

Today Formentera hosted a meeting of the Balearic Islands Governing Council (*Consell de Govern*), which delivered approval for several agreements marking an important strengthening of local public services, and Francina Armengol, president of the Balearic Government, and Ana Juan, president of the Consell de Formentera, took stock of the investments from the executive branch.

Armengol emphasized the crucial role of collaboration between the administrations in reaching important agreements with the island's government and catering to local requests and particularities.

For her part, President Juan highlighted "constant coordination and dialogue between the two administrations, which has been key to progress implementing progressive policies on Formentera." Juan reviewed milestones this legislature and underscored "pending key issues for Formentera, some of which are currently being resolved, though much work remains for us to do together."

Governing Council

Highlights of the day's meeting include the declaration of regional interest in works to expand IES Marc Ferrer, which will speed up work on the project to add eight new classrooms and increase the surface area of the high school.

President Armengol also announced the creation of a commission dedicated to educational matters on the island. The Advisory and Consulting Commission (*Comissió d'Assessorament i Consulta*) is fruit of the development of the new education act and will facilitate coordination around education between the Balearic Government and Consell de Formentera to guarantee provision of non-university educational services in a way that is equitable to the rest of the islands.

In healthcare, Armengol touted the creation in La Mola of a Basic Health Unit, which comes in

response to the growing population and healthcare needs detected in this town.

The Governing Council took note of the €473,934 that the Balearic Office of Social Affairs and Sports will allocate to the Consell de Formentera to finance municipal social services in 2022 and 2023, as well as the commitment to provide the Consell with eight places in its network of housing resources for unaccompanied minors.

The president explained that the Governing Council agreed to commission TRAGSA to maintain the agricultural irrigation pond for the next two years for €224,000, and adopted the Decree Law of special urgent measures to protect the Pine Islands and Balearic lizards, and to establish biosecurity measures to preserve these endemic species of reptiles and curb incoming and existing numbers of certain species of snakes.

The flagship measure of this regulation involves limiting incoming olive trees, carob trees and ornamental oaks with trunks more than 40 centimetres around during egg laying, hatching and hibernation.

Finally, Armengol confirmed that this Wednesday 1 February, the 315-member staff of IB3 will join the workforce of the regional administration, marking fulfilment of the Balearic Government's commitment with all relevant **steps during the established time frame.**

Legislature in review

The president took advantage of her visit to take stock of investments made, and said that on Formentera they have increased like on no other island, considering that this year the Consell de Formentera will receive €11.4 million from the Balearic Government, 128% more than in 2015. In terms of local investment, this year the executive branch will allocate €25.2 million to Formentera, €9 million and 55% more than last year. In fact, at €2,107, Formentera's per capita spending is the highest in the region.

Armengol highlighted the island's contribution to economic leadership and job creation in the Balearic Islands, and held up four tourism sustainability projects that will get €2 million in funding from Europe. The projects in question include a new smart access at Ses Illetes, electric pergolas in public parking lots, management of tourism data and promotion of Formentera.eco.

In addition, the president underscored social investment on the island, including the first home for the elderly, with capacity for 18, which Armengol said would be operational this February, sparing elderly islanders travel to Eivissa.

Last year Formentera also opened its new early-childhood and primary school, with modern facilities, capacity for 450 pupils and space for the new municipal nursery (*escoleta*).

One area of investment that the Balearic Government has promoted the most is healthcare. Services like haemodialisis and CAT scans that are now available at the Formentera Hospital have spared islanders 10,000 and 650 trips to Eivissa, respectively. The new urgent air transport contract also means availability 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year of helicopter transport for patients who need it, and the new permanent base for the 061 emergency response service, now under construction, is expected to be complete before year-end.

In housing, the president pointed out that construction of a new development of 17 public housing units on Formentera is already under way, while the new housing office will soon provide service to the entire island.

Finally, Armengol reviewed other improvements such as the Posidonia Decree, recovery of the agricultural irrigation pond, expansion of the wastewater treatment plant and an upgraded tank at the desalination plant. Construction of the latter two projects is expected to begin construction by late 2023.

Formentera's social safety net

The president of the Balearic Government seized the chance to explain how the executive branch's social safety net is reaching families on Formentera. She highlighted 25 measures involving an investment of approximately €3.3 million, including €2.5 million in direct aid.

Likewise, Armengol said that a hundred families have applied for €200 grants for extracurricular activities. Moreover, this week the second of two extra payments will be sent to people who have a recognised financial benefit for family care, benefits linked to the adult day care centre or

benefits linked to home help service. On Formentera, 149 people will benefit, for a total investment of €39,000.

Armengol additionally underlined aid for job seekers, which will reach 1,623 beneficiaries on Formentera for expected investment of €642,900.

As well, the president affirmed that this year's budget includes deductions of up to €1,760 for individuals who study off the island where they normally reside. She also highlighted free public transport everywhere in the Balearic Islands and the regional government's plan to refund the first registration fee and half of the second to 76 students of the University of the Balearic Islands from Formentera and Eivissa. Sixty-six are undergraduate students and ten are completing master's degrees.

30 January 2023
Communications Office
Consell de Formentera