Formentera and Eivissa's councillors of social welfare, Rafael Ramírez and Carolina Escandell, met today on Formentera for a working meeting where discussion centred on various issues affecting the departments, including the arrival of underage minors on the shores of the Pine Islands. Ramírez and Escandell redefined the strategic lines of action and inter-council collaboration in response to a situation they said had “caught everyone off guard” and which, amid the arrival of watercraft on local shores in recent months, “has exceeded any predictions”.

Conseller Ramírez underscored cooperation between the islands, remarking the special nature of the situation and speaking of saturation at the level of the island councils, including Mallorca: “This is why coordination with our regional and national institutions is vital, so we can guarantee migrants' ability to find their place here and thrive socially”. Ramírez said Formentera's social welfare office would take on new personnel in order to follow the youths' cases, and insisted more resources would be needed to ensure the minors' proper care.

For her part, Consellera Escandell described “an emergency no one anticipated and that none of the other island councils had dealt with before”. “Guardianship of underage persons is something we've managed until now, but numbers this year are beyond any predictions”, said the councillor. “All the means at our disposition are outstripped”, she asserted, “we're talking about having to double capacity; no one expected that, and we believe that for the time being, it's going to continue”. Escandell agreed with Ramírez that the circumstances “require support from Palma and Madrid” and said Formentera and Eivissa's two governments would meet periodically to “keep exploring new areas of collaboration and new synergies”.

“There isn't going to be one single fix here”, insisted the Eivissa councilwoman: “We need the strength of many if we intend to give these youth the resources they need”.

And finally, the two councillors highlighted the work of department staff: “We decision-makers can draw strategic lines of action, but the ones dealing with this situation —the dedicated ones, out there on the ground— are the employees of local Formentera and Eivissa governments. That's important”.

29 October 2019
Department of Communication
Consell de Formentera