



The plenary session held today by the Formentera Island Council dealt with issues ranging from an agreement to be signed with Emergency Services in the localisation of rural homes to a proposal regarding radiation therapy at Can Misses Hospital, in addition to another proposal about petrol prospecting in the Gulf of Valencia that could potentially effect waters here in the Pitiüses.

To begin the session, the Council secretary reported on numerous issues, among which were the definitive approval of a constitution for the public, door-to-door rubbish collection service, the approvals, also definitive, of a revision of the Consell de Participació de les Dones (Women's Participation Council) by-laws and of the regulatory ordinances of the Centre Gabrielelet's Mercat Pagès i Artesania, a market where locally-grown fruits and vegetables as well as artisanal products are sold.

Another issue on the table at the plenary session was the revision of the regulatory fiscal ordinance concerning the tax on public potable water provision. Despite abstention by the PP and a nay vote cast by the GUIF, the vote for a revision received an absolute majority. The vote followed the Govern Balear's obligation upon the Formentera Island Council to update potable water rates. Rates will increase by 7%, the same percentage increment that will effect water at the desalination plant, another change imposed by the Govern.

Formentera is the Balearic municipality that pays the highest taxes on water, a discriminating factor that affects residents of Formentera much more than their counterparts on the other islands. It is the responsibility of the Govern Balear to maintain a certain territorial cohesion and stabilize utility prices at the Autonomous Community level, avoiding – as in the current case – a situation of first- and second-class citizens. Those in attendance at the plenary session showed unanimous support for the proposal by Bartomeu Escandell, councilor of Urbanism, to request a fair deal be drafted by the Govern for the people of Formentera insofar as the provision of 'primary necessity' services is concerned.

The fourth proposal to be put forth by the Council dealt with operations and available spaces at the Formentera Day Centre for people in situations of dependence. This, and the proposal for radiation therapy at Can Misses Hospital in Eivissa, were both approved unanimously. Until recently, residents of the Pitiüses requiring radiation therapy had no other choice but to receive treatment in Palma, with all of the inconvenience that this implied both for patients and for their families. Furthermore, in the case of Formentera, this implied the added concern of a voyage to Eivissa. Given the fact that it is the right of every resident in the Pitiüses to receive medical treatment in Eivissa, and the fact that the right to healthcare should not be connected to economic factors, a request was made of the Department of Health of the Govern Balear that radiation therapy equipment be installed at Can Misses Hospital.

A unanimous decision was also made regarding the sixth issue to be tackled by the Council, with respect to petrol prospecting in the Gulf of Valencia. All of the actions anticipated within the prospection plan raise very real concerns of impact on underwater flora and fauna on the Pitiüsa coastline. The majority of these species are within protected areas and are classified as having 'priority interest' both by the European directive on habitats and the Declaration of Natural Assets/the Heritage of Humanity.

It is estimated that the prospection activity will begin within the year, a fact which presents very serious risks to the Mediterranean's marine ecosystem, as well as to tourism on our island and in the Pitiüses in general.

It is for these reasons that the Formentera Council approved a resolution to unequivocally reject any of the planned actions for petrol prospecting in the Gulf of Valencia. An agreement was also reached to set in motion legal action – be it administrative or legal – to block the execution of the prospecting.

The final matter among the day's resolution items was the proposal by councilors – approved unanimously – of an accord between Emergency Services (SEIM-112) and the Council to quickly locate the island's rural houses. Effective immediately, any dwelling located on rural soil will be assigned a number which will itself contain a security code associated with a set of GPS coordinates. This will allow for correct localisation and facilitate the work of ambulance, fire department, local police, postal and public transport services.

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.

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.

The final portion of the plenary session was led by councilor of Sports and Community Involvement Sergio Jiménez, who reported on the projects carried out so far this year.