

Addressing the issue of water scarcity in Calvià

The beautiful resort of Calvià this year welcomes ABTA's Travel Convention and its delegates.

In May 2025, Mayor Juan Antonio Amengual Guasp announced a Euro 20 million investment in modernisation and improvement of tourist areas. However, Calvià is also very clear on its challenges. Amengual emphasised, *"We must act with two main ideas in mind: the protection and preservation of the environment; and ensuring that tourism is in harmony with our society."* Specifically, this means water stress. Along with swathes of Southern Europe, water is a precious commodity in Majorca. After a long hot summer, resources in local reservoirs have dwindled to below 30% capacity, with restrictions in force for the local population. The situation continues to be reported in the press.

Water scarcity is a Europe-wide issue

By no means is the problem confined to the Balearics. The European Environment Agency recently reported that 30% of EU population suffers from permanent water stress, rising to 70% during the summer. The crisis has been steadily intensifying since 2010, with droughts increasing in frequency and severity. Using a benchmark of Q3 2022, Italy, Spain, Greece Portugal, Romania and Türkiye all experienced shortages of between 30 and 40%; with Malta (60%) and Cyprus (90%) being impacted most acutely.

What underlies the problem?

Prolonged higher temperatures and lower rainfall are key causes of reduced freshwater amounts, accentuated by growing climatic change. This is compounded by increased demand, with agriculture, industry and energy all being drivers. However, tourism and its summer spike also plays a key role. Typically, demand stems from activities in hotels, swimming pools, and golf courses. Competition over water manifests itself as one cause of friction with local residents. The region is working on its infrastructure supply (as outlined below), but this takes time and prolonged investment.

Water scarcity is Calvià's most pressing environmental issue

As with previous years, summer has seen reports from across Europe of wildfires, landslides and coastal flooding. It should be emphasised that none of these are significant hazards in Calvià, where the key risk really is the shortage of water. Independent analysis, which TerraVerde conducted into the resort underscored this.

So what action is Calvià taking?

The destination is taking pioneering steps to address the situation, and there is significant investment in measures such as an expanded infrastructure programme, rainwater purification and regeneration of wastewater. Project Calvià 2000 is using reclaimed water to irrigate farms and public parks, funded with over €4 million from the Sustainable Tourism Tax, it aims to irrigate 914,000 m². Going forward there are plans to extend this to domestic use like gardens and flush toilets. The e-AIGO (Comprehensive Efficiency and Digitisation Project) digitises the water system to increase efficiency. The local government is also supportive of private sector projects which further address the problem.

How delegates can help

During his May 2025 address, Mayor Juan Antonio Amengual Guasp stated that, *“Tourists and residents must know and appreciate each other... Tourism cannot be a burden on citizens. Calvià residents must benefit from it, participating in all it brings us.”*

Convention delegates can take a lead in working with the destination hosts, by being mindful of water use and moderating consumption whilst in resort. Practical advice includes not changing towels daily and being prudent with showers and running taps. Majorca is currently compiling its own official guidance for visitors, and this will be shared with members once published.

Sources

6 May 2025 – Calvià daily reported on Calvià tourism strategy for 2025

European Environment Agency published its paper on **Water scarcity conditions in Europe** Published 17 Jan 2025

[https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/analysis/indicators/use-of-freshwater-resources-in-europe-1#:~:text=Cyprus%20and%20Malta%20faced%20the,Subunit%20scale\)%20were%20a ll%20effected](https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/analysis/indicators/use-of-freshwater-resources-in-europe-1#:~:text=Cyprus%20and%20Malta%20faced%20the,Subunit%20scale)%20were%20a ll%20effected)

Worst seasonal water scarcity conditions for European countries in 2022, measured by the water exploitation index plus (WEI+)

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