

A number of proposals got the green-light when members of the Consell de Formentera gathered today for the July full-house assembly: one in particular, brought to the floor by Sa Unió party members and brokered by the GxF-PSOE senior cabinet, calls on the national government to “work toward consensus on international agreements” to control the movements of covid-19 patients before they leave countries of origin and to establish a country- and worldwide system to monitor individuals’ infection status. Guarantees on the reimbursement of costs generated by foreigners required to self-isolate will also be necessary, plenary participants asserted, as well as a cap on the price of coronavirus testing.

Consell president Alejandra Ferrer described the goal as “nation- and worldwide consensus around public health safety for travel within Europe”. “Let there be no mistake, the problem is enormously complex”, she said. “That’s exactly why we’re calling for conversations and consensus at the European level”, continued Ferrer, who said that such an approach could offer “a fix that strikes a balance between public health and the reopening of tourism”.

Assembly members additionally advocated respect for and guarantees on local authorities’ autonomy in managing finances, and agreed to push the central government to remove barriers to funnelling budget surpluses into covid-19 response strategies. “There have been many cases in which local administrations have had to take on responsibilities that aren’t theirs”, tax office chief Bartomeu Escandell pointed out, “often without the corresponding funding from regional and national authorities”, he said.

Broadening protections around La Mola windmill

With “yes” votes from the senior cabinet and the abstention of the opposition, support came for a proposal to expand protections around Molí Vell de la Mola after a recommendation by Institut d’Estudis Eivissencs. Highlighting the input received around the motion to class the “Old La Mola Windmill” as a cultural interest site, patrimony consellera Raquel Guasch held that the safeguards being envisioned, “which can be applied to other sites in the Balearics, are more innovative, and fit more closely with the actual physical layout of the monument”.

Under a second Sa Unió-authored proposal that gained approval after handling by the GxF-PSOE cabinet, the Consell will study the possibility of implementing virtual appointments at

the bureau of vehicle roadworthiness tests (ITV), Citizen Information Office and other services.

Cross-party support materialised around the terms of a partnership between the Consell and the Formentera Association for Audiovisual Culture (ACAF) on content production in 2020 for Ràdio Illa public radio. Culture consellera Susana Labrador seized the opportunity to underscore ACAF's "selfless work to make local radio a reality" and applauded "the efforts of the station's professional staff to keep islanders informed, particularly during lockdown".

Report from Consellera Raquel Guasch

Chief of the departments of heritage, language policies and training, Raquel Guasch, stood before the assembly to take stock of efforts her first year in office. She began by saluting the work of department staff and trumpeting "the crucial role of heritage preservation", stressing its its "social and practical importance" and asserting, "Heritage means nothing if people don't make use of it".

"Tangible and intangible heritage are engines of education, enjoyment and social, economic and cultural growth", said Guasch, "and they need to interact with people". Looking back over the last twelve months, she extolled fresh energy injected into new classifications of cultural interest sites (BICs); promotion of and education around the Formentera's underwater and terrestrial heritage, which includes recent discoveries; creation of the first local roads catalogue; more than 350 students signed up for Catalan courses and new tactics to normalise use of the Catalan language, including the Apunts en net initiative; revision of local place names; progress on a framework document for the Formentera museum, and collaboration around the Committee for Memory and Democracy and the Committee for Disappeared Persons and Mass Graves.

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