



KIMO RESOLUTION 2020/02

Prohibition of plastic confetti

Introduction

Reduction of marine litter has been a priority issue within KIMO since its foundation in 1990. During the last years, our Swedish member municipalities have seen a new source of marine litter - plastic confetti. Our assessment is that it has become increasingly common to use it for celebrations and festivities, in particular during the yearly senior exams at high schools.

KIMO Sweden member municipalities have for several years carried out information campaigns ahead of exams informing schools, students and the public about the environmental problems caused by confetti, and encouraging the use of alternatives.

We recognise that it is difficult to change behaviour, and through our inspections during the exam period, we see that the problem persists despite the information we have sent out. To get the results we would like, we need to proceed by requesting changes to legislation that will prohibit the use of plastic confetti. Such changes would be in line with the Directive on Single Use Plastics that was adopted by the European Parliament and Council agreed in May 2019.

Background

Confetti is spread by so-called confetti cannons that spray small, thin, colourful pieces of plastic or paper into the air. Confetti has become a symbol of celebration and many people feel a need to use confetti to achieve a festive celebration. The companies that sell student caps often give confetti cannons for free to the schools and students, which only compounds the problem.

The confetti ends up on the ground, in the grass, on the asphalt and in between the paving stones, and is very hard to clean up. The confetti is spread by the wind and, if not cleaned up from the ground, it will be transported by rainwater and stormwater into surface water wells, streams, and ultimately into the ocean.

The use of confetti outdoors adds a significant financial burden to waste management costs in municipalities. Plastic confetti that is not cleaned up will ultimately fragmentize into smaller components - so-called microplastics. Scientific studies show that microplastics can severely harm the marine environment and its organisms, and that microplastics today occur in all marine environments globally, on the seabed, in bays and coastal areas, on beaches and in living organisms.

The results of a survey of confetti products, carried out by the environmental department in the City of Malmö in 2019, shows that several products contained PVC but that the list of contents was missing from the product.

Confetti is a single use product that can easily be replaced by greener alternatives such as compostable confetti, petals, birdseeds or rice, soap bubbles or flag banners. People inventing their own innovative ways to celebrate that do not harm the environment is also something we want to encourage.



In the 2019 Single-Use Plastics Directive, a series of measures are set out on how member states should address the negative impact of certain plastic products on the environment. Some plastic products, where adequate substitute alternatives exist, are to be completely prohibited from July 2021 under the directive. With adequate alternative options, the product is already available on the market in other materials or as a multiple option. The list of items that will be prohibited are categorised in six different product groups, including cotton swabs, plates, cutlery, beverage containers and balloon sticks. The plastic products regulated by the directive are those found during monitoring to be most prevalent.

Position

KIMO is aware that confetti has a limited use, both in time and scope. However, we consider it an unnecessary product that has a direct negative impact on both watercourses and the sea. It also creates a significant cost to municipalities for waste management. KIMO considers that plastic confetti is a product that should be banned, as there are already adequate alternative options. KIMO proposes that plastic confetti be added to the list of prohibited products in the Directive on Single Use Plastics. It would be a simple measure to implement, and a symbolic one.

KIMO believes that:

- using plastic confetti should be prohibited;
- student celebrations and other festivities should take place in a sustainable and environmentally friendly way that do not create litter nor cause harm to nature. Instead of using plastic confetti, we recommend using compostable confetti, petals, birdseeds, rice or soap bubbles, and we encourage other innovative 'green' solutions.

KIMO

Recognizing the need for a clean environment in and around the Northern- and Baltic seas and the threat posed to marine ecosystems by the use of plastic confetti.

Urges:

- European Governments and the European Commission to take action to ban the selling of confetti that contains plastics in order to minimize this source of spread of plastics into the Baltic Sea and the North Sea;
- Plastic confetti be added to the list of prohibited products in the Directive on Single Use Plastics, and thereafter implemented in national legislation.

KIMO members:

- Agree to submit this Resolution to all National Governments, the European Commission and other relevant organizations.