



As previously announced to media outlets at the beginning of the week, councilor of the Environment of the Formentera Island Council, Sílvia Tur, sent a letter this morning to the regional minister of the Environment to the Govern Balear, Gabriel Company, requesting once again a revision of the Ses Salines Natural Park's Pla Rector d'Usos i Gestió (PRUG), a document which serves as the use and management directive for the protected zone located between the islands of Eivissa and Formentera.

Last month, at a 20 March board meeting of the Ses Salines Natural Park, a gathering which served to inform on park activity in 2012 and 2013 as well as relate details regarding the present year's projects and concurrent budgets, Neus Lliteres, director general of the Direcció General de Medi Natural (Directorate General of the Environment of the Balearics), announced the modification of the PRUG. According to Lliteres, revision of the directive had become necessary to bring the document up to date with the management plans currently being drafted for the other zones of environmental interest (LIC, or lugares de interés comunitario).

In response to the news, a number of board attendees seized the opportunity to expressly request that a participatory process be employed in the PRUG revision and furthermore that this modification represent a real structural change to the document rather than a mere one-off revision.

The Formentera Island Council is extremely pleased to learn that the PRUG revision will take place. Updating this document will be a strategically important move in the regulation of a host of actions that have traditionally stood in the way of proper conservation of the island's most sensitive habitats.

In particular, the Council's Office of the Environment believes the PRUG revision must outline a more appropriate process of regulation for sea-based visits to the park. This includes the so-called 'party boats'; the anchoring of recreational watercraft and large cruise ships; the arrival of crowds at the island of Espalmador and at its inner lagoon.

The sudden policy shift by the Govern was indeed surprising for the Formentera Council, long-since accustomed to receiving flat-out refusals from Palma regarding any requests for directive revision.

Finally, and based on the rationale presently articulated, the Formentera Council wishes to urge the Govern Balear to convene, posthaste, a special one-off session of the Ses Salines park board. This will encourage participation by different local groups and by the businesses and collectives represented therein, thus providing the Regional Ministry of the Environment with necessary information about the problems and possible contributions that are most relevant here on Formentera.