

CiF president Jaume Ferrer, president's office secretary Bartomeu Escandell, and Alejandra Ferrer, the island's secretary of tourism, sat down today with two regional government officials —Joan Boned, the Balearic minister of land, mobility and energy, and Luis Corral, the director general of the ministry's land use department— to be brought up to speed on an order, approved yesterday by the executive branch, containing urgent measures on urban planning.

Speaking after the gathering, Alejandra Ferrer framed the new decree as an extension of the island's own guidelines for territorial safeguards, a code of standards called “Subsidiary Norms” (*Normes Subsidiàries*) which was adopted in 2010. Yesterday's executive order throws up a building freeze on certain swaths of protected land, something Formentera's standards code includes as well. “Our unique territorial situation, not to mention limited size, make us different”, Ferrer said, “that's a difference that makes us competitive”.

Power return

Ferrer spoke cheerily about another effect of the decree: that local branches of government stand to regain some powers. When the Balearic executive decree and Formentera's Subsidiary Norms overlap in a given area, the more restrictive of the two codes takes precedence, a fact Ferrer indicated could mean reinstatement of the local ban on camping.

Concerning tourism, Ferrer welcomed the potential that yesterday's order opens up for facilities improvements in rural areas, while still warning against the possibility that such a rules change be used improperly, say, to disguise unauthorised expansion projects.

In Ferrer's estimation, a good deal of work on land-use legislation still lies ahead, and she encouraged the Palma officials to work with the Formentera administration to ensure that the new regulations “square with the unique qualities of our island”.