

Today tourism councillor Alejandra Ferrer gave an appraisal of the Formentera Council's inspection unit since its launch this summer. In its first months the crew, an arm of the Office of Tourism and the Office of Land, carried out 700 educational visits and 400 inspections.

Occupying public land

Agents reported 39 cases of businesses occupying public land without a permit. Thirty applications for permits generated €14,806 in revenue, another €17,664 came as payments on overdue fees and sixty fines were issued which brought in €17,861.

Commercial activity

Checks of 47 businesses led to the discovery that 22 were without required paperwork and incurred punitive fines. In addition, other controls resulted in 17 proceedings being brought for illegal commercial activities. In those cases, €90,628 in fines were issued, plus fines totalling €14,050 for failure to respect established operating hours.

Twenty-seven controls were conducted at seven of the island's rental car agencies. These led to penalties of €153,000 for carrying on business activity in areas zoned as rural and using public parking spaces for rental cars without the required permit. Activity was shut down at three businesses and three rural-zoned plots were cordoned off for that reason.

Tourism

In tourism, charges were brought in ten cases following checks of one hundred dwellings. One business with 17 apartments was forced to close when the owners were discovered in absence of the required permit. In that case litigation is being sought. The checks targeted a random assortment of businesses picked by a council task force to develop a summer inspections roadmap.

Forty-three thousand euros in fines were issued after sites were found to be offering accommodation online (infractions that were later corroborated with the discovery of guests). As for the task of regularising tourist-use lodgings, 173 checks were conducted and 354 new

rentals declared, not to mention an additional 90 cases pending processing or checks which are projected to generate two thousand new tourist beds.

In urbanism in 2016, 51 proceedings opened to re-establish businesses' legal standing will also have punitive effects. Currently, 43 corrective measures have been pursued, of which 25 were completed. Since the start of the present legislative session, 60 of the 99 disciplinary measures sought have been applied in full. Thirty-three resulted in demolition orders, 26 regularised business activity through available legal channels (legalisation or partial or full voluntary demolition) and one case expired. Urbanism fines revenues in this legislative sitting total €242,883.

Educational campaigns
Summer served as the opportunity to collect information for various awareness campaigns this winter: clearing rural land, fixing traditional stone walls and revamping commercial signage in rural areas are just a few. Regularising tourist accommodations, an object of regular questioning and motive for new registrations, will remain a target of outreach.

In Councillor Ferrer's words: “The inspection unit, by applying limits and regulating both commercial activity and land use for tourism, aims to curb unfair competition and ensure the rules of engagement are respected, raising the bar in terms of tourism and social well-being.”