Jaume Ferrer and Sebastià Munar, presidents of the Formentera Council and the Institut Balear d'Estudis en Arqueologia Marítima (IBEAM), met today to sign a pact which, Ferrer said, «lays down the framework for joint action between the Council and IBEAM to create a map of Formentera's surrounding underwater archaeological sites».

President Ferrer noted that Formentera's 2015-2016 directive on managing cultural heritage sites establishes the commissioning of such a map as a priority task. The IBEAM, he pointed out, is a non-profit association whose mission is to «research, protect and raise awareness about the undersea cultural patrimony of the Balearic Islands».

The accord signed today has a period of validity of five years and stipulates assistance from the Council in the amount of 2,000 euros for research and lodging costs. Councillor of patrimony Susana Labrador underscored the importance the map will have for the Council: «It will provide for localisation and description of sites that make up our marine patrimony, which is the first step in being able to effectively manage and protect them».

Help locating underwater heritage sites

Munar said that once completed the map will become property of the Formentera Council and noted that viewing privileges must be limited to experts «in order to avoid plundering». He called the map a «living document» that will be constantly updated, and thus called on help from the people of Formentera in general — and fishermen and sailors in particular — reporting any underwater archaeological ruins to the CiF office of patrimony, or to agents of the Guárdia Civil.

Continuing education

The IBEAM will provide online courses and facilitate youth-oriented workshops to raise awareness about the need to preserve Formentera's undersea patrimony. A documentary film of the work that goes into the creation of the map is also envisaged. Munar said a crowdfunding campaign is being launched to help meet financing costs. At present, Trasmapi, Fundació Abel Matutes, Decathlon, Vellmarí, Marina de Formentera, Ibiza Fun Rent Car and Global Star Events have all jumped on board to join the Formentera Council and the Guárdia Civil in their work.