



Last Tuesday, 20 March, was the occasion to celebrate – two years after originally scheduled – a regular session of the Patronat del Parc Natural de Ses Salines d'Eivissa i Formentera, the park's consultative board. The goal of the board is to facilitate participation by local entities, conservationist groups, local businesses and different groups of interest relevant to decision making at the park, overseen for the last year by Ibanat.

Though the Patronat is purely consultative in nature, such encounters constitute a rare opportunity for representatives of local organisations to learn first-hand details regarding the park's annual work plans, along with other budgetary information and conservation activity.

One closely-watched issue is that of the park's budget. For example, in 2013, the combined budget for the Eivissa and Formentera portions of the park was 19,628.75€, down from a 2012 total of 79,460€. Such a drastic change had been unseen in the eight years since the space was declared a natural park in 2005, and the drop in turn resulted in the termination of the work contract of the park's on-site naturalist. The cuts also effected a situation of zero investment in conservation programmes and a dismantling of the near entirety of the park's technical and directive staff (the Ses Salines park was without park director for nearly two years). Budget cuts have also brought about changes in operations at the Can Marroig Interpretation Centre, which is only open for a handful of hours every week. The majority of the other natural parks located across the Balearic Islands – according to the Govern – are open year-round from Monday to Sunday.

Moreover, cutbacks meant that in 2013 neither land nor water-based surveillance personnel could be hired for the regular supplementary assistance customarily provided in summer, nor were any line items to this end included in the 2014 budget. Nevertheless, the director of the Govern Balear's Directorate General of the Environment (Medi Natural), Neus Lliteres, has assured that these services will be maintained by delegating the work to private third-party companies. These companies – with the collaboration of the Guàrdia Civil – will oversee the programme of assisted anchoring. It is thus clear that direct surveillance by park staff will be non-existent, and given as much, one of the park management's principal obligations will be abandoned.

Members of the Formentera Island Council, we feel compelled to speak out about the incongruences inherent to the present situation. Since 2012, Medi Natural has applied fees for a host of different actions, including visits to interpretation centres, filming promotional videos and moorage at ecological buoys. Such collections meant a total of 25,000€ income in 2012 and 30,454€ in 2013. To wit, in 2013 income from the different taxes and fees was equal to 50% of the park's total budget. How then can it be that not a single euro was destined to park surveillance or to any of the other fundamental conservation actions currently being neglected?

Another detail of note that emerged from the Patronat meeting was that the year 2014 would finally see a revision of the park's use and management directive. The announcement provoked surprise among Formentera Council representatives who had repeatedly requested of Lliteres that just such steps be taken. Director General Lliteres, who had previously insisted that no such necessity existed, has made an about-face and affirmed that the revision will indeed occur, bringing the park's current directive – recently expired – into line with management directives for new LIC-zones (zones of special environmental importance) now being voted into law.

The Formentera Island Council has on numerous occasions requested that the park's use and management directive (PRUG) be revised, especially with regard to its bearing on the delimitation of moorage zones in Illetes and Cavall den Borràs. The Council has moreover repeatedly asked that definitive approval be granted for the anchorage planning project promoted by the island's Office of the Environment. Last Thursday, Council members urged Director General Lliteres to bear in mind the opinions of the different Patronat representatives in the revision of the park's directive, urging that if possible the revision be undertaken as a participatory process.

Although Director General Lliteres did not directly oppose participation by Patronat members in the drafting and modification of the new PRUG, neither did she make any firm commitments before the attendees that such a debate might be conceivable.

For this reason, the Formentera Island Council will formally petition that participatory and consultative proceedings be opened in order to obtain a careful revision of the PRUG, one that is adapted to the real necessities existing at the Ses Salines park.

Finally, the Council wishes to make clear its disappointment with the manifest indifference of the Govern Balear vis-à-vis the Ses Salines park. Despite appeals by the Formentera Council, at no point in time was any special session of the Patronat called in order to discuss the myriad

issues affecting the natural park, such as petroleum exploration and so-called 'party boats'. It has also yet to be revealed what, if any, preventative measures have been adopted by the park's management with respect to these issues.

The meeting did however result in the revelation of certain relevant data concerning, for example, the park's conservation programmes: during the 2012 year funding for these programmes did not exceed 32,500€, and the entirety of this money was destined for the removal of the non-native and invasive *Carpobrotus* plant. This same category of funding received zero euros in 2013, while provisions for 2014 place this amount at 8,000€, money which will be applied once again toward the removal of the *Carpobrotus* species.

Finalment, dir també que des del CIF lamentam la desatenció que el Govern ha fet cap a ses Salines, ja que com varem posar de manifest a la reunió, en cap moment s'ha convocat una reunió extraordinària del patronat del Parc per tractar temes com les prospeccions petrolieres o la problemàtica amb els party boats, i es desconeixen les accions preventives que el des del parc s'hagin pogut dur a terme en aquest sentit.

En el transcurs d'aquesta reunió es donaren a conèixer dades rellevants com per exemple que en l'apartat "programes de conservació" a l'illa de Formentera el parc només hi ha destinat 32.500 euros l'any 2012 per a la retirada d'espècies al.lòctones (*carpobrotus*), zero euros l'any 2013 i per a 2014 hi ha un total previst de 8.000 euros que novament es destinaran a actuacions de retirada d'espècies al.lòctones.