



A presentation of the Balearic government's 2021 spending plan was attended earlier today by Consell premiere Alejandra Ferrer; Balearic tax office and foreign relations minister Rosario Sánchez; president's office, culture and equality minister Pilar Costa and spending director Joan Ignasi Morey. Other Formentera officials also on hand were economy, tax office and general services councillor Bartomeu Escandell and the island's three deputy premieres: Ana Juan, Susana Labrador and Rafael Ramírez. The press conference was preceded by a working meeting.

The officials highlighted nearly €16.1 million expected to benefit Formentera under the new plan. Half that figure —€8.8M in current transfers and €3.3M in capital transfers— will go directly to the Consell. 2021 investment from the Balearic ministries and public-sector firms and entities in the region approach €4M. And, during the regional parliament's review of the budget, an additional €2.3M in additional investment was unlocked thanks to amendments proposed by provincial deputy Sílvia Tur.

In the words of President Ferrer, "with all the uncertainty in 2020, government must join in common cause to help vulnerable people, families and businesses and those the crisis has hit the hardest". She also underscored the importance of renewing "safeguards for the land and environment".

Among the leading Govern-funded projects, President Ferrer pointed up plans for new low-cost housing in Sant Ferran, earth-smart upgrades and the future museum of Formentera, about which she added, "We've no time to lose". Ferrer additionally underscored pledges made in the past by Madrid and Palma to unlock funding to retrofit the island's established tourism hubs, and appealed to use European Union funds to finance phase two of refurbishments in Es Pujols.

Rosario Sánchez pointed out that the budget —the current administration's second and the first since the outbreak of the pandemic which, in Sánchez's words, "has shaken our world and community"— offers "stability and confidence" in a moment of uncertainty, and is marked by "exceptional political will" in the face of this "emergency situation".

Investment

The regional chiefs described the most substantive areas of planned local investment as the environment and hydraulic facilities, including a €0.5M pilot deposit-return system for single-use recipients; new projects to expand and upgrade Formentera's water treatment plant; work on the sewage pipe of the local desalination plant; improvements on wastewater pumping station pipes.

Agricultural initiatives include infrastructure-enhancing sustainable irrigation project powered by reclaimed water and EU funding to the tune of €600,000 from 2021 to 2023. There is also money to defray operational costs at slaughterhouses.

Construction of 12 units of low-cost housing in Sant Ferran is expected to start in early 2021.

The regional health authority has indicated that 2021 will also see the start of work to equip Formentera with an 061 emergency response service. Among the three mobile on-call units there will be one ambulance to provide basic support, another for advanced support and a third unit for scheduled non-emergency transfers of patients. One-point-two million euros have already been set aside for the project, which could be expanded moving forward.

The energy transition and innovation figure prominently among projected investment too. There are subsidies for investments in solar panels at government buildings, in energy communities, for business and to pay for improvements at municipal markets. Additional spending is planned for the Foundation for the Formentera Museum and Cultural Centre, the Formentera Museum and celebrations on Balearic Islands Day.

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