



This morning, Formentera Council President Jaume Ferrer received the regional minister of Public Administrations, the Interior, Emergencies and Justice of the Govern Balear Núria Riera for the minister's first official visit to Formentera, taking advantage of the opportunity to raise several issues of importance here on the island. Also present at the meeting were councilors of Territory, Hisenda-Tax Office and Town Planning, Bartomeu Escandell; of Infrastructure, Santi Juan; and of Education, Culture and Local Patrimony, Sònia Cardona.

Of the different areas matters that fall within the authority of the regional minister, the recent approval of Platerfor and a safety directive currently in the works were among the different issues raised during the meeting. The latter, a directive regarding safety on island beaches, was given in draft form to the Formentera Council for review. Another topic of discussion was the pending signature of a joint measure with 112 emergency telephone services to implement special plaques for the quick localisation of countryside homes in case of fire. Today's meeting resulted in the establishment of a date for a signature of the accord, which will facilitate not only the work of Emergency Medical Services, the firemen and local police, but also the postal and public transport services.

Under the new plan, when a person calls emergency services, he or she can supply the operator with the home security code, whereupon the operator's computer will immediately provide the specific geographical location on a computer tablet along with the shortest available route. This numbering project will constitute an invaluable tool in the localisation of homes, the objective being to guarantee quick access in cases of emergency. It is important to remember that Formentera is characterized by the diffuse nature of its houses and a tendency toward relatively few urban centres, making an effective system of localization a necessity.

This advance comes thanks to work begun in 2009 by the Formentera Island Council. In the project's initial phase 350 rural routes and some 6,500 dwellings were located, of which 4,500 were private homes.

On the subject of civil defence, discussion also occurred on the subject of forthcoming training courses for public safety personnel. This followed requests made by local civil defence workers and transmitted by the Formentera Council to the ministry of the Govern. The courses in

question will allow the current volunteer corps to renew its existing knowledge base as well as permit the training of new volunteers.

With respect to the local public administration, the task of programming continuing education opportunities for public employees was also brought up, as were other issues of a more administrative bent. Here, the minister of the Govern highlighted the insularity that exists in the Balearics and the effect that this has on administrative authority, finally recommending raising such petitions to the national level. The regional minister also stressed the Govern's desire to ameliorate existing plans for inter-agency operations, facilitating the public administration's contact with residents and communication between the different administrative bodies. Recognising the minister's role as spokesperson to the executive body of the regional government, the Formentera Council president voiced his concern with respect to several different issues, including payment for waste transfer from Formentera to Eivissa's Ca Na Putxa rubbish tip or application of Decree 15/2013 regarding the use of languages in non-university educational centres here in the Balearics.

On the issue of UTE Giref's claims that the Formentera Council maintains outstanding debt with the waste company, it is the opinion of the governing team of the Formentera Council that payment of this service is not the remit of our local administration. As established by the Estatut d'Autonomia de les Illes Balears (Balearic Islands Statutes of Autonomy), it is the responsibility of the autonomous community to guarantee the same rights to every resident in the Balearic Islands. Thus, it must be the work of the Balearic regional government to oversee a mediative process between the two islands and to correctly apply the Sectorial Plan for Waste Management.

The Formentera Island Council, the entity responsible for guaranteeing the protection of the rights of local residents, will continue working with both of the affected institutions (the Eivissa Island Council and the Govern Balear) as well as UTE-Giref, to find a definitive solution to this problem. For her part, the regional minister committed to transmitting this question to the executive body in Palma and, if necessary, to the Spanish central government.

Our public administration thus reaffirms its conviction that Formentera should not be responsible for the cost-overrun implicit to the waste-transfer service from Formentera to Eivissa, as it represents a latent form of discrimination for the population of Formentera compared to their counterparts across the islands. Otherwise, Formentera will continue to be the only party to suffer the consequences of the island's double (and often triple) isolation.

Another issue of discussion – given the current state of affairs and indefinite strike at the educational centres of the Balearics – was related to local education. The governing body of the Formentera Council made clear the general public support that exists for educational professionals in Formentera, not only with respect to the TIL (Tractament Integral de Llengües, or Comprehensive Treatment of Languages), but also regarding constant reductions to educational funding, both factors effecting a very real risk to the quality of local education.

Representatives of the Formentera Council consider troubling the lack of consensus sought with the educational community and the unilateral manner in which the Govern Balear has operated. This course of action has generated a climate as discouraging as it is unstable for the professionals working in our educational system.