



Economic crisis: Eco-social exit

A group of people and organizations have decided to unite voices to ask that the economic solutions that are being built from the crisis caused by Covid-19 incorporate environmental and social criteria. We are asking for an eco-social solution, in accordance with the following considerations.

Our society is going through an unprecedented health crisis, which has slowed down almost all human activity in most parts of the world. It has had and continues to have a high cost in lives, it has been difficult for many families and has caused a complex emergency.

On a positive note, the planet has had a break. Planes, big ships and cars have stopped, and air pollution levels have been dramatically reduced. On land and at sea, noise levels have disappeared and nature has regained space. With this quieter pace, we have heard the birds singing from inside our homes, and we have appreciated some very nice streets on the first family walks. With this obligatory pause, we have been given an opportunity to feel the silence and to reflect, as well as being able to appreciate the things that we consider important.

But we have a duty to set society in motion again, up to now almost totally confined, and we want to join our voices to ask that the economic plans being put in place do not commit the same mistakes as have been committed in the past.

Menorca's position as an eminently touristic area could harm us in a context where the movement of people may be restricted for months, we do not know until when. It is not hard to presume that, if tourists are able to visit this year, it will be in much smaller numbers and probably for longer stays. Therefore, let us take advantage of this moment to rethink the tourism model that we would like to see on the island.

We are planning the conversion of the large hotels built in the sixties and seventies. We should encourage the reduction of volumes and accommodation capacity. Sustainability criteria in matters of water, energy and biodegradable materials should be incorporated into all interventions carried out on buildings.

It is also time to try and diversify the economy and stop betting solely reliant on tourism. We believe that the agricultural sector must be helped to diversify production, which up to now has been very much geared towards the industrial generation of milk. Menorca needs to increase produce in vegetables, fruit and meat with guarantees of nutritional quality and respect for the environment, in order to supply the local market, which is increasingly interested in local products.

There is a need for companies to address the problem of waste, to capture plastics at sea, to replace non-biodegradable materials to be used and thrown away, to take advantage of biogas from farms or biomass from gardening. There is a lack of companies working in the areas such as; obtaining water by condensation, carrying out forest management to generate local fuel, to use hydrogen obtained from renewable sources as a sustainable energy vector.

It is necessary to start initiatives, both public and private, that stimulate an economy based on culture, archaeology, sailing, dry stone wall building, renewable energies... We should know how to take advantage of this hiatus to become more resilient and self-sufficient.

We think that we are facing a time when we should be able to envisage educational programmes that will help the many people who will remain unemployed, in order to give them skills that will allow them to enter new sectors of work. The University, the Vocational Training, the BIT Park and the public and private institutions, have to look for how to quickly manage our educational options in order to give answer to the needs that arise from this new situation.

It is also time to analyse and plan concepts such as Menorca's capacity. Our island has been subjected to enormous pressure, with more than 200,000 people visiting during the summer of the last few years. We believe that the new tourism paradigm must show signs of excellence in health provisions and means avoiding mass tourism. Just as a maximum capacity has been established in beach car parks or in the Jocs del Pla, Menorca also has limits in terms of people and vehicles, which we can now logically define.

We live in Menorca, we love this island and its people. We need economic activity, and that this activity is built trying to avoid the mistakes made under the previous model. We know there are matters that are not decided locally, but we are aware that we live in a natural paradise that we must preserve, enjoy and bequeath to the generations that follow us, and that is why we want Menorca to make its contribution by seeking out and showing the new paths that can be taken.

We think that health should be a transversal axis, to maintain an environment that is fundamental when it comes to avoiding and being able to deal with health crisis. Working to reduce – quickly – emissions from the power plant, to implement policies for citizen mobility that aim to non-motorized travel, to prioritize chemical-free agriculture, to establish a maximum number of vehicles in summer (as is done in Formentera), require maritime transport that does not use heavy fuels, promote gastronomy based on a balanced local diet ...

There is a global citizens' movement that demands new economic visions in order to provide a more solid future for so many young people who have not found it for years, that incorporate more solidarity in the distribution of benefits, that are not based on the transfer to third countries without citizens' rights in search of more profit, that do not encourage the premature departure from education...

There are many people mobilising to demand that we do not continue on the wrong path without taking into account challenges as considerable as global warming, loss of biodiversity and increasing pollution. There are many approved instruments and agreements that provide frameworks for action: international agreements on climate and earth conservation, European directives on energy, water and pollution, legislation on climate change and on waste, declarations of climate emergencies, the declaration of a Biosphere Reserve...

We call on all citizens to mobilize and visibly demand an eco-social solution to the economic crisis that is now beginning. It requires the support of organizations and groups, as well as people at a personal level.

We invite the corporate world, the self-employed, employers, unions etc. to join this call asking for economy, but with more rationality than the previous model.

We ask public institutions to be sensitive to this orientation, to act in accordance with legislative commitments and to apply environmental and social clauses in both contracting processes and lines of support, so that no one is left behind and so that we do not lose sight of the need to harmonise our activities with the land and the planet we live on.

Let us join the call and in the face of the economic crisis, let's look for eco-social solutions.

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