Testing protocol for Balearics air corridors

**Palma/Madrid.** The Spanish government and the regional governments in the Balearics and the Canaries have agreed a protocol for establishing air corridors with European countries that will involve tests at points of origin and destination when the accumulated incidence of coronavirus cases is greater than 50 per 100,000 inhabitants.

The protocol establishes that people arriving in the Balearics or the Canaries from a foreign destination will have to undergo a test 48 hours before the flight. These tests will be at facilities designated by local health authorities and will be free.

Any travellers testing positive will not be allowed to fly and will have to go into quarantine. The regional governments will take care of accommodation and other needs and will, if necessary, also cover the costs of health care and hospitalisation.

The national tourism ministry says that a working group involving representatives from the Balearics and the Canaries has established that the two regions have the necessary capacity to deal with tourists who may test positive.

The tourism minister, Reyes Maroto, believes that the protocol will be useful in reaching agreements with foreign governments to reactivate the movement of tourists on safe corridors.

She adds that the government hopes to be able to extend the protocol to tourist destinations on the mainland.

These corridors will be complementary to recommendations that the EU Council of Ministers is expected to approve this week in order to harmonise epidemiological criteria and rules for travel between EU countries.

**TWO ARRESTS FOR SPATE OF BURGLARIES IN FELANITX**

Two men have been arrested in connection with burglaries from rural properties in Felanitx. The Guardia Civil and Felanitx police launched a joint operation after there were reports of break-ins at the end of September and of the theft of valuables.

The two men became suspects, and the police operation will involve tests at facilities designated by local health authorities and will, if necessary, also cover the costs of health care and hospitalisation.

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**Spanish PM urges end to COVID feud as far-right protests**

Spain’s Socialist Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez appealed for unity yesterday after the far-right Vox party said it would take legal action against a partial lockdown imposed on Madrid to contain one of Europe’s worst coronavirus outbreaks.

Vox, which is echoing the conservative-led Madrid regional authority’s opposition to the new restrictions implemented via a state of emergency, has also called for protests.

The measures affecting 3.8 million people in the Spanish capital and eight satellite towns include a ban on non-essential travel except for work, school or medical reasons.

Around 7,000 police are deployed to ensure compliance.

Vox leader Santiago Abascal said his party, Spain’s third largest, would appeal in the constitutional court against the “illegal” state of emergency. Opponents say the measures in Madrid are excessive and will crush the economy.

But Sanchez told a news conference that health should come before politics. “We have to be united. This is an epidemiological battle, not ideological,” he said.

Spaniards are bemused and angry over the political bickering, as their nation suffers the highest COVID-19 caseload in Western Europe and its worst recession since the civil war.

“I feel frustrated, deceived, I feel afraid because I see that we are in the middle of political disputes that lead nowhere,” said Miguel Angel, 63, a Madrid resident.