



Earlier today Consell de Formentera president Alejandra Ferrer chaired a gathering of the island's security forces that was aimed at enhancing inter-agency coordination and charting a response to recent parties, crowds and violations of Covid restrictions.

Attendees featured representatives of the Civil Guard, Formentera Local Police, Formentera Inspection and Environment Service, Balearic Office of Emergencies and Environment, Spanish Coastal Authority and a group of local officials including deputy premiere and commerce chief Ana Juan, chief of interior Josep Marí, environment and inspections chief Antonio J. Sanz and mobility chief Rafael González.

After the meeting, President Ferrer announced a forthcoming presidential decree requiring closure of all access points to the Illetes area in Ses Salines Natural Reserve of Eivissa-Formentera. From tomorrow at 6.00pm, guests may exit freely, but cannot enter without reservations at a restaurant located on the reserve.

The measure was designed to address the island's rising Covid-19 case count, as well as recent reports of gatherings —some with alcohol, some without— where Covid rules have been violated. The decree also cites cases of street vending and damage to the local ecosystem.

The new regulations will take effect Saturday, with beaches closing at 10.00pm, as opposed to 12 midnight, as previously.

President Ferrer insisted that, whereas visitors to Formentera are typically respectful of the environment and rules, the current season has seen the emergence of uncivic tourists who flout public health measures and the authority of law enforcement, as meeting participants themselves attested.

Reinforcements

The island's security forces pledged extraordinary efforts to implement the new provisions, which will see collaboration from FLP, the local, public safety and traffic arms of the Civil Guard and the Formentera Department of Mobility. In August, the Civil Guard's aquatic and maritime units will provide additional help tackling drinks sales, unauthorised peddling, "party boats" and other arriving watercraft. Agents will also receive support from Formentera's inspection and environment service.

The Balearic government has also vowed to send inspectors from the regional office of emergencies to enforce public health rules.

The president said attendees had also discussed the domino effect that the measure could have on other areas. "We'll be flexible and if necessary these measures will be applied elsewhere too", she said.

Message to public and business community

"Let's be clear, we do not want the just paying for the sinners. We know most businesses are complying and trying to make it to the season's end. The same goes for the islanders who endured a tough winter because they wanted to save their summer. Our intent is not to enact more restrictions, but we do want to stop offending behaviour that puts us at risk". In that regard, Ferrer praised law enforcement for their hard work and applauded the business community and islanders for their patience. She also insisted the island's government would "exhaust every means at our disposal to make the remaining 20 to 25 days in August safe. Nobody expects it to be easy, and it's going to take the cooperation of one and all".

Limited hours of operation

Additional talk revolved around preventing street drinking and crowds in Es Pujols and Sant Ferran, particularly at closing times. President Ferrer said the new restrictions on business hours would mean more work for law enforcement, and pledged to keep asking that protocol changes reflect consideration for Formentera's reality on the ground: "It's key to ensuring restrictions are effective and not counterproductive", said the president, "otherwise they'll be frustrating and unfair to the people and businesses that have been complying with them since the start of this pandemic".

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