



This morning by video conference call, a meeting was held of the Formentera section of the mixed transfer commission regarding the transfer of authority on tourism promotions. Similar versions of the same meeting will be held with Mallorca, Menorca and Eivissa to preface the work to be overseen by each island's mixed transfer commission.

In the words of Formentera Council President Jaume Ferrer, the meeting was “disappointing given that representatives of the Govern remain unwilling to change even a comma of their original proposal”. However, with time left on the clock before the final meeting is convened, Ferrer indicated his belief that “the Govern still has time to rectify things and adopt a position of compromise”. Evoking the lead-up to the law on financing of the island councils, Ferrer recalled “a real willingness to negotiate on the part of the Govern...[At that time] our island was listened to and a real effort was made to make the accord happen”.

According to President Ferrer, “Formentera wants this accord. We are not acting capriciously here. We make our living almost entirely off of tourism and want our say chiefly because we need it. However, it is clear that the behaviour of the Govern is not one of an institution seeking an accord”.

### **Support from the local board of tourism**

Yesterday, 18 February, in a meeting held by the local board of tourism (el Patronat de Turisme), representatives of the tourism and business sectors of the island voted unanimously to reject the present conditions of the authority transfer. Concurring that the proposal in its current state was neither fair nor sufficient, Patronat attendees found that acceptance of the conditions would be “irresponsible”.

Tourism councillor Alejandra Ferrer indicated that the rocky progress of negotiations had been set at the beginning. She lamented: “Mallorca has been allowed to set the rules of engagement, while at the same time, they have already made their position perfectly clear. [Mallorca] would prefer for the authority transfer not to happen, that tourism promotions remain in the hands of

the Govern Balear in Palma. The situation is illogical, because Mallorca's goal is clearly for control to remain in the hands of IBATUR, the Govern entity presently charged with tourism promotions across all four islands. What Mallorca wants is for IBATUR to retain a maximum of financing and infrastructure”.

Ferrer explained: “As a result, the dialogue shifted and people began calling the change a transfer of authorities, although in reality it's nothing of the sort. [The current plans] call for the staff, structure and majority of the budget of IBATUR to remain where it is, and that entity would continue operating in favour of Mallorca. Meanwhile, the other three islands would be required to construct a new infrastructure from the ground up, doting it with a staff and budget allowance that can barely cover attendance at tourism trade shows. In a word, nonsense”.

The councillor of tourism continued: “So, to start, we had Mallorca insisting they didn't want the transfer to happen and yet they have been the ones defining its evolution. And now, adding insult to injury, not one of our suggestions has been accepted over the course of negotiations. We have thus ended up with a proposal from the Govern that includes a minuscule allocation for Formentera. While the overall budget for tourism in the Balearics grows and the allocation of each of the other three islands grows with it, Formentera is left with a quantity that will remain more or less at its initial level. This would mean, from year to year, a steady loss of ground with respect to our competition”.