



When Consell de Formentera president and deputy president Alejandra Ferrer and Ana Juan sat down this afternoon with Francina Armengol, the Balearic first minister, and Pilar Costa, the chief of the first minister's office, it marked the first in-person encounter between the two administrations since the start of the Covid-19 crisis.

Ferrer praised Armengol for the coordination between the Consell and Govern in recent months, and expressed her will to see such cooperation continue beyond lockdown de-escalation, which is set to conclude next week. "Emergency orders will be lifted on Sunday 21 June, but that doesn't mean the crisis is over", said Ferrer, who underscored the need for contingency planning with regard to the families and companions of infected tourists: "In our new normality we'll need to maintain controls on public health and establish tracing protocol in the event that new cases emerge with arriving visitors".

Ferrer also voiced concerns about domestic and international flight connections, and about the ongoing absence of Europe-wide safety protocol, which she described as "a missed opportunity for a united message". As for furloughs announced in the midst of the crisis, Ferrer asked for Armengol's backing in discussions with the central government: "Considering our economy is based exclusively on tourism, and given the short season in 2020, business owners and workers on the island will need help weathering the winter ahead".

Ferrer additionally highlighted the potential for new opportunities that crises can afford, and suggested that the current juncture may hold out the opportunity for forward strides in terms of sustainability, solidarity and economic diversification, particularly as the island attempts to move away from a summer-centred tourism. "This crisis has laid bare the weakness of Formentera's highly seasonal economy and the vulnerability that a large swath of our population faces", Ferrer offered. "We have to realise that a diversified economy will make us more balanced and improve the quality of life for the people who need it most."

For her part, the Balearic premiere offered a public show of thanks for the efforts of islanders and local government during a loosening of lockdown measures that saw Formentera, thanks to favourable public health figures, enter de-escalation one week ahead of the rest of the archipelago and Spain. "We are well aware that the economic situation is going to be very

complicated”, Armengol added.

The premiere pointed out that the number of Formentera families receiving minimum social income (RESOGA) has jumped from 38 pre-coronavirus to 442 today. As well, she highlighted assistance of between €2,000 and €3,000 for self-employed individuals, including €250,000 from the Consell de Formentera, as well as €100,000 that the local government has put up in support of businesses and micro-businesses benefitting from ISBA loans.

Ferrer and Armengol asked islanders and visiting tourists to remain vigilant in terms of safety measures designed to prevent the local spread of Covid-19.

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