



This morning, councilmembers reunited to celebrate the first plenary session of the new legislative sitting of the Formentera Council. Intended to be mainly organisational in nature, the session secured approval for a proposal on hourly commitments and wages of representatives of the local administration. Spending on councilmember remuneration “has dropped four percent compared to the previous sitting – an annual savings of 20,000 euros,” explained councillor of the presidential cabinet Bartomeu Escandell, a defender of the proposal.

Escandell underscored the fact that the wage bill of the Council's political structure has not changed, despite accommodating 17 councillors instead of the previous 13. He explained, “that was the line we'd drawn in the sand”.

The government team of the Formentera Council is composed of nine councillors (one more than in the previous legislative sitting). Seven of the nine have a full-time contract, one a part-time contract and the last has no hourly commitment. The president will receive a gross annual salary of 52,950 euros, the three vice-presidents 51,400 euros, the three full-time councillors 50,300 euros and the part-time councillor –a post which demands a weekly commitment of 19 hours– 25,150 euros.

The three spokesmen of the opposition parties –whose duties require a weekly commitment of 9.4 hours– will receive annual compensation in the amount of 15,050 euros (gross). Likewise, councillors without a fixed salary are remunerated 150 euros per plenary session attended and 120 per briefing committee, the latter a gathering known locally as a '*Comissió Informativa*'. Each of the political parties also receives a monthly wage of 700 euros.

The three opposition parties –el Partido Popular, Compromís amb Formentera and el Partido Socialista– voted against the restructuring of wages and hourly commitments of councilmembers. José Manuel Alcaraz, spokesman of the Partido Popular, declared that “the weight of the [four percent] wage reduction has been foisted on the opposition”, while the PSOE's councillor, Rafael Ramírez, requested that the wages associated with different posts be defined in what is known as the Council's '*Reglament Orgànic*' – the set of regulations that guide the administration. The legitimacy of such a suggestion was acknowledged by presidential cabinet councillor Escandell.

## **Isidor Torres, new chief of staff of the CiF**

Another development at the morning plenary was the appointment of the Formentera Council chief of staff, a new position within the CiF. According to the councillor of the presidential cabinet, such an organisational post has become necessary for an administration that comprises more than 200 employees. The chief of staff will be charged with streamlining Council operations, collaborating on issues of organisation, directing personnel, fomenting the press department and assisting the work of the administration's human resources and IT offices.

Chosen to occupy the trusted post is Formentera-native Isidor Torres. A graduate in communication sciences at the Universitat Ram3n Llull and in political science and administration at the Universitat Aut3noma de Barcelona, Torres also holds a degree in public administrations management from Esade and a Master's degree in public administration. Among the different noteworthy aspects of his professional background are Torres' role, from 2004 to 2009, as consultant, project head and advisory member within the consulting, organisational, communications and human resources firm Estrat3gia Local. From 2010 to 2014, Torres was also a founding member and director of Planifica, a company dedicated to consulting, decision-making training and organisational and productivity improvements. From May 2014 he served as press department head of the Formentera Council.

The plenary session also saw approval –with votes in favour cast by the government team, abstention from the PP and votes against from the PSOE and Comprom3s amb Formentera– for a proposal concerning the frequency and scheduling of plenary sessions. As has become customary, the sessions will be held at nine a.m. the last Friday of every month.

Both the government team and the opposition parties approved a measure established the organisation of briefing committees ('*Comissions Informatives*') and gatherings known as 'special accounts comissions' ('*missions Especials de Comptes*'). Secured by an absolute majority, a measure was approved that plotted nominations of Council representatives to different governing bodies. The PP and PSOE, two groups that had no representatives included among the nominations, voted against the proposal. Bartomeu Escandell stressed the importance of the chosen nominations in the case of decision-making meetings of the briefing committee while promising to “study the possibility of including the participation of an opposition member” in other meetings of the committee. Comprom3s amb Formentera opted to abstain from the vote.

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Finally, despite the “no” votes of the opposition, the plenary procured approval for a measure assigning plenary powers to the government commission ('*Comissió de Govern*') of the Council, a move designed to speed up plenary session proceedings. On that subject, CiF government team spokesman Bartomeu Escandell indicated that “affairs of an administrative nature will be handled by the government commission”.