

Consell de Formentera chief Alejandra Ferrer sat down today with Balearic health and consumption minister Patricia Gómez to assess the state of covid-19-related affairs and gauge the impact of preventive measures to date. Deputy chiefs Ana Juan, Susana Labrador and Rafael Ramírez were on hand as well, together with Balearic Health Department assistant director of hospital care, Francesc Albertí, and Eivissa-Formentera Health Office manager, Carmen Santos.

Later in press conference Ferrer and Gómez announced plans to introduce tier 3 public health orders from Tuesday 2 March, with the local premiere contrasting the island's 170 active cases at the start of February to the seven-person case count today ("all have received primary care and no one is currently hospitalised", she pointed out). The figures mean Formentera can loosen restrictions, said the premiere, "but we're far from a place where we can forget about public health protocol".

Tier 3 rules from 2 March
Social and family get-togethers limited to six individuals from no more than two distinct households
Until 6.00pm bars and restaurants can offer outdoor seating at half capacity, max. four to a table and two households
"Sealing off" of entry and exit points continues
10.00pm-to-6.00am curfew remains

Building awareness
President Ferrer asked islanders to be mindful that in the previous seven days Covid-19 had claimed yet another local victim, pushing the pandemic-wide total to six on Formentera, 691 across the Balearics and 68,468 nationwide. "We can hide behind excuses like age and pre-existing conditions, but many of these people would still be here with us if not for this disease ."

"As the island prepares to take restrictions down a notch, it's important to note that we'll do it with respect, responsibility, solidarity and, not least, experience", said Ferrer. "Today's step forward mustn't be cause for tomorrow's step back."

Ferrer insisted the de-escalation of Covid-19 control measures had to be gradual — “so we don’t get caught in a fourth wave that jeopardises our health, the summer tourist season and a broad push for vaccination. Our priority is an immunity rate that lets us reopen and regain freedom of movement, for the sake of our everyday freedoms and for the sake of economic recovery”.

Vaccination push

Ferrer said government and health authorities were collaborating at every level to execute the essential vaccination push, insisting “regular islanders” would get their turn after vulnerable people, health workers, seniors and key workers. “But we need vaccines to get here”, she continued, “and for production and distribution to be fast.”

The premiere called on “all corners of government to do what’s needed to get vaccines delivered”, insisting the heavily tourism-dependent nature of the Balearic economy made the matter even more pressing. “Twelve months into the pandemic, uncertainty has pushed business to the brink and hospital workers to physical exhaustion, and the rest of us are worn-out and scared too”, she said. “Getting this vaccine here and organising its rollout will take teamwork and compliance with safety protocol.”

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