Today the island welcomes the third Posidonia Project Forum, and Formentera's president and councillor of tourism, Alejandra Ferrer, tended to the task of greeting participants. Formentera is, in the president's words, "a small territory where the importance of sustainability has always been crystal clear". "There's no better proof of that than the Save Posidonia Project, launched in 2017", she continued, pointing out this year marks the twentieth anniversary of nearby posidonia meadows' naming as a World Heritage Site and affirming: "Their protection is one of the reasons why we're here today".

"We're on our way, but there's a considerable stretch still ahead", she said. "When there's a will in the political, social and business circuits, there's a way", Ferrer asserted, reasoning "we know what the problems are, but we know what the fixes are, too". To pin them down, the forum kicked off yesterday with a series of working groups tackling issues like water, waste, plastics, mobility on land and by sea, the energy transition and posidonia seagrass.

President Ferrer held up Formentera's adhesion to the sustainable tourism declaration along with local adoption of the 2030 sustainable development goals—"17 sustainable development priorities we hope local civil society and businesses make their own". But the president didn't mince words, either: "Working toward sustainability is no longer an option; it's a responsibility for each and every one of us".

2021 goals

Lastly, marine biologist Oscar Esparza presented the conclusions of working groups that met all day yesterday to explore the issues and prepare a roadmap to local sustainability that has been dubbed "Formentera 2021".

The following goals and action plans emerged:

- Goal 1: move toward zero waste generation on Formentera.
Action plan 1: withdraw single-use plastics and work toward a system of returns and deposit refunds.

- Goal 2: improve energy efficiency on the island by favouring renewable energies.
Action plan 2: craft a plan for renewable energy efficiency for businesses in tourism, government and housing.

- Goal 3: reduce high-pollution vehicle use among local businesses and islanders.
Action plan 3: create incentives for businesses and islanders to use clean transport alternatives.

- Goal 3: regulate the flow of incoming visitors, bringing this into line with the island's actual capacity.
Action plan 4: develop a participative strategy to efficiently regulate and administer regular ferry traffic in such a way as to simultaneously address uncontrolled anchorage on local shores.

Efforts over the next two years will be based on the idea of incremental changes, and entail the active engagement of Formentera's social and business quarters. It is hoped that changes are evident by 2021, when the next large-scale Posidonia Project Forum is planned.

Conferences and round tables

The day-long event will feature conferences from experts on the environment and sustainability in tourism and social and economic areas; one will focus on sustainability as a pillar of competitiveness in tourism, another will offer a close-up look at an environmental issue: the suitability of carbon footprints in gauging real impact.

Activities will continue tomorrow, Saturday, with a community cleanup and an outing at sea to familiarise visiting journalists with the reasons for posidonia meadows' designation as a World Heritage Site.

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Department of Communication
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