

This morning, Balearic Islands president Francina Armengol chaired a meeting of the island council presidents —dubbed la Conferència de Presidents ("the Presidents' Conference")— which was held on Formentera. Besides Armengol, the conference was attended by Gabriel Barceló, the Govern's vice president and minister of innovation, research and tourism, and the presidents of the island councils: Jaume Ferrer, of Formentera, Miquel Ensenyat, of Mallorca, Maite Salord, of Menorca and Vicente Torres of Eivissa. The gathering took place at 10.30am in the plenary hall of the Formentera Council (CiF). Other Govern Balear officials in attendance included Pilar Costa, the minister of the president's office in Palma, and Josep Enric Claverol, head of administrative relations.

Afterward President Armengol spoke about one of the agreements made during the morning talks — "over the course of 2017 authority on issues affecting tourism promotion will be transferred to the island councils". Speaking about the change, CiF president Ferrer said "the sooner the better", while still insisting that the transfer of authority should be accompanied by "the greatest amount of funding possible". Ferrer also expressed his hope that the mistakes made during the last legislative session —which ultimately meant an earlier attempt at a similar overhaul was rejected by every council but Eivissa's— not be repeated.

Budgets

Armengol clarified her stance that "with regard to island residents, the money that comes to the Balearics from the central government is wholly insufficient" and said that the regional government had yet to receive information about the spending cap or the deficit. Armengol said a budget would be drawn up supposing a 0.5% deficit and pledged to continue funding "priority areas like healthcare, education and social services". As well, she vowed to "try to improve funding received by the island councils in 2017". In the words of President Ferrer, "knowing what the regional budgets are going to look like is extremely important to drafting each individual island's budget". He also called the Govern president's announcement a good thing, saying it would allow the island councils to increase their own spending in turn.

The Presidents' Conference is convened on a rotational basis on each of the islands. Today's was the third of this legislative sitting and the first this term to be held in Formentera.