



SDG 12 Is about ensuring sustainable patterns of consumption and production. This means organising our economic life permanently such that we do not consume at the expense of the environment or humankind – either here or in other countries. Managing natural resources more efficiently, conserving nature, respecting human rights and social standards and ensuring fair trade – these are the challenges.

DEPOSIT AND RETURN SYSTEM FOR COFFEE CUPS IN FREIBURG

➔ WHAT ARE THE ACTIVITIES ALL ABOUT?

Coffee to go is very popular, particularly in cities. The other side of the coin is that huge quantities of avoidable waste are generated, which increases the environmental burden. In the city of Freiburg alone, every year 12 million disposable cups need to be managed as general waste. The city intends to counteract this with a deposit and return system.

➔ WHAT HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR?

Since November 2016, cafés, bakeries and restaurants in the inner city participating in the scheme have been serving coffee in the 'Freiburg cup' – a returnable receptacle for coffee to go. The deposit is one euro. The cups can be returned to all participating outlets, where they are washed and reused.

➔ HOW WAS THIS IMPLEMENTED?

The 'Freiburg cup' is a joint campaign by the City of Freiburg and the municipal waste utility company Abfallwirtschaft und Stadtreinigung (ASF). They provide the operators of the outlets with the cups free of charge. The city is continuing to pay for the introduction of the system, while ASF is responsible for coordination. The catering trade in Freiburg was also involved in designing the scheme.

➔ WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

Initially 14 cafés were involved. Four months after the cups had been introduced, 72 establishments were already on board as partners. The deposit system has been extended to other parts of the city. The city and ASF plan to fully establish the system within one year and subsequently hand it over to a private service provider.



Freiburg → Baden-Württemberg



Population:
226,393



Mayor:
Dieter Salomon



NACHHALTIGKEIT TO GO

One important target on the path to a sustainable economy is the challenge of preventing waste. Here it is important not least to recognise and address negative developments that occurred in the past. One example is coffee cups to go.

According to Environmental Action Germany, 320,000 coffee to go cups are consumed every hour in this country – almost three billion cups a year. A huge number, caused solely by the fact that for a number of years people been ordering their coffee to go. The problem is that disposable cups constitute waste which is not recycled. Even the manufacturing process uses largely new paper fibres. This is compounded by a plastic lining, and plastic lids or stirrers. So from an environmental perspective the cost of the coffee cup to go is high. Too high, in Freiburg's opinion – which is why it is tackling the problem.

In November 2016 Freiburg became the first city in Germany to introduce a deposit and return system for coffee cups. On the initiative of the city's environmental department, together with Freiburg's waste management utility company Abfallwirtschaft und Stadtreinigung (ASF) the so-called 'Freiburg cup' was developed: a stable, dishwasher-safe returnable cup that is made available to cafés and bakeries free of charge. Since then, customers in participating cafés have been able to choose whether they would prefer to have their coffee to go in a returnable cup and pay a deposit of one euro. They can redeem their deposit at any participating outlet. The cups are washed and reused. The costs for the returnable cups – so far approximately 24,000 euros – are met by the City of Freiburg, while responsibility for coordinating the scheme rests with ASF.

ESTABLISHING THE DEPOSIT SYSTEM PERMANENTLY

No costs are incurred by participating cafés, hence their interest in the scheme is relatively strong. 'Thanks to the broad response in the media when the campaign was launched the cup became a talking point in the city almost overnight. Everybody wanted one – and the Freiburg cup has remained popular', says Michael Broglin, Managing Director of ASF. The figures prove it: four months after the project was launched, 72 establishments were already taking part. The deposit system has now been extended beyond the city cen-



In Freiburg a returnable cup for coffee to go is designed to help prevent waste. (Photo: Abfallwirtschaft und Stadtreinigung Freiburg GmbH (ASF GmbH))

tre to other parts of the city. At the end of March there were 14,000 cups in circulation. ASF and the municipality are continuing to work on optimising the deposit and return system. 'Among other things we intend to improve the return of used cups, for instance through a smartphone-accessible city map showing all the establishments taking part in the scheme', says Gerda Stuchlik, Mayor for the Environment.

This is important because there is still a long way to go until the pilot project really takes effect. In Freiburg alone, 12 million empty cups are produced every year. The municipality and ASF intend to firmly establish the 'Freiburg cup' in the local catering trade within one year. Since ASF, which is a waste management company, is not supposed to become a permanent 'cup provider', there are plans to hand over the established deposit and return system to a start-up company which can then combine environmental goals with economic targets.

This might be made easier by the fact that the Freiburg cup is attracting interest beyond the city limits. Other cities in Germany such as Hamburg, Munich and Berlin have either already introduced systems to prevent disposable coffee cups based on the Freiburg model, or are planning to do so.

INTERNET ADDRESS

www.freiburg.de