

Marine Litter Solutions

June 2018

■ **Marine litter is a global challenge**

Marine litter is a global challenge that affects the world's oceans, seas and rivers, harming wild life, fisheries and tourism. A growing number of authorities and organisations such as the UN, OECD, European Commission, EPA Network, OSPAR, HELCOM, UNEP/MAP as well as the G7 and G20, have placed marine litter on their agendas. In order to contribute to the aspirational marine litter reduction target of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), EU Member States have also developed Regional Action Plans with key measures focusing on improving waste management infrastructures and changing human behaviour.

■ **Global plastics industry initiatives**

In 2011, plastics organisations from around the world set up a 'Global Action Plan for Solutions to Marine Litter'. Until today the 74 signatories, including the World Plastics Council (WPC) set up in 2014, have supported over 355 initiatives in 40 countries – from improving waste management, raising awareness and education campaigns, to funding global research and carrying out beach clean-ups. Plastics organisations around the world are working in collaboration with civil society and other public sector actors to tackle this global issue. See: www.marinelittersolutions.eu.

■ **Our Vision: No waste entering the oceans**

Plastics are too valuable a resource to be thrown away. Any waste entering the oceans is unacceptable! PlasticsEurope prioritises actions that prevent plastics ending up in rivers, lakes, seas, oceans, and the land, by sharing knowledge on better waste management practices through conferences such as [Polytalk](#) and [Identiplast](#), for example, by promoting responsible consumer behaviour through projects like [Recykling Rejs](#), or by being a direct collaborator as observer at the Regional Seas conventions. Our Circular Economy ambitions play an important role in tackling marine litter at source by promoting full life cycle thinking and resource-efficiency and conscious human behaviour. In its Voluntary Commitment, Plastics 2030, PlasticsEurope committed to accelerate the implementation by the plastic value chain of prevention measures to stop plastics raw materials leaking into the environment.

See <http://www.plasticseurope.org/strategy.aspx>.

■ **Preventing microplastics from entering our oceans**

Microplastics derive from a wide range of sources: mainly from larger plastics breaking down into smaller fragments, but also from other sources like consumer care products. We support the voluntary initiatives by personal care product companies to phase out the intentional addition of plastic microbeads from their products. We also promote proper pellet containment along the plastic value chain as host of the global [Operation Clean Sweep®](#) initiative, thus supporting its member companies in preventing industry pellet losses into the environment.

Key recommendations:

1. Shift behaviour to reduce littering

Member States need to ensure that citizens understand the negative effects of littering and how to act responsibly. Waste disposal infrastructure is needed; for instance, rubbish bins placed on beaches to support waste collection efforts.

2. Appropriate waste management infrastructure is key to reduce littering

Governments need to integrate the issue of marine litter in their national waste management strategies: waste management infrastructure should be improved so that all plastic waste is collected and then either recycled or used for energy production. Landfilling should be avoided.

3. Avoid shortcuts – product bans are not the solution

Awareness campaigns and appropriate waste management systems are the solutions to prevent marine litter. Whilst bans on any specific products will not resolve the issue. Littering is not due to the material's characteristics, it occurs with other materials as well.