



This month of January 2015 marks one year since the implementation of an ordinance—ratified by the Formentera Council in July 2013—that prohibits the distribution of plastic bags on the island.

The measure has essentially already been in effect since 2009, when the campaign “*Formentera, naturalment sense plàstic*

” ('Formentera, naturally without plastic') meant a disappearance of plastic bags at all food-selling locations—some fifty across the entire island. Then, on 1 January 2014, application of the measure was extended to include all commercial establishments, affecting a total of 439 businesses.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and the Environment has estimated that 145 plastic bags are used per person per year, 50% less than five years ago.

Based on these figures, the ban on bags in Formentera amounts to forestalling the distribution of 1,740,000 plastic bags. The move was proposed as part of the 2008-2015 national plan on waste disposal and its local adoption has turned Formentera into one of the leading participants.

At island businesses over the past year, workers of the Formentera Council's office of the environment have carried out informational campaigns and in the case of seven stores, work by inspectors has also led to injunctions being brought for violation of the rule.

Sílvia Tur, councillor of the environment, explained: “The rejection of petroleum-based plastic bags is a question of vital importance for the natural beauty of our land and waters and for the health of many marine species that ingest such objects accidentally”. In the councillor's words: “Replacing such bags with more natural, less durable substitutes—like the potato and wheat starch-based options that currently exist—is a low-effort action that can be extremely beneficial to the environment”.