

Majorca Daily Bulletin

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More people in Britain struggle to pay bills, ONS survey shows

London.—Almost a quarter of people in Britain said it became harder to pay household bills even before increases in regulated energy prices took effect, according to an official survey that underscored the breadth of a cost-of-living crisis.

Some 23% of people surveyed in March by the Office for National Statistics said it was difficult or very difficult to pay their usual bills compared with a year ago, up from 17% in November.

Among payers of household energy bills, 43% said it was very or somewhat difficult to afford them in March.

The survey took place before regulators this

month raised the maximum amount that can be charged by energy suppliers by 54% - a change that will affect around 22 million households. "The combination of shrinking pay packets and rising costs means that the pressure on households is building," Jack Leslie, Senior Economist at the Resolution Foundation, said.

"This is set to get worse, with the estimated number of households experiencing fuel stress hitting five million this month."

Last month Britain's budget watchdog said consumer price inflation rate could hit almost 9% later this year and it predicted living standards in 2022 would fall by the most since at least the 1950s.

THE BRITISH
CAN NOT GET
ENOUGH OF
SPAIN:
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PALMA WANTS PORT CONTROL

● After a weekend which saw four mega cruise ships moored up in Palma at the same time and the arrival of 1,000 hire cars, with a further 2,000-plus still yet to come, the Balearic government is desperate to secure some control over the port and also the airport.

Yesterday, with the *Queen Elizabeth* moored in port, the Balearic vice-president and Minister for Energy Transition, Juan Pedro Yllanes, stressed that the co-management of ports and airports between the central and regional government "would undoubtedly simplify" the control of the flow of cruise ship arrivals in Palma and the rest of the ports across the islands.

Yllanes yesterday stressed that an agreement had been reached between the Balearic government and the large cruise lines to limit the number of large cruise ships moored in Palma at the same time.

However, Yllanes has claimed, as stated in the Bellver Agreement, the request of the regional government to Madrid that the Balearic Islands have the power to decide on the management of the ports and airports of the three islands in order to control the arrival of visitors has fallen on deaf ears.

The vice-president said that this year the Balearics will experience a large influx of tourists by air and sea following the easing of the pandemic, the end of the restrictions and the pent up desire to travel by national and international tourists, but he would like to see the Balearics have the powers to manage the situation in an orderly fashion.

Yesterday there were further complaints about the number of cruise ships in port over the weekend and the sudden influx of thousands of new hire cars destined for Majorca's roads this summer amidst fears of traffic congestion and pollution.