



Today local decision-makers gathered for the September assembly of the Consell de Formentera, securing approval for tuition breaks at local nurseries (*escoletes*), rules on remote working, honorary distinctions for four local police officers, and the regulations underpinning a future space for members of the local business community.

First, plenary members voted unanimously to adopt a proposed amendment to the Consell's rules of order, enabling new telematic means to replace printed transcripts of plenary sessions. "From today monthly assemblies will be video-recorded, streamlining the administration's work and marking firm steps in the modernisation of local government", as explained Bartomeu Escandell, councillor of finance and general services.

### **Travel discounts**

In the plenary session, members of the GxF-PSOE cabinet and opposition group Sa Unió came together in support of inter-island travel discounts in the low season. Alejandra Ferrer, vice president and councillor of Tourism, defended the proposal, which found councillors urging the Balearic government to consider deploying the initiative from October for islands in the Balearics that are heavily dependent on tourism. "The discount on inter-island travel was a success, so we're asking the regional government to reactivate it at least on the islands where tourism is currently down to help extend the season and improve residents' quality of life. This will generate employment and increased social welfare", explained Ferrer.

### **Cost of canteen service**

Assembly members also handed final approval of the ordinance regulating the price of meal service in public primary schools.

Councillors also agreed to ask the Balearic Ministry of Education and Vocational Training to urgently assess reports of high temperatures in the public schools that fall under the ministry's authority. "Given complaints received by the educational community, we ask the Balearic government to make the necessary investments to alleviate these high temperatures because they impede the healthy development of learning", said Susana Labrador, councillor of education and culture. "Faced with forecasts that heat waves will be increasingly frequent due to climate change", said the councillor, "we are asking for solutions now so that we do not have

the same problems at year end".

### **Tuition breaks**

Councillors united again to support the initial amendment of the tax ordinance regulating fees at La Miranda and Sant Ferran *escoletes*. This modification includes free 8.30pm-to-12.30pm learning for year-three students and a 30% discount for children in year one (ages zero to one) and year two (ages one to two). The latest discount will take effect when the modification is legislated and becomes definitive. "This way we reach all children", explained Councillor Labrador, drawing attention to the "longstanding effort to give all families a quality service" and the current wait list of zero at both nurseries. "Now we will continue working to extend free education to all children in escoletes", she added.

### **Remote working rules**

The cabinet overcame opposition abstention to pass telework rules at the Consell de Formentera. As Paula Ferrer, councillor of human resources, pointed out, "these regulations allow us to modernise local government and increase work flexibility to improve employees' work-life balance".

The councillor pointed out that "the benefits of this regulation are also social": "This is a way to reconcile work and family life, which can impact improved productivity, energy savings, and a more sustainable management of resources, transport and consumption linked to in-the-flesh activity". The regulation applies to civil servants and individuals providing services to the Consell de Formentera.

### **Local police medals**

Plenary members also unanimously agreed to award a merit cross with green distinctive to Formentera Local Police Chief Felix Ramos Perez and Officers Carlos Malberti Moragon and Marc Aragay Torres. On 4 August, the officers played key roles in dismantling one of the biggest points of sale of drugs on Formentera, and intervening at an apartment where prostitution took place.

Councillors also voted to award category-two medals to Marcos Roig Ferrer and Marc Aragay Torres for 15-plus years of upstanding service. Josep Marí, councillor of interior, thanked all the agents for their dedication in the special operation, and for the dedication of both agents in their 15 years serving the public. The award ceremony will be held Sunday at 12 noon.

### **Espai Empresarial**

Cross-party backing materialised for regulations at the Espai Empresarial, the future space for local enterprise promoted by the Consell de Formentera, and endorsement was secured for an ordinance regulating the public cost of the initiative. Ana Juan, president and councillor of entrepreneurship, cast the approval as key to the launch of the Espai Empresarial, which she described as "a seedbed to promote and develop initiatives to diversify, deseasonalise and encourage innovative start-ups". "This is a space that will promote business cooperation through the exchange of information and experiences among business people and entrepreneurs".

"Policies and actions to support the creation and launch of new businesses and the consolidation of existing ones deliver significant boosts to employment, wealth and local economic growth, which are so necessary and urgent in moments like these", said Juan.

### **Eco-friendly buoys**

As part of a proposal developed in cross-party collaboration, assembly members asked the Balearic government for information about eco-friendly buoys in the Pine Islands and their exact location. They also asked the Govern balear to provide the island's government with access to Formentera-specific data and, if disaggregated data are not being collected, to take the necessary steps to do so in the immediate future.

Finally, unanimous backing was handed to a Sa Unió proposal to press the Consell de Formentera to install lighting systems at pedestrian crossings, at least at points of low visibility and/or high danger.

### **Department report**

President Juan, who additionally serves as councillor of commerce, entrepreneurship, elderly and equality, offered an account of the work done in the departments she oversees.

#### *Equality*

The president highlighted the development, since Juan assumed control of the office in October, of local government's first-ever Equality Plan and related training and educational work that is under way.

### *Entrepreneurship*

Juan summarised all the work being done to open a business space for entrepreneurs of Formentera by the end of the year. She touted the island's first job fair and training and support coordinated by the department to promote employment and capacity building, particularly among young people and the unemployed.

### *Commerce*

Juan reviewed events and actions last year like the Plan for Stronger Businesses, Passarel·la de Moda (the island's fashion showcase for home-town designers), coordination between craft markets and campaigns to promote local trade.

### **Elderly**

The president underscored agreements with and maintenance of local senior citizens' clubs and the lecture series for elderly islanders (*Universitat Oberta per a Majors, UOM*).

Finally, for International Day to End Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking of Women, Girls and Children (23 September), President Juan presented a unanimously-backed official proclamation reiterating the Consell's commitment to tackling such violence.

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*Communications Office*

*Consell de Formentera*