



Angel Custodio Navarro, secretary of the Formentera Council, explained today the reasons behind the spike in plenary representatives in the coming legislative session, when the number of councilmembers (referred as 'consellers' in Catalan) will go from 13 to 17. The increase, in the words of Secretary Navarro, “is totally beyond the control of the local administration. [It is] in fact a consequence of the automatic application of the Llei de Règim Electoral General (or LOREG, for 'Law on the General Electoral Regime'). Article 179 of that law establishes that in municipalities of 10,000 to 20,000 people, 17 councilmembers must be elected”.

Formentera is at once ajuntament (town hall) and consell insular (island council) and its working mechanisms stipulate that – on the question of elections – the Council operates identically to a town hall. To wit, local elections determine the appointment of representatives known as 'regidors' [roughly translated as a town councillor, but of smaller municipalities]. These regidors were relabelled consellers the day the Formentera Council's constitution was adopted.

It so happens that in the coming legislative session, Eivissa and Menorca will have a total of 13 consellers – 4 less than Formentera, whose population is smaller. Navarro explained this was due to the fact that, contrary to Formentera, “the councils of Eivissa and Menorca are not guided by the LOREG in same the way Formentera, other Eivissa town councils and all the councils operating at the national level are. They are instead bound by the Llei Electoral dels Consells Insulars (the 'Island Council Electoral Law')”.

Àngel Navarro reminded those present of a document entitled “Proposal for the constitution and creation of the Formentera Island Council”. The report was drafted by Navarro himself and ratified 15 December 2005. The report, which contains copies of agreements reached by the committee for the creation of the Formentera Island Council (CiF), constituting then mayor Isidor Torres and including representation from each of the political parties, warned of this situation.

Specifically, speaking to the reform of article 37 of the Balearic Islands Statute of Autonomy, the report noted that “in the case of Formentera, the number of consellers insulars ('island councillors') will correspond to the municipal administration of the island, as per organic law 5/1985 [19 June] concerning the general electoral regime and municipal elections. The current population of Formentera – falling as it does between 5,001 and 10,000 inhabitants – dictates

the present number of regidors (13). However, were the population to increase to anywhere between 10,001 and 20,000 inhabitants, the number of regidors would also increase – to 17”.

In the words of Secretary Navarro: “The Statute set no limit to the composition of the Formentera Plenary, as do the statutes of Ceuta and Melilla. Under the those documents, the assemblies are fixed at 25 representatives independently of the local population”.

According to the CiF secretary, any rectification of the current situation “must happen via legislature at the national level. This could have been done with a simple modification of LOREG, accompanying law 27/2013 concerning the rationalisation and sustainability of local public administrations. However, this did not happen”.