

Balearics ban single use cartridges

Like many governments lately, the issue of single-use plastics is high on the agenda. In 2018 the Government of the Balearic Islands decided to ban single-use plastics. Details released on Friday show that the ban will include single-use cartridges.

The Balearic Islands are a popular Mediterranean tourist destination and faces the tourist pressures as more and more people want to live in the islands and space is scarce. The welcome economy that tourism brings also presents high levels of concern on the corresponding environmental issues.

To meet these challenges in 2018, the Balearic Islands Government (Mallorca, Menorca, Ibiza) announced radical measures to deal with waste and plastic pollution. The Government's goal is to reduce the amount of plastic that ends up in the Mediterranean Sea and boost the amount of reuse and recycling among their citizens and tourists. In their latest bulletin, the Government has included a ban on non-reusable and non-rechargeable versions of printer and photocopier cartridges and toners that will take effect from the 1st January 2021.

Apart from a ban on single-use cartridges, the islands have banned the sale of single-use plastics, including plastic cups, plates, cutlery, straws, and bags, as well as wet wipes, disposable lighters and razors, cotton swabs made of plastic, and non-recyclable coffee capsules.

Coffee capsules will have to be 100% compostable rather than plastic or aluminium and cannot be recycled.

Restaurants and bars will have to offer free tap water to all their customers to reduce the number of plastic bottles sold.

The Balearic Islands economy is based on tourism and increases the usage of disposable items causing litter and pollution. Non-compliance of these measures could lead to penalties between €300 (\$326) and €1,7 million (\$1.8 million).

A 2017 report from Greenpeace Spain stated that 96% of the floating litter in the Mediterranean Sea is plastic, making the Mediterranean Sea is one of the most polluted bodies of water in the world.