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Balearic economy in meltdown

Palma.—The contraction of the regional economy was more than double the national average of 11% and almost four times as great as the European Union average of 6.2%.

The Balearic government's latest economic report points to the acute crisis caused by the region's de-

pendence on tourism, the sector most affected by the pandemic. The collapse last year ended seven years of growth, which at one point had been by four per cent.

In the first quarter of 2020, which included the first couple of weeks of the state of alarm, there was a 5% decrease. This was followed by

40.5% in the second quarter, 28% in the third and 16% in the fourth. The ministry for the economic model is forecasting growth of 11.1% in 2021.

The 23.7% drop isn't as bad as the government had predicted it might be. Initial estimates were in the region of 30%.

Balearics will be the first Spanish destination for the vaccine passport

● The Balearic tourism minister, Iago Negueruela, told parliament yesterday that the Balearics will be the first destination in Spain where "the European vaccination certificate will be launched".

● The European Union will unveil the COVID-19 pass to allow free travel this summer today. The EU's executive

European Commission will propose creating a bloc-wide "green digital certificate."

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EU drug regulator to assess AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine risks on Thursday

Europe's medicines watchdog will release results of its investigation into incidents of bleeding, blood clots and low platelet counts in recipients of AstraZeneca's coronavirus vaccine tomorrow afternoon.

EMA Executive Director Emer Cooke yesterday said there was no indication that the incidents, which she called "very rare" had been caused by the vaccine, but that experts were assessing that possibility.

"The experts will meet again on Thursday to come to a conclusion and to advise whether there are any further actions that need to be taken", Cooke said at an online news conference.

"And we will inform the public of the outcome immediately after this meeting."

Trust in the safety of the vaccines was paramount and the agency was carrying out a case-by-case evaluation, she said.

"The benefits continue to outweigh the risks, but this is a serious concern and it does need serious and detailed scientific evaluation. This is what we are involved in at the moment," Cooke told a news conference. Sweden and Latvia yesterday suspended use of the vaccine, bringing to more than a dozen the number of EU countries to act since reports first emerged of thromboembolisms affecting people after they got the AstraZeneca shot.



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