



On 8 July, 2014, the Contentious Administrative Supreme Court of Justice of the Balearic Islands handed down ruling number 00382/2014, dismissing the case brought by plaintiff Sunway Ltd. against a local territorial plan – known as PTI (pla territorial insular) – passed in Formentera on 27 October, 2010.

Specifically, the plaintiff's case concerned activity planned for the Punta Prima area of the island. Sunway Ltd. called for the application of previously-established building parameters – parameters that have since been overwritten by a stricter set of guidelines. Sunway Ltd. had argued that the PTI was “arbitrary” and reflected an “abuse of power”.

In response to the accusations, the Court ruled that “it is the duty of the public administration to adopt models of town planning to which the population must adapt, acting in such a way as to favour the social growth and economic development of its people.” The court affirmed in its ruling that “it is for this reason that the powers of town planning are discretionary.”

The Court found that this discretion is nevertheless subject to “checks” and procedural compliments. However, in the case of the normes subsidiàries (subsidiary regulations) outlined in the PTI, the Court asserted that the process was duly followed. Thus, the sentence dismissed the case brought by Sunway Ltd.

The Formentera Council's councilor of Town Planning, Bartomeu Escandell, reiterated that “the goal of the PTI de Formentera was to define use of the land in order to preserve it, attempting always to serve the general public interest.”

Escandell stated that “specific private interests took issue [with the PTI] using recourses established to that effect, but the Council has protected the interests of the general public. We are happy because these kinds of sentences are important to making tourism compatible with environmental preservation and limits on growth.”

Escandell expressed his hope that “the sentences stand as proof of the quality of the work done by the Council and its technical services.”