to all establishments in the country to replace 100% of the terminal fleet with Android technology. However, these devices have recently led to inquiries by traders and people with blindness or visual difficulties in the Andorran Association of Consumers and Users (ACU). «We work with consultations, and not with complaints, because we do not have any sanctioning power, but we try to link them to the competent bodies,» remarked the president of the ACU, Lluís Ferreira. Thus, on the one hand, visually impaired users have regretted that they have to be accompanied to shops with trusted people who know their PIN, or they have to provide this figure to those who have to charge them, «more than anything because this new tool consists of a completely touch screen», pointed out Ferreira. And it is that these payment machines do not have any point of reference to locate the position or the relief of the numbers, «and for that reason it is a very important offense», lamented.

On the other hand, retailers have also expressed their doubts or problems regarding digital POS. So, Ferreira explained that, for example, there is a trader who has had the machine turned off for a couple of days because the line does not work well for him. In this sense, failures have been detected with the connection in other stores, as expressed by a waitress of a business in Escaldes-Engordany. Additionally, the president of the association told that they have received complaint about the tickets language, because it is in Spanish and not in Catalan, as well as it is questioned why is it not possible to select the bank when they do the payment, in the same way as before.

As a result of the various pro-



► An image of a digital POS in a restaurant in the country.

Both entities will meet next Tuesday to discuss the issue together

blems of users, the ACU has decided to publicly denounce the Data Protection Agency (APDA) via Twitter, stating that «the PIN is still confidential information that must be provided to a third to be able to carry out something as simple as a payment», said the president of the association. The APDA, for its part, reiterated that accessibility to POS is not a matter for them. Faced with this position, however, Ferreira criticized that «the Data Protection Act details that the means of capturing this personal information that the user provides voluntarily, is within its competence.»

For now, the two sides do not reach an agreement and, for this reason, will meet next Tuesday to try to find common solutions and ideas. Pending the resolution of the conflict, the president of the ACU stated that «it would be as easy as putting a screen saver on devices that have a reference point.» One of the alternatives is to set up a sound-based system to guide the user. «It makes me angry because they say they have a solution, but we continue with the problem on the table. If they have the answer, what they should do is stop the implementation, because otherwise it



Lluís Ferreira
PRESIDENT OF THE ACU

«The Data Protection Act states that the means of capturing this personal information is within its competence»

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makes no sense, «added Ferreira, who also said that» they are aware that there is a problem, they are indifferent and continue to do the deployment».

Finally, Andorran Banking assured that the new system is ready, and tests will soon be made with real cases to activate a payment system adapted for blind or partially sighted people and to be able to make payments. Through voice activation, the customer will be able to follow the instructions and carry out the operation with complete security. He also posted a guide on his website for the establishments. Regarding the benefits of the new digital POS, Andorra Banking explained that «the new terminals allow a personalized configuration, install different applications and configure the automatic sending of operations to the different banks without having to select them in a particular way».

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