



The Formentera Council is treating as very serious the incident that provoked the most recent severing of the underwater fibre-optic cable linking the islands of Eivissa and Formentera.

Last night and for the second time in a period of six weeks, residents of the island found themselves without Internet service – a condition affecting almost the entirety of the island – and, in the case of mobile phone clients of the Telefónica company, without voice and data services as well.

Immediately after learning of the incident, the Formentera Island Council contacted representatives of the Agrupació Hotelera and the Association of Small and Medium-sized Businesses to inform them of the service failure. Also contacted were representatives of the Telefónica company in order to determine what actions were being taken to reestablish communications.

According to statements made by Telefónica early this morning, voice service for the company's mobile customers as well as service for 80% of the island's ADSL lines had already been re-established. All indications suggested that the company was on track to re-establish 100% of mobile phone communication over the course of the day today.

It is worth mentioning that the Council's legal services – in a move initiated on the occasion of the first service interruption which left the island without Internet services for more than four days – is currently working to determine what if any action shall be taken against the telephone services operator or the Ministry of Development. It is the work of the Ministry of Development to ensure that Telefónica fulfils its obligations for minimum communications service across the country.

The plenary session held in June 2013 saw approval for an accord to pressure the Govern Balear into revising and improving the Sectorial Plan for Telecommunications. The goal of the accord was that special consideration be given to Formentera, for it is, in the Council's estimation, inexcusable that neither a secondary underwater fibre-optic cable nor other technological alternatives exist to guarantee identical service in the event of failure of the primary cable.

Cause for concern is not only the fact that, once again, the cable break was caused by a large-scale watercraft (classified as a 'super yacht' for the vessel's dimensions), but additionally, the fact that navigational maps indeed signal the existence and specific coordinates of such cables. The incident thus begs the question if a check of the cable's security system is in order, and if additional preventative systems might also be necessary.

On 17 June a request was made of the Telefónica company that a report be provided the Council detailing the technical aspects leading to the previous service interruption. As of today such documentation has yet to be received, however, given the negative impact these events have on our local economy and on the tourist image of the island, a meeting with Telefónica representatives will be called urgently to discuss the different possibilities at hand to improve the existing cable connection.