



# A EUROPEAN STRATEGY FOR PLASTICS IN A CIRCULAR ECONOMY



*“Europe must ensure we make our planet great again. It is the shared heritage of all of humanity.”*

European Commission President Juncker, State of the Union Address, 13 September 2017

## EU LEADING GLOBAL ACTION TO PROTECT THE PLANET

Challenges linked to plastics are global but they may turn into opportunities. Plastics use is growing rapidly in emerging economies, particularly Asia. Plastic waste is transported across continents - **the EU sends about half of its collected plastic waste abroad**. Collection and recycling are needed in many parts of the world.

Up to **13 million tons of plastic waste end up in the world’s oceans every year**. Plastic pollution devastates local economies, damages fishermen and destroys tourism potential. The **damage to marine environments** is estimated to at least **\$ 8 billion per year** globally.

To develop actions, standards and technology to tackle these problems will give the European Union a global lead and help achieve the objectives of the **Paris Agreement on climate** and the **2030 Sustainable Development Goals**.

*SDG 14: conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources*

*SDG 12: ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns*

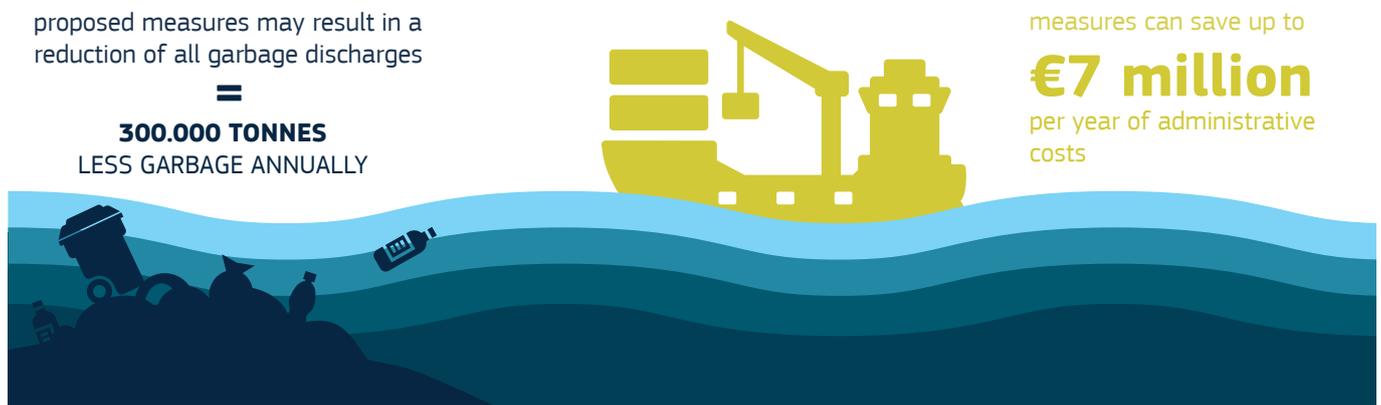
## THE TOP-10 RIVERS FOR LAND-BASED CONTRIBUTION TO MARINE LITTER



Source of the data: Christian Schmidt, Tobias Krauth, Stephan Wagner. Export of Plastic Debris by Rivers into the Sea. Environmental Science & Technology, 2017; DOI: 10.1021/acs.est.7b02368. Source of the map: European Commission.

## EU IS LEADING BY EXAMPLE ADOPTING MEASURES TO REDUCE DISCHARGE OF WASTE AT SEA

- Between **20-40%** of marine litter originates from sea-based sources (Eunomia, 2016). In its 2017 report on the 10 environmental priorities of ports, the European Sea Ports Organisation includes garbage waste from ships.
- To reduce this litter, adequate waste reception facilities should be available in ports and ships should deliver their waste to those facilities.
- The proposed incentive and enforcement measures may result to the **reduction of up to 300.000 tonnes of garbage discharged annually**, as well as significant reductions of sewage and oily waste discharges.
- An effective EU regime, based on international norms (MARPOL), should result in a reduction of the administrative costs for ports, ships and competent authorities of approximately **7 million euro** per annum.



## ACTION BY THE COMMISSION

### The Commission will:

- pursue **dedicated action** to prevent plastic waste and marine litter:
  - in **East and South-East Asia**
  - in the **Mediterranean region**, in support of the Barcelona Convention
  - in major world river basins
- support **multilateral initiatives on plastics**:
  - renewed EU engagement on plastics and marine litter in fora such as the UN, the G7, the G20, and regional sea conventions
- promote the objectives of the Strategy in **non-EU countries** through:
  - policy dialogues and economic diplomacy
  - bilateral, regional and thematic funding, including the External Investment Plan and dedicated instruments (e.g. 'Switch to Green')
- work towards international standards on sorted plastic waste and recycled plastics
- step up **enforcement of the EU Waste Shipment Regulation** to ensure that exported plastic waste is adequately treated.
- provide through the new **Directive on Port Reception Facilities** a mix of economic incentives and enforcement measures to ensure that operators deliver their waste on land to adequate port reception facilities rather than discharging the waste at sea.