

# USTICA BLUE DAYS

## Sustainability at the centre of the Mediterranean

Environment, scientific research, inclusion: the various aspects of sustainability in an initiative that spotlights the Mare Nostrum

**A** project of “augmented sustainability” covering the environment but also rights, emerging technologies, new urban layouts and economy: this was the focus behind Blue Days, an initiative held between July 23 and 25th with its centre in Ustica, the “Black Pearl” of the Mediterranean.

With a prestige Technical Scientific Committee represented by the Pisa Scuola Superiore Sant’Anna, the University of Palermo and the Protected Marine Area of the island of Ustica, the event – planned from the start is an annual date – with a message of respect for human and environmental nature pointed the spotlight on a Mediterranean: a basin of exchanges, integration, cultures and the crossing of important migrator reflow was, as well as an environmental ecosystem of fundamental importance for the climate balances of the entire planet.

The initiative, divided into the three pillars of “environment and

territory”, “sport and challenges” and “scientific research” (in line with the sustainable development objectives of UN Agenda 2030), debated the role that robotics, marine biology, architecture, science, environment, economy and even sport can have for a world that is sustainable not just in the traditional environmental sense but as a broader concept of inclusivity (including the marginalisation of small villages and islands), developing diversity, services and infrastructures that make it possible.

### The value of small villages

Small villages, which are often on the margins of the territories they occupy, represent a large fraction of inhabited areas all over the world, areas whose aspirations in terms of sustainable economy, green transition, new qualified tourism and logistical connections need to be implemented.



And the Mediterranean, on which the event, above all in its scientific approach, wants to bring back to the centre of attention, also has very many islands (in Sicily alone there are 104) where energy transition is not always technologically sustainable.

“Along the road towards a sustainable European industry that is resilient and centred on man, we must perhaps be prepared to go back to the villages to rethink humanity. But how could citizens live in a small intelligent environment without services and technologies? Even small villages must be involved in a great smart and digital transformation: very complex aspects in often marginal territories, in the centre of the Mediterranean which needs great attention also in environmental terms and not only there,” says Paolo Dario, pro-Rector of innovation at the Pisa Scuola Superiore Sant’Anna, helped by Enza Spadoni, engineer and innovation manager who drew up the project.

### **The sustainable revolution is “human-centric”**

In the air of connection between physical and digital systems, of Cyber Physical Systems, of the Internet of Things, Big Data and

the Cloud, Artificial Intelligence connected to 4.0 enabling technologies, the fifth industrial revolution will be the one that turns back to man.

In short, a “human-centric” revolution which will also be sustainable and resilient, where in particular “sustainability” will be the key word, at the centre of a policy of recovery by the European Union based on the acceleration of the double green and digital transition.

On the other hand, if we look at the general strategic reference on sustainability (Agenda 2030 of the United Nations with its 17 objectives of sustainable development) the idea that sustainability is only an environmental question is definitively overcome: it promotes an integrated vision of the various dimensions of development, which must be inclusive, sustained by technology and improve the living conditions of everyone.

### **Augmented sustainability**

Ustica Blue Days – co-organised by the municipality of Ustica, the Protected Marine Area of Ustica and the Sferracavallo Sailing Club, with several patrons including the Sicily Region, the Lega Navale Italiana, the WWF and Legambiente – sets out from these assumptions to explore sustainability in this augmented interpretation.

With the word “augmented” we are speaking of emerging technologies (which are not always sustainable, particularly in small and very small villages) but also inclusion and, naturally, the environment and ecological and energetic transitions.

The conference held on Saturday, July 24 brought together some of the most important Italian re-

searchers for a transverse dialogue on the potential offered by new technologies, new forms of organisation and urban layout and possible forms of sustainable economy.

To the appeal for a new paradigm of augmented sustainability, among the Italian scientific community involved, responded prof. Paolo Dario and Roberto Buizza, lecturer at the Scuola Superiore Sant’Anna where he is working on a new climate initiative and a new inter-university and inter-disciplinary doctorate on climate and sustainability.

He gave a warning and a recommendation for immediate concrete action to bring about a substantial reduction in greenhouse gas emission, starting from the premiss that the Mediterranean is one of the areas most at risk from the impact of climate change. Change that is accelerating and having a particularly obvious impact in certain regions, like the Mediterranean, where extreme natural events are seen increasingly frequently. For example, increasingly intense and prolonged heat waves are having increasingly negative effects on agriculture and access to food, and hence on migration.



## A new identity for Ustica

Ustica itself, always considered a naturalistic paradise for its habitats and ecosystems that are particularly rich in species (it is the oldest protected Marine area and one of the biggest in Europe), with this initiative aims to put itself at the centre of a new narration of well-being with augmented sustainability as its new identity, linked to that of the Mediterranean in the middle of which it is sited, at the crossroads of millenary history and culture and marine ecosystems.

“Only through the well-being of the environment, both natural and social, can we get to the well-being of man and a new economy of growth, that puts the environment we live in and hence man at the centre.

A sustainable economy is not a dream, but a system that works and can reduce inequality,” says Davide Bruno, Director of the Isola di Ustica protected marine area.

## Yachting in the world of yachts

Speaking of sustainability and the Mediterranean, and also of sustainability as a tool for a new economy, it is inevitable to speak also of yachting.

This was the focus of a talk by Pietro Angelini, MD of Navigo Scarl and managing director of the Distretto Tecnologico per la Nautica e la Portualità Toscana PENTA, whose members include the most important shipyards in Viareggio and Tuscany.

The post-Covid has speeded up many reflections and actions. Certainly, the environmental issue is back in force after slackening a little during the health emergency, but it still remains a priority above all for entrepreneurs.

A company that does not produce according to true parameters of sustainability risks being cut out of the market in five years.

“An important reflection has started particularly in the yacht sector,” says Angelini, “with increasingly energy hungry and often polluting vessels in circulation off our coasts.

And the criticism is no longer aimed at the lifestyles of those who use them, but also at the style of consumption.”

Megayachts, as explained in recent analyses on the per capita carbon footprint consumption of the world’s super top spenders, consume “naturally” in an obvious way, although they are examples of manufacturing excellence that is often only Italian.

The reflection on luxury demands attention that, while following criteria of environmental sustainability, do not damage the sector, for example with:

- measures such as certification attesting the purchase of the excellence of craftwork;
- sustainability of materials with analysis of their lifecycle;
- an ethical approach to workers, as is partly already done in the fashion sector (and we are speaking of the most important luxury houses in the world), where certification of the origin of the material has already begun to distinguish its quality and where continuous thought is being given to solutions to certify also ethics.

“This approach, in a logic of Marketing 3.0” says Angelini, “can enrich an aware buyer who knows how to choose not just the finished object, but also the process that created it and its sustainability, at the same time supporting the sector.” In practice:

- innovations that demonstrate the best sustainable yield of work;
- LCA analysis of materials;
- systems to control the efficiency and efficacy of processes;
- environmental certification (like the 14001);
- ethical certification (like the SA8000);
- certification tracing the origin of material (rfid, supply chain or similar solutions).

Yachting, he concludes, could be the most experimental sector in the maritime field for construction methods, ease of application and client portfolios, where innovations are tried out for global improvement and acting as example for more demanding naval sectors in terms of numbers and routes.