



President of the Formentera Council, Jaume Ferrer, accompanied by Sònia Cardona, councillor of education and culture, have traveled to Palma de Mallorca today to meet with Núria Riera, recently-appointed regional minister of education to the Govern Balear.

In addition to wishing the minister luck in her new position and officiating the first visit by Formentera councilmembers since Riera's appointment, president Ferrer and councilwoman Cardona's intent at the outset was to learn the calendar of action for the pending Sant Ferran school rebuild. At the most recent Formentera plenary, Palma's local delegate – José Manuel Alcaraz – remained silent as to whether or not a line item for construction of a new primary school would be included the Govern's budget.

In the words of Jaume Ferrer, the issue is “of fundamental importance for three reasons. First, [the stalled construction] means that our students are receiving instruction in obsolete facilities. Second, it effects a de facto paralysation of plans for the Sant Ferran nursery school. And third, the stall has hindered the redevelopment of the Sant Ferran town centre. When this rebuild takes place, the grounds of the school's current location will be used for cultural programming and municipal services. These are changes that will be important not only for the people of Formentera, but for the island in general.”

Riera – whom the two Formentera councilmembers found receptive – acknowledged that the Govern's budget didn't include money for the construction, while still leaving open a window of possibility. The regional minister of Education asserted that the Govern's budgets for the current calendar were not yet finalised, and thus, the inclusion of a new line item to start construction could not be discarded. Riera also said that the draft project for rebuilding the Sant Ferran primary school was expected within the coming weeks, and that the project itself would be elaborated over the course of 2015.

After the meeting, Ferrer and Cardona said that the Formentera Council would no longer hold back plans for the new nursery school: “These are two educational centres whose construction ought to be coordinated, but even with the expansion of the Sa Miranda nursery school in Sant Francesc, the growth of Formentera's local population has made a second nursery an unquestionable necessity. We will now do everything in our power to make it a reality, even if

the Govern fails to do the same vis-à-vis the new primary school.”

Councillor Cardona indicated that she had also spoken with Riera on a series of other issues in education that still await resolution. Among these, adequate facilities for students of Formentera's technical programme in cooking and resources for the Catalan self-study point were among the first issues discussed. Currently, the space at the Marià Villangómez Library is funded entirely by the Formentera Council, which already assumes instruction costs for more than 180 students of Catalan. Moreover, Formentera's is the only self-study point in the Balearics whose maintenance is not administered by the Govern. Cardona also raised the issue of adding a new instrument to the list of those available for study at the Formentera Conservatory of Music. She explained: “We asked the Govern to make a similar effort to the one our own council has made with the School of Music, which has recently added 'school of dance' to its résumé.”

Riera apparently demonstrated a willingness to dialogue on the different issues and committed to providing clear and straightforward answers to them all, alluding to a visit to Formentera planned for the very near future.