



- **Juan urges stopping and considering whether more growth in tourism is necessary**
- **The Consell president highlights forthcoming opening of housing office, old people's residence and centre for enterprise**

Today Ana Juan, president of the Consell de Formentera, stood in the plenary hall to open the first session of discussion on the state of Formentera. In her address, she championed regulatory projects like Formentera.eco and controls on mooring at Estany des Peix which local government has introduced this legislature and encouraged islanders to reflect on whether ongoing growth in tourism is necessary. "The spotlight is on Formentera. In this perilous moment success could kill us if we do not act and enact measures to preserve our island. We, the men and women of Formentera and many of our visitors, face this threat on our roads, at beaches, in the countryside, on the coast... And this threat not only endangers our model of tourism, but disrupts the way of life of our people", said the president.

Guardrails and tourism growth

President Juan asserted that "safeguarding Formentera is our raison d'être" and called initiatives like Formentera.eco "pioneering" and new rules at Estany des Peix "unprecedented in the Balearics and something no one on Formentera had dared do previously". She stressed that "recovering Estany des Peix will help us recognise the importance of preserving our natural spaces, restore part of our identity and show new generations there is hope and that this wonderful island has a promising future".

On tourism growth and the freezing of roughly 3,800 overnighting permits on Formentera under the tourism act, Juan offered the following: "If we are pursuing regulatory policies, do we really want to keep growing? The island and the policies we apply must be coherent".

Moreover, Juan highlighted local government's work in coordination with other administrations and Formentera's contributions to Balearic legislation on tourism, island councils, youth and education. That coordination has seen the opening of the Sant Ferran primary school, year-round 061 emergency response service and local availability of haemodialysis, for example.

Maritime transport and port of La Savina

President Juan highlighted the passing of the decree on maritime transport "which will be an instrument to improve and regulate maritime mobility and tourist excursions and, with early-bird and late-night ferry connections, ensure islander mobility". She called for continued efforts "to improve our port and tune it to our needs for environmental, financial and social sustainability" and bemoaned the fact that "unfortunately, the port of La Savina is suffering the consequences of a war of economic interests. We have seen this before at other ports nearby. It seriously affects many local businesses and entrepreneurs and the port's ability to function and do so safely". Juan said: "Let me be absolutely clear: the Consell and I, as a representative on Port Authority's board of directors, will always defend the general interest over private interests, and we will always defend a more social port designed for our residents, for our fishermen and, ultimately, for Formentera".

Housing

In addition to environmental equilibrium, the president spoke of social equilibrium – "another issue on red alert due to housing access woes. As political representatives, it is our duty to look for solutions and minimise impact. That includes offering the chance to islanders whose requests for holiday rental permits were denied to administer their properties as year-round rentals. If the law allows it, let's do it. I think this is a good opportunity and we must be courageous", said Juan. She announced that "after summer we will open Formentera's housing office. The pandemic put a stop to this project, but it is absolutely necessary. The Consell must be there for islanders and help them find housing at a decent price. We are also working on creating an ethical housing reserve".

Ongoing projects

During her speech, the president drew attention to work done in the different areas of the Consell and some of the projects that will either be launched soon or are currently in the pipeline. These include the old person's residence, due to open after the summer, the new waste management contract, the island's first solar panel-equipped pergola in a public parking lot, the roll-out of a packaging return system, the centre for enterprise and new stands at the municipal football field.

Juan closed with a word for maintaining and enriching local heritage, tangible and intangible alike: "It represents the vision of the future of a people, and it is very important we value everything that shapes who we are and gives meaning to our hopes for the island". In this sense, Juan also highlighted last Friday's awarding of the Formentera Gold Medal (*Medalla d'Or*) and offered a nod to the island's elders. "We speak about the island of the future, of younger generations, of paths towards sustainability and of the model we want for Formentera. Here, we must listen to our elders and learn from them, because they too, a source of wisdom and repositories of Formentera's true legacy, have plenty to say."

The second session of discussion around the state of Formentera will take place at 9.00am Thursday 14 July and include proposals from the political groups.

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