

## AGUILAR REPLACEMENT

# PSOE leadership battle begins

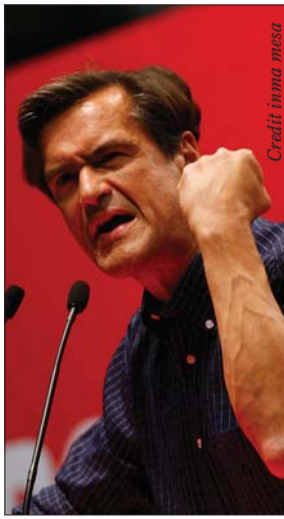
**Canarian socialists are preparing for what is expected to be a hard-fought contest to choose a new leader in March.**

Senior figures in the PSOE party are doing their best to convey an impression of unity but the first cracks have already started appearing concerning the future role of current leader Juan Fernando López Aguilar.

The former Spanish justice minister is now an MEP in Brussels and some leader-

ship contenders have already made it known that they do not want him to have any say in the party as of now. "Juan Fernando has done a lot to make us the biggest single party in the Canaries even though we did not get into power. But we need to move forward and I don't see him occupying any role, even an honorary presidency, if I become leader" vowed early front-runner Arcadio Díaz, who is a senator in the Spanish Parliament.

However, Aguilar support-



Credit: inma mesa

ers say his exclusion from even a token role would be disastrous for the party and have promised to keep his legacy alive. Other candidates who look certain to bid for the leadership and run for the Canarian presidency in 2011 are the current Gran Canaria Cabildo boss José Miguel Pérez and La Palma's Marcos Pérez.

*Lopez Aguilar's supporters don't want him excluded from all aspects of local political life*

## HERMIGUA

# Four wheels ...

□ By Barbara Belt

**Hermigua's two local policemen are the proud users of the town's first municipal police car.**

A grant of €18,000 from the regional government, €13,500 of which went on buying the vehicle, and the rest on what must rate as one of the most expensive repaint and refit jobs of all

time, has made this leap into the twenty-first century possible. Mayoress Solveida Clemente, following the hallowed island tradition of using all events, great or small, for some political chest-beating, confirmed that, "... the council will continue to work to improve services provided to the local population, as well as the working conditions of the local police, especially given the winter weather."



Until now, the town's two policemen have had to content themselves with fifty CC mopeds, rendering a serious chase of any criminals virtually impossible and leaving them, more importantly, since Hermigua is a tranquil place not prone to outbreaks of crime so much as inclement gusts of winter wind and rain, rather exposed to the elements. The policemen expressed satisfaction with their new car. "This is more like it! If it rains now, we won't get wet," they confirmed.

*Hermigua's mayor Solveida Clemente*

## News in Brief

La Palma is hoping to house the new E-ELT



Credit: IAC

## E-ELT

## Backing received for supertelescope

• After weeks of speculation that the Spanish government would not give financial support to the project, the Canarian authorities say La Palma's bid to host the world's biggest telescope is very much back on track.

Last-minute talks at the highest level with Madrid appear to have secured an agreement to cover the massive cost if the European Southern Observatory decides to award the project to the island. Madrid was lukewarm in its backing in recent months but recent political pressure, including unanimous support from the European Parliament for the telescope to be built and based on La Palma and not in the La Silla Observatory in Chile, forced a change of tune. Science minister Cristina Garmendia said that "a competitive offer" would be tabled to the ESO by the project deadline on 3 March.

The ESO says the revolutionary new European Extremely Large Telescope (E-ELT) will be 42 metres in diameter and will be "the world's biggest eye on the sky".

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