



SAFETY RISKS

No plans in place



↑ The Supreme Court in Luxembourg is to rule against Spain

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There are 26 points in Fuerteventura that are threatened by tides and seven by storms. In Tenerife there are a total of 33 danger points,

with eight threatened by heavy rainfall and 25 by the tides. Gran Canaria has the most risk points with 44, of which six refer to storms and 38 to wave movements.



↑ Heavy rain can cause severe flooding in Santa Cruz

The second phase is the preparation of a hazard map with a potential flood calculation and a risk assessment. These maps have been submitted and registered at the European Environmental Agency for all islands. However, they have not yet been publicly announced and posted in Gran Canaria, Fuerteventura and La Palma, which is also mandatory.

The third instrument for risk minimisation is the preparation of a contingency plan so that, in an emergency, society and the public administration can be coordinated as efficiently as possible. This plan should have been drawn up long ago not only on the basis of EU regulations but also by Royal Decree 903/2010, but this has not yet happened. This is why the



↑ The Barranco de Los Santos in Santa Cruz becomes a flooded monster after heavy rain



↑ Cleaning work should be carried out to clear the drainage channels

European Commission is taking the matter to the Supreme Court, and it is not clear how much a possible penalty would be. Considering the high number of danger points, especially on the three largest islands, the urgency of the settlement is quite obvious. The Canary Islands Government has now announced a kind of supervision to promote compliance. However, most islands, with the exception of Tenerife and Gran Canaria, do not even have the personnel needed to work out the plans.

With the arrival of autumn, the probability of storms with heavy rain increases, even though the archipelago has been largely spared in the last two years. How well are the Canary Islands really prepared for this? Only the cleaning of canals and ravines, which should be carried out by the local councils in the summer months, is sufficient to cope with a real storm and how much of that necessary work has been done?

SYSTEM SNAGS

Education fears

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According to the Canary Islands Statistical Office, it fell by only two per cent from 2016 to 2017, but has plummeted by around 23 per cent compared to the time before the crisis in 2008. "However, these figures are somewhat misleading, because there are communities in which we have falling figures, but also others in which they are rising" explained the new Canarian Education Minister María José Guerra Palmero. She wants to use the space that will become available above all to create more places for small children from zero to three years of age. This is because 70 per cent of the children in this age group are currently accommodated in private day care centres due to a lack of public services. In view of the high cost of living, for single mothers, the care of a small child is an important factor for young women who do not want to give up their job. According to a study by the Fundación General de la Universidad de La Laguna (FGULL), there has also been a significant decline in the number of vocational schools offering intermediate and higher courses. This downward trend in this two-year pre-vocational training is mainly attributed to poor communication between schools and potential employers. It's also striking that only seven per cent of graduates actually work in the occupation they have studied. Although everyone has found a job after graduation and about half of them continue to work, most of them work in a field other than the one they have trained in.

Where to put the teachers?

On the other hand, teachers who are transferred to the Canary Islands at short notice do not get local housing at affordable prices. The situation in Lanzarote and Fuerteventura is particularly critical. Sometimes the allocation of the teaching positions takes place only a few days before the start of the school term. If the teacher has to change his or her place of residence, it will be difficult. It's precisely on these two islands that most apartments are offered on the holiday market. Often, at least temporarily, the displaced people have no choice but to rent such an apartment at even more expensive prices. Their salary then shrinks faster than it is earned.

Even more delicate is the situation for substitute teachers who only have to replace colleagues who are absent due to illness and also have to look for accommodation on the expensive rental market. "The teachers have to bear the costs for the family and housing. Although each case must be considered individually, there are some teachers who are pushed to the edge of affordability by high rents," explains a spokesman for the Canary Islands Education Employees' Union (Stec). Not everyone transferred to the archipelago for a year gives up everything at home, even less if he or she already has a family. The situation is so precarious that many educators have already indicated that they exclude Lanzarote and Fuerteventura from their choice of jobs on the distribution list. Unfortunately, this problem is not only limited just to the teaching profession and these two islands. The situation of workers from other categories and in the Balearic Islands is similarly precarious. ■



↑ Searching for accommodation in Lanzarote on a normal salary is tough

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