

Majorca Daily Bulletin

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Palma 07011



March put Mallorca in shade

Palma.—The sunshine isle was literally put in the shade last month, according to the Palma Met Office.

The number of sun hours in March fell by 60 percent to the lowest levels since records began.

In fact, the Palma Met Office said that last month Majorca was pretty poor weatherwise with cold temperatures and grey skies, similar to northern Europe, rather than an island which is known for its blues skies.

And the bad weather continues today.

EASTER LIFT OFF



Madrid.— Spain expects international tourist arrivals to reach 80% of pre-pandemic volumes in the second quarter as northern Europeans shrug off concerns over the Ukraine conflict and return en masse for Easter, a senior tourism official said on Friday. “Easter isn’t showing any direct impact from uncertainty caused by the conflict,” Secretary of State for

Tourism Fernando Valdes said, adding that he was confident the industry would bounce back from the drop caused by the Omicron coronavirus variant in late 2021 and early 2022.

Any future hit from the war to Spanish tourism would depend on its duration and intensity, he told a news conference. Bookings for the

long Easter weekend have already reached 90% of 2019 levels, according to data from market-intelligence firm ForwardKeys he showed at the news conference.

Reservations from Denmark and Sweden were nearly 40% higher than over the same period before the pandemic, while the number is 26% higher for Germans and 13% for

Britons, the data showed. The number of tourists from the United States is around 26% lower than in 2019.

The Balearic and Canary Islands are among the fastest recovering destinations, with Ibiza and Tenerife registering more Easter bookings than before COVID, the ForwardKeys data showed.

European governments ponder Russian energy response

London. - European governments and companies were working yesterday on a common approach to Russia's demand that they pay for its gas in roubles as the threat of an imminent supply halt eased.

European capitals have been on alert for a disruption to gas imports

for weeks as President Vladimir Putin seeks retaliation over Western sanctions for Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

A crunch point appeared to be in the offing when Moscow issued a decree on Thursday requiring foreign buyers of Russian gas to open rouble ac-

counts in state-run Gazprombank from Friday or else risk being cut-off. But the Kremlin said yesterday it would not immediately turn off the taps to Europe as payments on deliveries due after April 1 come in the second half of this month and May. That

message and signs Europe would take a pragmatic approach sparked relief on markets. Gas prices, which had risen on fears of disruption, fell. “If things remained like this, all in all not a lot would change,” Italy’s Ecology Transition Min-

ister Roberto Cingolani told state broadcaster RAI.

With weeks left before bills are due, governments in Europe, which relies on Russia for more than a third of its gas, are talking to their energy companies about how to pay them.

“Working closely with Member States and operators. EU coordination today to establish a common approach on currency payments for gas contracts with Russia,” European Commission energy division director general Ditte Juul Jørgensen tweeted.