

Formentera's port will close from Thursday 19 March. The three remaining passenger crossings connecting Eivissa and Formentera will be devoted chiefly to "transporting health workers staff and emergency response personnel to the island", explained Consell president Alejandra Ferrer.

A Saturday decree mandated the implementation of minimum services, meaning 10 just daily journeys in each direction, but the Consell de Formentera has worked with the regional and central governments to reduce the frequency further still, trimming the number of daily trips to three in each direction.

In fact, the central government is set to adopt a new regulation today that will pare down connections not just between mainland Spain and the Balearics, but for inter-island travel as well. Ferrer pointed out that "in Palma, too, the regional government is expected to adopt a resolution that accommodates travel for health workers — something Formentera has been asking for all along so we could close our port".

### **33% capacity**

Mobility chief Rafael González indicated that under the new scheme Formentera-bound ferries would set out from Eivissa at 7.00am, 1.00pm and 7.00pm, with return trips at 9.00am, 3.00pm and 9.00pm. In order to respect the two-metre safe distance between individuals, ships must not exceed 33% of normal capacity, and the Guardia Civil will screen all boarding passengers to ensure they have a valid reason for travelling as per the state of alarm.

### **Guaranteeing supplies**

González pointed out that the new restriction would not affect the freight vessels essential to keeping the island stocked. "There are never passengers aboard these watercraft; just goods", said the conseller, who added that priority was being given for transport of basic essentials. He said the passenger ferry timetable was mainly designed "so healthcare professionals who work on Formentera but live on Eivissa can come to work and go home to sleep if they so choose".

Meanwhile, the local government has teamed up with Formentera's small and medium-sized business group, Pimef, the Chamber of Commerce, Formentera Hoteliers' Group and Formentera Hospital to temporarily free up apartments and lodging for healthcare workers coming every day from Eivissa, the goal being to make things easier for such professionals in

order to guarantee hospital coverage during the current health scare.

“The aim of this newest precautionary measure is to filter access to the island”, offered President Ferrer. “It was done at the request of islanders and local business owners to protect the island’s inhabitants from this health crisis.” Once again she conveyed a message of thanks “to the entire island of Formentera, to the emergency response and healthcare professionals, and to our local business community; everyone has done an exemplary job of things”.

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**Department of Communications**

**Consell de Formentera**