



Formentera Island Council president Jaume Ferrer and councillor of Tourism, Trade and Transport Alejandra Ferrer, held a meeting last Friday with the local association of taxi drivers, l'Associació de Taxistes de Formentera, and the Pitiüsa association of Eivissa and Formentera hotels, l'Associació Hotelera, to discuss increasing the number of seasonal taxi permits for the coming summer season.

After initial meetings with both the Associació de Taxistes and representatives of the island's business sector, preliminary consensus was reached regarding possible improvements to transport in Formentera, management of the local taxi fleet, a calendar of periodic meetings, the number of seasonal permits to be made available, as well as common criteria for the provision of a quality taxi service and a time frame for getting there.

As accorded the previous meeting in October of last year, representatives from the sector had prepared a document to submit at yesterday's follow-up. In it, the authors listed recent issues, concerns and possible solutions as well as survey data obtained from phone calls and house visits, all toward the end of making an informed decision about improvements to transport in Formentera.

For its part, the Formentera Council had previously committed to commissioning legal reports and further studying the issue in order to determine the best way to grant the seasonal taxi permits. All of this information was in turn used to create a sample draft of proposals which could be brought to Formentera's business sector for consensus.

After studying the ensemble of legal reports, meeting participants have agreed on a proposal to resolve the issue of sagging taxi availability during high season months. Both the Associació Hotelera and the Associació de Taxistes have on numerous occasions bemoaned what they claimed were deficiencies in the island's taxi service, and both have requested that the authorised number of taxi permits – currently twenty-four – be increased.

The current deal establishes the following: the possibility of permanent taxi permits for vehicles

with disabled-access; creating a specific telephone number or mobile phone-based application which could be used by hotels for direct contact with drivers, and finally, increasing the number of seasonal licenses by five:

- two additional permits for the period extending from 15 June to 31 August
- three additional permits for the period extending 1 July to 15 September

Thus, Formentera's taxi service will boast five extra drivers in July and August as well as a marginally-reinforced fleet during first two weeks of June and September. Drivers will be authorised to work between 10 am and 10 pm and will also have the possibility of requesting additional hours or additional days.

Seasonal permits will be valid for a period of two years and will require their holder to meet a series of fairly simple criteria: possession of a BTP-class driving license, possession of the Council's own local taxi permit, proof of current status with all payments and proof that the holder of the license is also the driver of the vehicle.

Once applications for the new seasonal permits have been received, they will be weighed according to completion of these criteria. In the event of a draw between applicants, a public drawing of lots will determine access. These measures constitute the preliminary system such as it is envisioned today, however, different elements will be regularly brought up for revision in order to ensure they are adapted to Formentera and the realities of transport here.

The process has evolved under the consensus of the sector, united on the issue of tourism and behind a desire to put forth the best possible services and image of the island for visiting tourists.

A new draft proposal is anticipated for the end of February in order to ensure application of the final legislation by 15 June.