

el Periòdic News

A FLAME THAT UNITES NINE NATIONS

Twenty years later, the Olympic flame of the Games of the Small States of Europe 2025 is lit

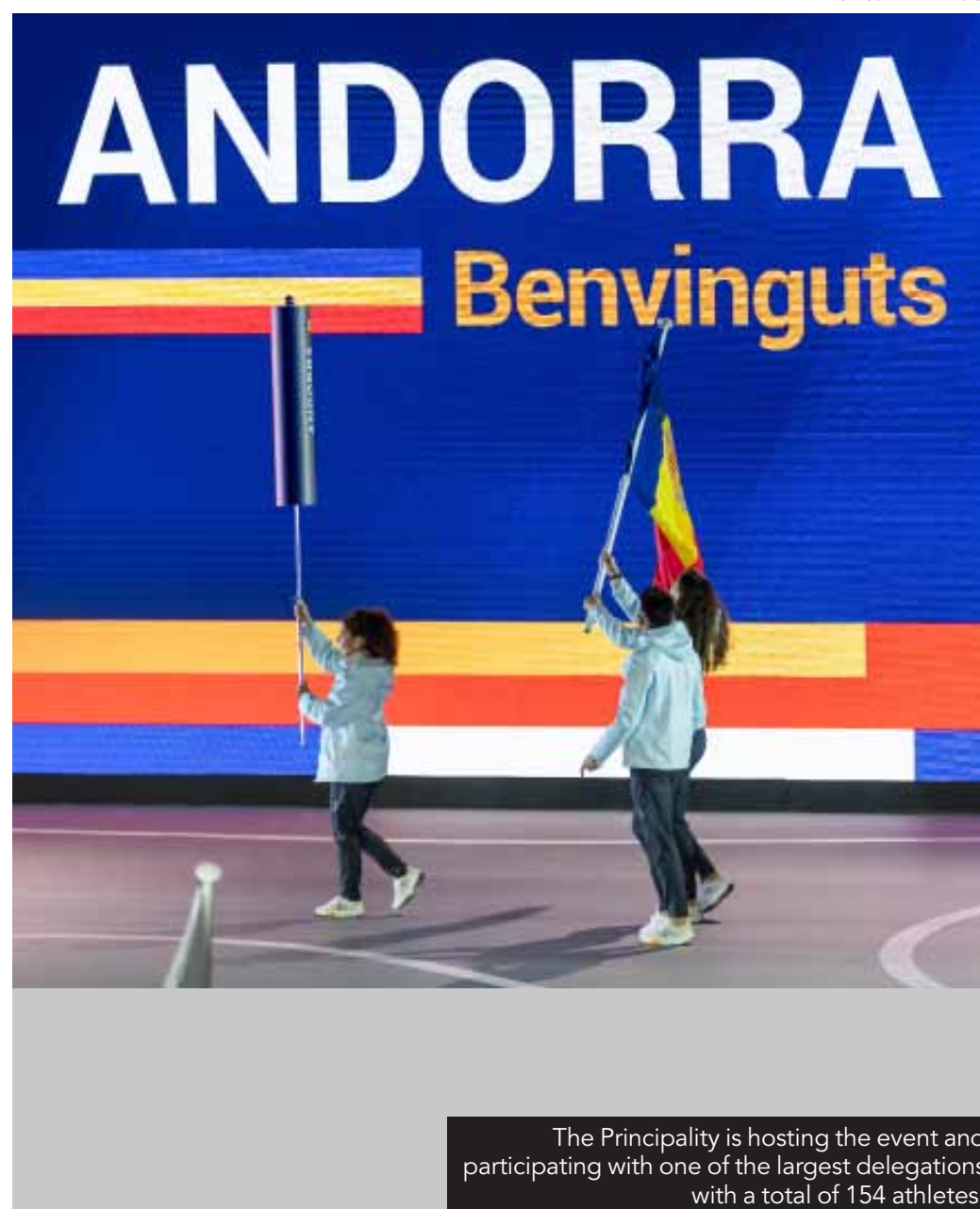
In 2005, the Principality hosted the sporting event for the last time and this year it is participating with 154 athletes

LAURA GÓMEZ RODRÍGUEZ
ANDORRA LA VELLA



With aerial acrobatics, musical performances, dance and the traditional Olympic torch, Andorra inaugurated this Monday the most anticipated sporting event of the year: the Games of the Small States of Europe 2025. The Principality is once again the stage, twenty years later, for one of the most important sporting events on the continent for small countries, which meet to compete, but also to celebrate brotherhood and shared identity. The opening ceremony included the parade of the nine participating delegations. Iceland, which has already hosted the Games in 1997 and 2015, has opened the march with 106 athletes. Liechtenstein, with a smaller but symbolic delegation, has presented its flag bearers: Leila Marxer and Dario Alfonso. Larger delegations such as those of Luxembourg (166 athletes), Cyprus (188) and Andorra (154) have proudly paraded alongside Malta, Monaco, Montenegro and San Marino, each with its own representatives and experiences as hosts in previous editions. The event has been attended by the highest authorities of the country and the Olympic world, who have underlined the symbolic and integrative nature of the Games.

The president of the organizing committee, Anna Gar-



The Principality is hosting the event and participating with one of the largest delegations with a total of 154 athletes.

A week of competition, effort and fraternity between the nine participating nations officially begins

cia, was in charge of opening the round of speeches with a speech that vindicated the country's spirit of commitment: «We are a small country in terms of size, but big in commitment. These games are much more than a sporting event.» Along these lines, she wanted to especially recognize the involvement of Andorran youth and the entire organizing team, highlighting that «all this would not have been possible without the work of all the collaborators.»

From the European Olympic Committee, its president, Spyros Capralos, addressed the athletes with a motivating and close message: «You have the opportunity to compete in this beautiful place. Take the opportunity to make new friends.» For his part, the president of the International Olympic Committee, Thomas Bach, firmly defended equality in sport: «It doesn't matter what language you speak or what your territory is like.» Visibly excited, he added: «This is the last time I'm in charge of the Games. I've learned to enjoy each edition.»

The Head of Government, Xavier Espot, spoke, highlighting the role of sport as a tool for social cohesion and overcoming borders: «There are few instruments as powerful as these to break stereotypes and unite territories.» He also took the opportunity to call for the impact of sport to be used to tackle major global challenges such as inequality and climate change.

Before the official proclamation, the Olympic oaths were pronounced by Toni Berengueres on behalf of the referees, Laura Gómez Vidal for the coaches and Adrià Bonell for the athletes. Finally, Co-Prince Joan-Enric Vives closed the event with the formal declaration: «We declare the Games of the Small States of Europe 2025 officially open.» One of the most anticipated moments of the night followed: the lighting of the cauldron, led by leading

athletes from the country such as Hocine Haciane, Albert Llovera, Montse Garcia, and, as a finale, Joan Verdú and Mònica Doria. With this symbolic

gesture, a week of competition, effort and fraternity between the nine participating nations, united by the value of sport and the Olympic spirit. ●

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