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Għal Għawdex Forum welcomes the introduction of stone facades in Gozo buildings

The Għal Għawdex Forum welcomes the first regional planning policy to be introduced for Gozo by the new Planning Minister and Minister for Gozo, Clint Camilleri. The Forum believes that this decision represents a positive step in the right direction, leading to a sustainable balance between the need to drive economic prosperity and protecting and preserving the island's heritage and long-term distinctiveness.

The Forum notes with satisfaction that this initiative, which is clearly reflected in the Forum's initial policy proposals which called for the use of traditional materials for all new buildings, with traditional limestone or constituted stone being made compulsory on all facades, is coming into effect. However, the Forum notes that whilst this is a step in the right direction, this decision should be but the first step in the introduction of other measures which should lead towards a regional planning approach for the island, and for the adoption of more policies in this respect.

Għal Għawdex also notes with satisfaction that this decision comes shortly after the partial implementation of one of the key Għal Għawdex fiscal proposals in the last budget. Within this context it again asks the Ministry for Finance to consider all its fiscal proposals which would incentivise good and sustainable development. The Forum believes that all these proposals and initiatives complement each other to safeguard the environment of the island.

All this, however, does not diminish in any way the need for the strict enforcement of both the letter and the spirit of current policies, rules and regulations. Such an approach will eliminate planning loopholes, and thus lead the way for correct decision-making and interpretation.

The Forum believes that this, together with other initiatives, would begin to instil the belief that there is some commitment to respect the built and natural environment of the island, bringing relief and hope back to its residents, high quality tourists and all the people who love the island for all its distinctive qualities.

The Għal Għawdex Forum is the collective voice of environmental NGOs Din L-Art Ħelwa Għawdex, Għawdex and Wirt Għawdex, Gozo Business Chamber, Gozo Tourism Association, Gozo University Group and Reġjun Għawdex representing the fourteen local councils in Gozo.

