



Earlier today, the CiF office of tourism posted a letter to the Balearic minister of urbanism, energy and transport, Joan Boned, calling for the creation on Formentera of a local branch of the Institut Balear de l'Habitatge – the Balearic housing institute – and urging a search for solutions to the problems plaguing homeseekers on the island. In the missive, councillor of territory Alejandra Ferrer requested a meeting with her opposite number in Palma as a first step in tackling «one of the greatest challenges faced today on Formentera: the shortage of available housing».

In her letter, Councillor Ferrer referred to the low-cost housing project backed by the Govern Balear – currently under construction in Sant Ferran – though predicted that project's failure to meet the existing demand. She also spoke of the Formentera Council's project to regulate tourist rentals of residential homes and the administration's goal «of distinguishing between tourist and non-tourist rentals, thus increasing the supply of dwellings available for year-round rental».

Ferrer also commented on recent rumours the Govern Balear was working on an initiative which would «penalise or reward homeowners depending on the type of property they have» and additional talk about the possibility of «hammering out deals with different financial institutions to establish a stock of some 70-100 housing units that the Institut Balear could use for residents in need».

But, Ferrer noted, «the number of apartments owned by banks are limited, as are dwellings that remain unoccupied year round». For the urbanism councillor, the problem remains that for many property owners, the attractiveness of housing speculation and rental during the high-season months outweighs the fear of non-paying tenants and dealing with evictions. The obstacle, she says, is sometimes quite simply a lack of information. «Worse yet», Ferrer added, «people looking for homes have no idea where to turn for information, nor do any associations exist that give counsel on loans or other available assistance».

For Councillor Ferrer, all those factors make the presence of the Institut Balear de l'Habitatge – and the counsel and orientation such an office could provide to Formentera's homeseeking population – a necessity.

