

Decision-makers gathered today for the October full-house assembly of the Consell de Formentera, a session that was chaired for the first time by President Ana Juan, and which found the Councillor of Environment and Inspection Services, Antonio J. Sanz, relinquishing his post.

The body unanimously adopted a proposal which was presented by the Councillor of Interior, Josep Marí, calling for amendments to legislation on how local police departments in the region coordinate. Marí said the change was about making Formentera's local force "larger and better suited to meet needs on the island" and explained that "in most Balearic municipalities, and Formentera is one of them, local police departments are facing serious staff shortages", a situation the councillor attributed to a recruitment process which, in 2021, "remains very long and inflexible".

Councillors urged government to make necessary amendments to the Local Police Coordination Act to streamline selection processes and shorten waits, as well as to broaden the scope of its financial and human resource provisions to the Balearic School of Public Administrations (*Escol a Balear de les Administracions Pùbliques/EBAP*
) so it can offer training courses for new officers and higher positions more quickly. They also pressed the Balearic Ministry of Presidency, Public Function and Equality for administrative, technical and management support that is due Formentera per 2017 legislation on coordination between local police forces in the region.

Environmental proposals

The assembly unanimously passed a resolution urging the Balearic Ministry of Environment to expand posidonia monitoring across the entire coastline of Formentera. The environment chief said the change would "establish the necessary mechanisms in coordination with the Consell de Formentera to make the new service effective in 2022".

Assembly members voted in unision to adopt the Sustainable Water Management Plan and

Emergency Plan for Droughts. Councillor Sanz framed the plans as "bringing Formentera in line with national and Balearic hydrological plans as established by law".

Another proposal that overcame Sa Unió abstention by virtue of votes from Gent per Formentera (GxF) and Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) reps included "administrative changes necessary to operations envisioned in the contracts for waste collection and transport services". Councillor Sanz said the move would usher in "the start of a new period of bidding on the contract, without delaying the start of next year's service".

Budget revision

Plenary members also granted initial approval to budget amendment 4/2021, with the GxF and PSOE cabinet voting in favour and the opposition abstaining. Councillor of Economy and Finance Bartomeu Escandell described the €1,370,000 revision as "an update and a response to urgent needs stemming from the COVID-19 crisis".

Councillor Escandell highlighted spending jumps in two main areas, staff and tourism promotion, tying the former to additional working days and the latter to countering springtime uncertainty around the tourist season (Escandell described both as "imperatives of the COVID-19 response"). The councillor expressed satisfaction "because the Consell has the financial capability to deal with the difficult and changing situation we're in".

Additional proposals

The session also saw "yes" votes from the cabinet securing passage of a Sa Unió proposal on implementation of road safety measures, although Sa Unió members ultimately abstained from the vote. The proposal formalises local government's intent to keep implementing the measures set out in Formentera's Sustainable Mobility Plan to improve road safety, and to press forward on the drafting and approval of the Road Safety Plan, which, once approved, will give way to prioritizing of road safety improvements at the main junctures of PM-820 and at pedestrian crossings.

Assembly members struck unity on another modified Sa Unió proposal to issue a call for bids on a multi-year contract to manage the social media presence of the island's tourism promotion department, with councillors agreeing on the importance of an open tender process to ensure fair and open competition and selection of the best bid.

S'Estany des Peix

Assembly members were appraised of the cabinet committee agreement to start the process of approving the guidelines that will govern regulated use and assignment of moorage points on floating pontoons and low-impact buoys in S'Estany des Peix.

Public consultation on the matter also received green-lighting after a 15-day comment period on the Consell de Formentera website and bulletin board sought to gather opinions and feedback from the most representative figures and organisations which future regulations stand to impact. Councillor Sanz called it "yet another step towards cleaning up an ecologically threatened area and reclaiming it for the people of Formentera".

Departmental report

The Councillor of Mobility and Territory, Rafael González, appeared before the assembly to give an account of operations in his departments over the past year. González described the period as comprising four phases: "The first was about aid and boosting the economy, bearing in mind that last winter was spent under a six-month state of emergency. Phase-two found us exiting emergency orders, adapting to the new situation and preparing for a possible tourist season. With summertime came phase-three, which Sanz characterised as "marked by the acceleration and intensification of strain linked to tourism".

According to the councillor, "We are now in the fourth phase: preparing for the next season in which that strain is expected to grow, and for this reason we must analyse mobility data from this summer and decide whether to enact or improve on the measures in our established road map". González highlighted priorities like "implementing formentera.eco; improving La Savina's summertime metred parking scheme; creating and improving access guidelines at natural areas; expanding and improving public transport services; promoting pedestrian and cyclist mobility and making towns more tranquil". González also explained efforts designed to improve

management of the Formentera Office of Territory.

Official proclamations

The October assembly also brought approval for two official proclamations, the first of which was presented by Ana Juan on the occasion of the International Day of Action for Trans Depathologisation. In the declaration, the President and Councillor of Equality underscored "the need to keep working to normalise all gender identities and to leverage activities, culture and education to build visibility and awareness in society". An official proclamation was also approved on the occasion of the International Breast Cancer Awareness Day.

29 October 2021
Communications Office
Consell de Formentera