



The Formentera Island Council's councilor of Social Welfare, Youth Services and Equality, Dolores Fernández, together with a representative from Projecte Home Balears, presented today in press conference the revised and updated island directive on drug-use (Pla Insular sobre Drogues de Formentera). The pla insular is an acting directive put in place to respond locally to the problem of drug dependency and other addictions from a perspective that is at once medical, psychological and social. The first directive was valid for a period extending from 2011 to 2013, and this year marked the occasion to evaluate the situation on the island and update the document.

The directive is based on the three basic principles of prevention, assistance and inclusion into the labour market, while also emphasizing the importance of awareness education and continued study of drug dependencies. For these reasons, it is absolutely necessary that there be well-coordinated, cohesive action between the different public institutions, private associations and the local population at large.

The 2011-2013 directive resulted from investigations into the different sociodemographic factors at play in Formentera and analysis of the phenomenon of drug dependency here.

Valid through 2017, the new version of the island directive will be based on data from home surveys of 200 individuals aged 15 to 64 (considered the 'active population'). The aim of the survey was to collect information on resident habits and prevalence of alcohol/drug consumption on Formentera.

The completed surveys were conferred to Projecte Home Balears (Proyecto Hombre in Castilian) for analysis and comparison with the data already collected at the national and local Balearic levels.

The object of the directive is to reduce consumption of both licit and illicit drugs; identify risk factors and, especially, delay the age of first-time use; limit damages caused by drug- and alcohol-use; ensure help and treatment for residents with drug and alcohol problems as well as

provide assistance for their families; and facilitate insertion into the job market for people with issues of dependency.

Thus, it is extremely important that local associations working on matters of health, sports, youth services, local safety and leisure be actively involved in the fight against drug addiction and in the development and drafting of this directive.

Public institutions play a vital role, particularly with regard to promotion of healthy living habits and drug-use prevention. In fact, since the 2001/2002 academic year, civic education has been imparted at both the primary and secondary school levels as a means to stress the importance of healthy lifestyles and drug- and alcohol-use prevention. This educational programme benefitted from the assistance of the Centre for the Study and Prevention of Addictive Behaviour (Centre d'Estudis i Prevenció de Conductes Addictives, or CEPCA), a project overseen by the now-defunct Council of Eivissa and Formentera. Currently, and since 2009, it has had the assistance of the Balearic Islands' Directive on Addiction and Drug-dependency (PADIB).

Formentera's Office of Youth Services also works toward prevention by trying to offer healthy alternatives to drug and alcohol consumption with the Formentera Marxa programme, which organises weekend options in alternative recreation for the island's youth. Indeed, this particular project came as a direct outgrowth of the island directive on drug-use, which allowed the Office of Social Welfare the access the additional funding required to hire the staff member who developed the Formentera Marxa programme.

### **Research study conducted in 2011 among Formentera youth**

Based on a study conducted on Formentera in 2011, 91.3% of youth between the ages of 14 and 18 report having consumed alcohol at some point in their lifetime, leaving national (81.2%) and local Balearic levels (80.3%) behind. Seventy-nine point four percent of youth under 14 admitted to having already consumed alcohol, and by the time young people are 16 this figure increases to 94.4%.

Among adolescents aged 14 to 15, more than half had consumed alcohol within the thirty days prior to surveying (52.8%), while 30% of respondents aged 16 to 18 reported consuming alcohol only at the weekend.

In the 14 to 18 age group alcohol-use on weekdays reaches 22.6%, notably higher than the national average of 15.6%. In general and with the exception of 'depressants' or 'downers', drug-use is witnessed earlier in Formentera. For example, the average age of first-time alcohol consumption in Formentera is 13.3. This figure stands at 13.7 for the rest of Spain and 13.8 for the rest of the Balearics.

*\*National and regional data are based on a 2008 study.*