



Today members of local government gathered for the November full-house assembly of the Consell de Formentera, securing backing for fully state-subsidised fare for seasonal and multi-journey bus tickets in 2023; a Basic Health Unit in El Pilar de la Mola; road upgrades, and a local astronomical observatory. On the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, councillors issued an official proclamation and observed a minute of silence.

### **Subsidised bus transport**

Councillors from all parties came together to back a proposal for fully state-subsidised seasonal and multi-trip bus tickets in 2023. "The central government's budgets already provide a line item to finance regular public bus transport", explained Rafael González, councillor of mobility, who presented the proposal, "hence, regular riders and holders of multi-journey tickets, whether residents or visitors, will be able to travel free of charge throughout 2023".

"In this way we hope to keep maximising sustainable mobility on our island, reducing our carbon footprint and helping families and individuals better cope with rising prices", he added. From 1 September to 31 December 2022, public transport on Formentera is free for residents thanks to funding from the Consell de Formentera (50%) and regional (30%) and central governments (20%), respectively. Tourists enjoy a 70% discount thanks to funding from the Consell (20%) and the central (30%) and regional governments (20%), respectively.

### **Basic Health Unit in El Pilar de la Mola**

Cabinet councillors overcame opposition abstention to pass a compromise proposal urging the regional health authority to create a Basic Health Unit (*UBS*) in El Pilar de la Mola, and pressing the Consell de Formentera to review local regulations and determine its location. Rafael Ramírez, councillor of social welfare, pointed out that "our growing local population has created a need for more workers at our hospital and the increased accessibility of certain services for patients who live in remote areas".

### **Roads**

The day's session also came with cross-party backing for a Sa Unió proposal to urge the Consell de Formentera to include an item in the 2023 budget for upgraded road surfaces,

including at the main access points to tourist areas.

### **Astronomical observatory**

Decision-makers again united in support of a Sa Unió proposal, expanded by the cabinet, to create a local astronomical observatory. Councillors urged the Consell de Formentera to continue with all audits and actions necessary to obtain StarLight certification from the Institute of Astrophysics of the Canary Islands (IAC) and to use future audit reports to site construction or adaptation of a suitable space for the facility.

### **Department report from Alejandra Ferrer**

Today Alejandra Ferrer, vice-president and councillor of tourism, appeared before assembly members. In tourism marketing, she highlighted 2020's Promoting and Reactivating Tourism Plan, updated annually, which sets basic guidelines like "promoting sustainable mobility, reviving rural areas and safeguarding culture and heritage" as well as guiding tenets like "social equilibrium, economic improvement and environmental protections". In marketing events, meanwhile, the Formentera Office of Tourism has attended domestic and international trade shows, workshops and presentations and focused on sustainability, local products, collaboration between administrations and the importance of reducing the seasonal nature of Formentera's economy, among other issues.

In planning, Ferrer highlighted her offices' work with the local tourism sector to tailor the Balearic administration's Tourism Act to the needs of Formentera. Vice President Ferrer held up an exception that was made to unlock 50 overnight permits on Formentera for families and small businesses that had already invested money and performed work. Ferrer noted that the Formentera Data Observatory opened in 2019 and in 2022 issued its first-ever "barometers" for residents, business and tourist satisfaction. "These data help improve not only our qualities as a destination and our visitors' degree of satisfaction, but also our residents' quality of life", she explained.

### **Official proclamation for 25 November**

Lastly, Ana Juan, president and councillor of equality, read a declaration endorsed by the entire assembly that reaffirms the Consell de Formentera's commitment to feminism, gender equality and the war on gender violence: "Only a society in which women do not suffer gender-based violence can be considered completely free. Only a democracy free of male violence is a full democracy."

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