

"Yes" votes from the Gent per Formentera (GxF) and PSOE cabinet meant amendment six of the Island Territorial Plan (*Pla Territorial Insular, PTI*) overcame abstention from Sa Unió opposition representatives to win preliminary approval. This amendment aims to secure public land for a sewage pump facility to provide the Es Ca Marí area with a sewerage network. Rafael González, Councillor of Territory, said the modification carried the "imperative of public interest", adding that "this land, which is close to the sea, can also fit with other uses, like new facilities or services that the island institution may opt to implement in consensus with the Neighbourhood Association of Es Ca Marí.

ACAF-Ràdio Illa

The day's session brought cross-party backing for the terms of a concerted action agreement between the Consell and the Cultural Audio-visual Association of Formentera (ACAF). This year's newly enhanced €60,000 grant will go to ACAF, which runs local public broadcaster Ràdio Illa. The grant supports content creation and means Ràdio Illa can offer the island a public audio-visual communication service. Susana Labrador, Councillor of Education and Culture, praised ACAF and the professional staff of Ràdio Illa for "turning our local station into a crucial tool for independent, public and social communication" and producing "quality, interesting content".

Cab fares

Cross-party support was also handed to a proposal to update taxi fares in 2022. Rafael González, Councillor of Mobility, traced the rate hike –the first since 2019– to a request from the Formentera Association of Chauffeurs. Local decision-makers agreed to raise current rates 6.5%, a proposed increase that will now be sent to the Balearic government, which has authority on such matters, for approval. Councillor González pointed out that the study justifying this request was carried out in January, before the current fuel crisis, "so it does not take into account the situation around the current crisis".

Regulating access to Es Cap de Barbaria

Another agenda item that saw the GxF-PSOE cabinet overcoming Sa Unió abstention was the proposed agreement to regulate access to Sa Tanca d'Allà Dins in 2022. For the sixth season, individuals attempting to access this area by care will face certain restrictions. Rules will be enforced the same dates as in 2019, before the pandemic: 15 May to 15 October 2022.

The Councillor of Mobility insisted that the "effectiveness and simplicity" of the measure made it special: "It promotes the sustainable mobility that the Consell champions, while protecting the territory". Proof of that fact, according to Councillor González, is the increase in visits from 2019 to 2021. "Pedestrians and cyclists increased 62% with no problems of saturation, crowding or harm to the natural environment", stressed González. North of the barrier there is a car park with capacity for sixty cars and one hundred motor scooters. People with reduced mobility are authorised to enter the protected area by vehicle.

Other proposals

Unanimous backing was also secured for the preliminary phase of a proposal to dissolve the Centre Balears Europa consortium with a view to creating a new public foundation controlled by the Balearic government. Bartomeu Escandell, Councillor of Economy and Finance, signalled that the legal form to be adopted by Centre Balears Europa would allow for "more agile management of European funds" as well as "greater impact as regional players within the European Union".

Representatives once again came together behind a Sa Unió proposal modified in the Informative Commission to urge the Consell de Formentera to automatically renew exemptions to the pay-to-park scheme if original exemptions remain unchanged. The plenary agreed to adopt this change starting in 2023.

Support for social dialogue measures around war in Ukraine

The GxF-PSOE cabinet overcame Sa Unió representatives' 'no' votes to pass a compromise

proposal to support social dialogue measures in the Balearic Reactivation Compact to take on economic and social fallout from the war in Ukraine. The proposal urges relevant government agencies to implement the seventy approved measures and to put them into action "as quickly as possible". Rafael Ramírez, Councillor of Social Welfare, asserted that, in terms of the economic impact of rising energy bills on Formentera, "the situation may be even more serious due to triple insularity and the need to source all raw materials by sea". Ramírez therefore advocated implementing all necessary contingency measures "until we stop seeing the effects of this crisis that Putin's war is creating".

Finally, uniting in support of an opposition proposal that was modified in the Informative Commission, representatives urged the Consell de Formentera to study restructuring Marià Villangómez Library to open on Friday afternoons and Saturday mornings as soon as possible and, thus, respond to popular demand.

Department report from Raquel Guasch

Today Raquel Guasch, Councillor of Heritage, Language Policy and Training reviewed her departmental work over the last year. First, Guasch offered thanks and acknowledgement for the "efforts, commitment and dedication of the technical and administrative staff" in her departments. Guasch stressed that the task of "preserving and elevating our tangible and intangible heritage offers us a glimpse of our future as a people, a people striving to remain true to its core while at the same time, with sustainability and equilibrium, working to evolve".

Councillor Guasch detailed progress and momentum in promoting and publicising underwater, maritime and inland heritage as well as in research, protections and upkeep for documentary heritage and historical memory.

The councillor insisted that the Office of Language Policy, for its part, had been "sized and staffed with the necessary personnel to take decisive steps toward normalising the Catalan language, an enormous leap forward because, today, we have a more even playing field between education and the rest".

Declaration of support for the Ukrainian people

Representatives in the Consell de Formentera plenary came together to "fiercely condemn Russia's aggression against Ukraine, firmly reject the invasion of Russian military forces and demand their immediate withdrawal".

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