

Consell de Formentera premiere Alejandra Ferrer sat down today with Iago Negueruela, the Balearic minister of the economic model, tourism and labour, for a gathering that was also attended by Ana Juan, the island's deputy premiere and chair of the commerce and entrepreneurship departments; local finance and economy chief Bartomeu Escandell; regional director general of tourism Rosana Morillo and, from Formentera employers' associations, Pep Mayans (president of the small- and medium-sized business group, or Pimef), Juanma Costa (Chamber of Commerce) and Vicent Tur (Hotel Federation of Formentera, AHF).

At the meeting President Ferrer detailed the tourism reactivation plan adopted last week by the Commission for Tourism Development and Promotion (COPT). The plan comprises four parts: public health measures; control and education; economic response; marketing and tourism strategy.

**Diagnostic tests**

The Consell and employers' groups asked Negueruela for help on public health measures being requested by travellers' countries of origin and, according to the premiere, "described joint efforts already under way to scale local testing for islanders and visitors".

"In fact", said Ferrer, "we've already contacted companies specialising in PCR and antigen testing to see what they can offer locally and how competitively it can be priced". Local government and the sector will collaborate to ensure testing costs approximate those in other regions, she said. "And we've also asked the regional government for support", she explained. The leaders hope the service will also facilitate regular testing for employers and workers, serving as a public health guardrail until herd immunity is achieved.

**Roadmap**

President Ferrer also pressed Negueruela to set a timetable for the lockdown exit strategy, starting with the end of emergency orders and looking ahead to summer measures. She urged the minister to be mindful of the specificities of Formentera, and said health authorities should seek consensus with the Consell and island business, as they the ones who must ultimately implement the chosen strategy.

Likewise, Ferrer stressed the importance of having a hotel on the island where covid-19-positive tourists could self-isolate as in 2020.

Ferrer said Covid data should indicate whether patients are tourists or residents so that the accumulated incidence rate truly reflects the situation of the local population. For his part, Minister Negueruela made assurances that he has already passed this request on to the central government.

**Economic measures**
Negueruela pointed to an expected €855-million agreement with the Ministry of Finance would facilitate direct aid to local companies.

After the gathering with business representatives, Ferrer and Negueruela dedicated a subsequent tête-à-tête to, in the premiere's words, "seeing how synergies can be improved in the way we court tourists".

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