

Streets names

Gay names proposal causes controversy



▲ **Plans to eliminate street names** in Santa Cruz which have echoes of the Franco regime and replace them with names of well-known homosexuals look set to trigger heated controversy in the city council. The local socialist

party has unveiled details of a proposal to use the recently-passed Historical Memory Law in Spain (which seeks to compensate people or groups who suffered under the 36-year dictatorship) to remove all vestiges of the Franco period from

the capital. Several streets, including the main Rambla del Franco which cuts across the capital, retain their old names and the idea is to replace these with names of gays and lesbians "as a first step to helping sexual identity to be viewed

Where the streets have new names

as normal and eliminate false notions regarding sexual identity". Councillor Florentino Guzmán Plasencia also said this would help promote the capital as "an open city" and a destination for gay tourism. The proposal will be discussed by the council at a forthcoming session.

Initial suggestions from the offices of *Island Connections* are Elton John Plaza (considering the number of times he has been due to gig here), Calle Almodovar and Avenida de Federico García Lorca.

Overdue payments

Santa Cruz agrees to Dragados payout

▲ **Under-pressure Santa Cruz mayor** Miguel Zerolo has been embarrassed by yet another controversy, this time over a massive bill for the late payment of contracts awarded to one of Spain's biggest construction firms.

The company, Dragados, took the council to court on 19 counts of missed payment deadlines for projects such as the new swimming pool in Añaza.

Dragados is believed to have tired of the constant excuses given by officials when the payments were requested and decided to use the letter of the law to recover the arrears, together with interest to counter the effect of inflation. The prospect of a legal battle prompted the council to settle the matter out of court and Dragados says it has been given cast-iron guarantees that it will receive approximately 830,000 euros as soon as



Santa Cruz mayor Miguel Zerolo faces another financial embarrassment

possible. The revelations brought a stinging rebuke from opposition councillor Ángel Guimerá, who said that the corporation's negligence meant that "instead of building crèches for local families it was paying interest on debts which should never have accumulated in the first place".

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