



SUSTAINABILITY

## MANAGING WASTE IN TOURIST CITIES

By Jennifer McDowall | 22 August 2016 | [Add a Comment](#)

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Everyone loves a holiday. You fly somewhere exotic to sit on a beach and forget about everything – your work, your problems, your waste... few people adhere to their home recycling regime when on holiday, but while you may forget, someone has to think about it.

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**Why single-use packaging will preserve Europe's food waste problem**

With the packaging industry

the world

Tourism

Organisation

estimates that

revenue from

international

tourism in 2014

reached £950

billion, but your

trip to that

fabulous exotic

city might be

causing more

problems than

you realise, as

there are

multiple negative

impacts tourism

can have on the

environment. These include putting a large demand on energy, resources and

on the waste management system of the city you're in. The United Nations

Environment Programme (UNEP) estimates that 4.8 million tonnes, 14 per

cent of all solid waste, is produced each year solely by tourists.



recently promoting itself as a key part in the circular economy answer, the European Environmental Bureau's Piotr Barczak argues that single-use packaging is not the way to avoid Europe producing waste.



### **Ice cream waste creating green energy this summer**

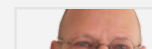
It's hot outside, but you don't necessarily have to feel guilty about eating that ice cream, as the by-products from its production could be being used to produce 'green' energy instead of going to landfill.

### **POPULAR**



### **£9 million to go unpaid to New Earth Solutions investors**

Creditors to the New Earth Solutions Group are likely to miss out on over £9 million after the waste management company was sold out of administration, according to the company's administrator.



### **The difference between**

This waste can potentially overload waste management systems, especially in destinations that are more rural in nature or have a low population. This increase is quite often seasonal as many cities have peak seasons in either winter or summer. Overloading, as well as tourists' lack of familiarity with differing waste systems, can lead to improper waste disposal, which can in turn lead to environmental problems such as groundwater or soil contamination and greenhouse gas emissions, among others.

Littering is also a particularly problematic issue in tourist areas, especially those on the coast, and can have extremely damaging effects on both the local landscape and the marine environment. A study by environmental consultancy Eunomia Research & Consulting earlier this year revealed that **over 80 per cent of the 12.2 million tonnes of plastic entering the sea every year** comes from land-based sources, with litter like drinks bottles and other packaging being the largest contributor.

To overcome these problems, different areas have implemented strategies based on their specific priorities to increase the sustainability of their waste management systems.

## Local preservation

All tourist cities have to cope with the amount of waste caused by tourists but if you live in a city which is home to a culturally significant UNESCO World



## RDF and SRF

As incineration becomes increasingly popular, Geert Cuperus from the European Recovered Fuel Organisation (ERFO) outlines the difference between SRF and RDF and the need for standardisation.



## UK's first food waste supermarket opens in Leeds

A new 'pay-what-you-feel' food surplus supermarket in Yorkshire is providing the public with the chance to grab unsold food from retailers and suppliers and prevent much-needed supplies from disappearing into the bin.



## Resource's top ten difficult to recycle household items

Resource has come up with its list of top ten difficult to recycle household items and wants to hear from you about your waste management bugbears



## Chinese firm to complete takeover of Urbaser

Heritage site, then you have to worry about preservation, too.

World Heritage city Bergen is the second largest city in Norway and is known as the ‘gateway to the fjords’. Bergen is in the process of developing an underground waste disposal system called The Bossnett to help maintain its medieval city centre.

This network of vacuum pipes is being constructed under the city centre and allows waste to be transported to the outskirts, where it is sorted and processed either via recycling or to retrieve energy which is used to heat the city.

By moving waste underground, the city believes, risk of fire, pest problems, litter, noise and the presence of waste vehicles can all be reduced. The first part was completed in 2015 and is already in use. It’s similar to the automated vacuum assisted collections system (Avacs) used to deal with 10,000 tonnes of rubbish every day on Roosevelt Island in New York City, which receives over 50 million tourists every year.

Several European World Heritage cities have recently teamed up to tackle waste management issues specific to such locations by taking part in the Interregional Environmental Integration of Waste Management in European Heritage project (Intherwaste).

Waste management firm Urbaser is to be sold to a Chinese-controlled investment firm, its owners have confirmed.

## SOCIAL MEDIA



This was launched in April 2016 as a means of developing better waste management solutions through sharing information and expertise between European Heritage cities. The project aims to aid in the difficult task of dealing with high amounts of waste while preserving the heritage of the member cities, which are also popular with tourists.

## **Beach waste**

The combination of beach and waste doesn't make for a good holiday, so some areas are coming up with innovative ways to keep their beaches clean.

Officials in the coastal city of Larnaca in Cyprus are now using a recycling vending machine to encourage people holidaying in the popular McKenzie Beach area to recycle their plastic, glass and metal packaging.

The vending machine, which until now hasn't been used in Cyprus, has been installed with the support of the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment to reduce the solid municipal waste produced by hotels on beach, and in doing so will help reduce the amount of waste entering the sea.

Users of the EU-backed project will be rewarded with a one cent voucher for every item recycled which they can put towards parking, cultural events, the hire of sunbeds or umbrellas, or the money can be donated to charity when

the minimum of 50 cents is achieved.

## Biowaste

When you're on holiday, with limited access to cooking and storage facilities, you produce a lot of food waste – the leftovers from one of the many restaurants you've eaten in, the fruit in the cocktail you didn't bother eating or the remains of the kebab you had on the way back from the pub. It all adds up. When you add that to the amount produced from every other holidaymaker in the same region, it adds up to a lot, and in some areas food waste, or biowaste, is the main barrier to achieving a sustainable waste management system.

In response, several Mediterranean countries, where biowaste produced ranges from 30-50 per cent of total waste arisings, started a three-year project to tackle the issue, which ended in 2015.

The Selective Collection of the Organic Waste in tourist areas and valorisation in farm composting plants (SCOW) project was originally developed to manage the amount of biowaste produced in the Mediterranean basin, including that arising from agricultural practices.

The aim of the collaboration was to 'close the cycle of biowaste' in different countries surrounding the Mediterranean Sea, namely Spain, Italy, Malta,

Palestine, Israel and France (Corsica).

They did this by developing cheap, simple but effective door-to-door biowaste collections from both households and tourist hotspots like hotels and restaurants and small-scale composting facilities in areas of high tourism and agricultural activity, which are areas of high biowaste generation.

Although it encountered some conflict with legislation in some countries, as well as with existing waste management practices, the project looked 'to promote a co-management of biowaste from tourist areas with another biowaste flows from rural areas, like manures or vegetable wastes', and was 'strongly focused in the role of farmers as facility managers and compost users'.

### **Sheer number of people**

Some cities have to cope with a mass of tourists that can be in the range of 2-10 times that of the native population. Based on the UNEP estimate that European tourists generate about 1 kilogramme (kg) per person per day and Americans generate up to 2kg per person per day, that means a lot of waste.


The European Commission-funded UrBAN-WASTE project was initiated to deal with waste management issues in cities with high levels of tourists 'because no one goes on holiday to see waste'. It was launched in Tenerife in June, where a framework to make waste management, collection and

treatment as sustainable as possible was developed.

The consortium of 28 partners has been funded under the Horizon 2020 programme, and will involve pilots of 'eco-innovative and gender-sensitive waste prevention and management strategies', including projects aimed at reduction and recycling.

These will be trialled across Europe in cities such as Copenhagen, Florence and Lisbon and will include developing innovations including a mobile app that will reward holidaymakers for 'low-waste behaviour'.

The majority of these projects involve cities that are members of the Association of Cities and Regions for Recycling and sustainable Resource management (ACR+), a global network of local authorities and other organisations that work together to promote sustainable waste management.

So when you go on holiday, do forget your work and your problems, but spare a thought for the people dealing with your rubbish. While you're away, don't forget about your waste. 



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