

A EUROPEAN STRATEGY FOR PLASTICS IN A CIRCULAR ECONOMY



"We will focus on how we produce and use plastics, working towards all plastic packaging being recyclable by 2030."

European Commission President Juncker, Commission Work Programme

A PLASTICS STRATEGY TO PROTECT EUROPE'S CITIZENS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Littering and leakage of plastic waste harm the environment, cause economic damage, and may affect human health through the food chain and air. If the situation does not change, we could end up having more plastic than fish in our ocean by 2050; and 99% of seabirds will have eaten plastic.

This phenomenon is made worse by the increasing amount of **plastic waste generated each year; 25.8 million tonnes** in Europe alone (Source: Plastics Europe). This is also fuelled by the growing consumption of 'single-use' plastics - that are thrown away after one brief use, are rarely recycled and are prone to being littered.

ITEMS FOUND ON EU BEACHES



Source: Joint Research Centre, European Commission (2017)

EUROPEAN CITIZENS ARE WORRIED, AND WANT US TO TAKE ACTION:

An overwhelming majority say they are worried about the impact on their health (74%) and on the environment (87%) of everyday products made of plastics

Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. (%-EU)



74%
agree
23%
disagree

You are worried about the impact on your health of everyday products made of plastics



87%
agree
11%
disagree

You are worried about the impact on the environment of everyday products made of plastics

Source: Eurobarometer

ACTION BY THE COMMISSION

The Commission will:

- tackle the growing amount of plastic waste and stem the tide of marine litter in our oceans with measures to prevent littering, and by making the plastics economy circular.
- gather evidence to determine the scope of a legislative initiative on single use plastics and fishing gear at EU level.
- tackle sea-based sources of marine litter, and ensure we better understand and monitor marine litter.
- act on compostable and biodegradable plastics to make sure consumers have reliable information on their use.
- restrict microplastics intentionally added in products.
- continue to work with Member States to cut consumption of plastic bags, under the Plastic Bags Directive.
- use EU funding to understand and combat the rise of marine litter.
- make sure that EU rules support higher recycling rates and better waste collection systems.
- promote access to tap water for EU citizens, reducing packaging for bottled water.

EUROPEAN CITIZENS SAID THEY HAVE TAKEN ACTION



72%
have cut the use of
single plastic bags



65%
separated most
of their waste for
recycling



24%
avoided buying
overpackaged goods

Source: Eurobarometer