

Marine litter – overview of EU legislation

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Regional Webinar on Marine Litter



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Marine litter: the challenge



Health concerns



Degradation of marine ecosystems



Impact on fisheries and aquaculture and ports/shipping



Tourism and coastal communities

Causes:

- poor waste and wastewater management
- lack of infrastructure
- public awareness of the consequences of their actions





The **solution** is to tackle the problem at the source.

Several EU **legislative acts, policies and financing possibilities** address microplastics in the Mediterranean Sea.

The **Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD)** requires Member States to monitor and reduce quantities of marine litter, including microplastics, to avoid harm to coast and ocean.

The EU's **Plastics Strategy**, the **Single-use Plastics Directive** and the **Port Reception Facilities Directive** aim to reduce litter.

EU Member States need to consider the following aspects in their **MSFD marine strategies**:

- Composition, amount, and spatial distribution of litter and microlitter:
 - On the coastline
 - In the water column
 - On the seabed
- They may also examine:
 - The amount of litter ingested by marine animals
 - Number of species negatively affected by litter (e.g., entanglement, mortality)



Limits established so far: Threshold values need to be set through EU cooperation.

Litter on coasts: In 2020, experts agreed that amount of litter along the coastline should not exceed 20 items per 100 metres of coastline.

Litter on the seafloor: In 2025, experts agreed on a threshold value for seafloor litter.

- Where seafloor litter is measured using trawl surveys, the results must show no increase in the amount of litter over time.
- In areas monitored visually, there must be no more than one litter item per 1,000 square metres.

Other threshold values are being developed as required by the 'GES' (Good Environmental Status) Decision.



The **Zero Pollution Action Plan** aims to improve water quality by reducing waste, plastic litter at sea (by 50%), and microplastics released into the environment (by 30%).

Most of the proposed Actions in the **Strategy for Plastics** are directly or indirectly related to marine litter, including the **Directive on Single-Use Plastics** and the **Directive on Fishing Gear**.

The Port Reception Facilities Directive addresses marine litter from ships, including from fishing vessels.



Measures targeting the Mediterranean

- EU-funded project **Marine Litter Med Plus** supports the updated Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management
- EU Mission '**Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030**' contributes to preventing and eliminating microplastic pollution in the Mediterranean

Marine Strategy Framework Directive

Directive 2008/56/EC



Clean, healthy & productive seas

Sustainable use

‘Good environmental status’



MSFD 'descriptors'

Pressures & impacts

Non-indigenous species



Eutrophication



Hydrographical conditions



Contaminants (in environment)



Contaminants (in seafood)



Marine litter



Energy & underwater noise



State

Biodiversity



Commercial fish & shellfish



Marine food webs



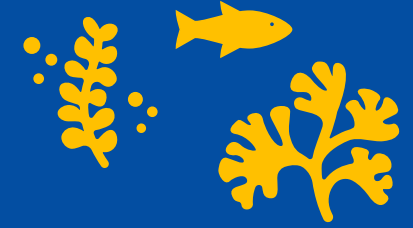
Seabed habitats (integrity)



Ecosystem-based
approach



European
Commission



Our needs for the current implementation

- MORE DATA for species, habitats, pressures, activities (as required by Annex III MSFD and Commission Decision (EU) 2017/848)
- BETTER DATA → innovative, coordinated and harmonised data collection programmes within and between Member States
- MORE TRANSPARENT AND ACCESSIBLE DATA → information, enforcement, accountability.



Better assessments and better measures



Improved state of the marine environment



Directive on Single-Use Plastic Products (and fishing gear) Directive EU 2019/904

- ✓ May 2018: Proposal by the Commission
- ✓ June 2019: adoption by the Council and EP
- ✓ 3 July 2019: Entry into force
- ✓ 3 July 2021: Transposition into national law



Improving the economics
and quality of recycling &
curbing plastic waste &
littering

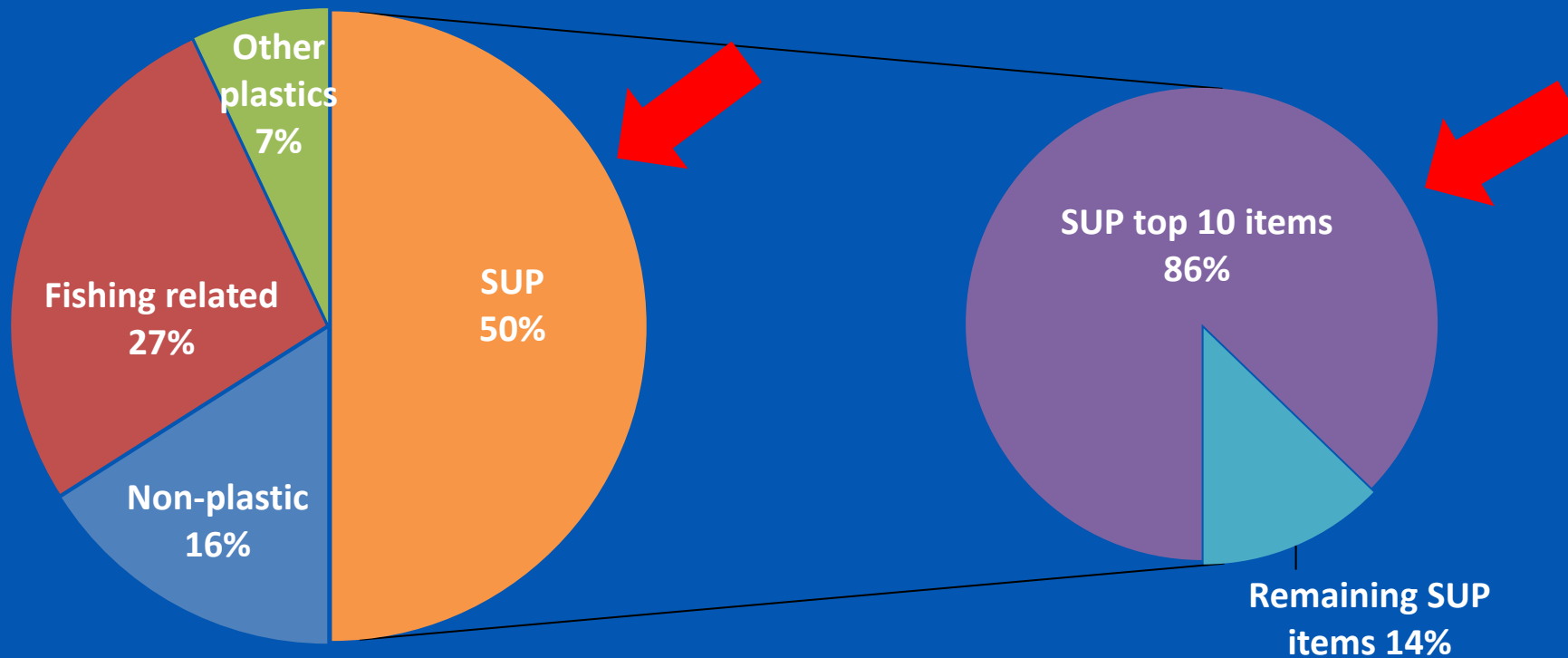


Maintaining the value of products,
materials and resources in the
economy for as long as possible, &
minimising the generation of waste



A climate-neutral,
resource-efficient and
competitive economy

Most found marine litter items on European beaches (count)



- SUPD: 70% marine litter covered: top 10 SUP (43%) + fishing gear (27%)

10 most found items



Ranking	Item
1	Drinks bottles, caps and lids
2	Cigarette butts
3	Cotton buds sticks
4	Crisp packets / sweet wrappers
5	Sanitary applications
6	Plastic bags
7	Cutlery, straws and stirrers
8	Drinks cups and cup lids
9	Balloons and balloon sticks
10	Food containers including fast food packaging



Directive (EU) 2019/904 on the reduction of certain plastic products on the environment of 5 June 2019

- **Objectives:**

- Prevent and reduce the impact of certain plastic products on the environment, in particular the aquatic environment and on human health
- Promote the transition to a circular economy with innovative and sustainable business models, products and materials
- Contribute to the efficient functioning of the internal market

- **Scope:**

- certain single use plastic products
- products made of oxo-degradable plastic
- fishing gear containing plastic

Different SUP products – different measures



items with available sustainable alternatives



promote less harmful alternatives:
market bans

items with no clear alternatives



prevention measures: design requirements, consumption reduction, consumer information

better waste management: separate collection, extended producer responsibility + clean-up

Consumption reduction (Article 4)



- **Ambitious and sustained** as well as measurable quantitative reduction in consumption by 2026 compared to 2022 of
 - Food containers
 - Cups for beverages including covers and lids
- **Member States to choose appropriate measures, e.g.**
 - National consumption reduction targets
 - Increase the availability of re-usable alternatives
 - Items not provided free of charge
- **National marketing restrictions are possible** for the purposes of preventing those products from becoming litter in order to ensure that they are (derogation from Article 18 of PPWD). **substituted with alternatives that are re-usable or do not contain plastic**

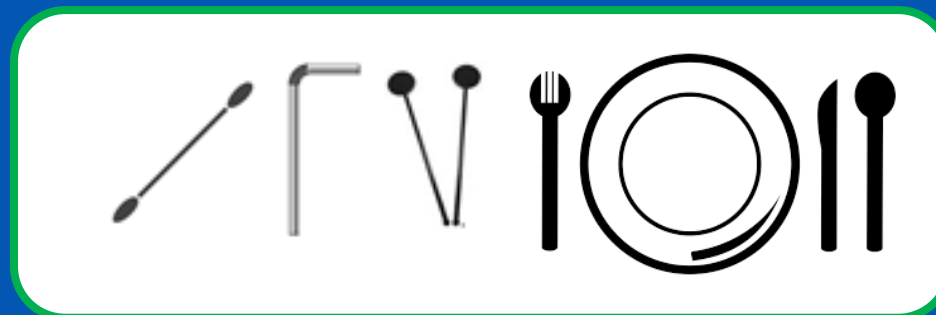


Market restriction (bans) (Article 5)



Only products with **readily available alternatives** are banned:

- Cotton bud sticks
- Cutlery
- Plates
- Straws
- Beverage stirrers
- Sticks for balloons
- All products made of oxo-degradable plastic
- Cups, food and beverage containers made of expanded polystyrene



Extended producer responsibility (Article 8)



For food and beverage containers, cups, packets and wrappers, light weight carrier bags, wet wipes, balloons and tobacco products with filters

Producers will help cover the costs of:



- awareness raising measures
- waste management (collection and treatment costs of on-the-go waste in public areas); - **except for wet wipes and balloons**



- litter clean-up and
- data gathering - **only for wet wipes, balloons and tobacco products with filters**

~ minimum requirements for EPR schemes as in Waste Framework Directive (Article 8)

Separate collection (Article 9)



Separate collection target for SUP beverage bottles :



→ by 2025 – 77%



→ by 2029 – 90%

- Supporting high quality recyclates and uptake of secondary raw materials
- Supporting plastic packaging recycling target of 55% by 2030



For food and beverage containers, cups, packets and wrappers, sanitary towels, light weight carrier bags, wet wipes, balloons, tobacco products with filters & fishing gear

Provide information to consumers on:

- **Availability of reusable alternatives, reuse systems and waste management options**
- **Impact of littering** in particular on the marine environment
- **Impact on sewer network** of inappropriate waste disposal



Evaluation of the Directive by July 2027

Report by the Commission on the feasibility to :

- Review the **list of SUPs** in the Annex
- Set **quantitative consumption reduction targets for food containers and beverage cups** and establish binding collection rates for fishing gear
- **Assessment of the change in materials and consumption patterns** (wherever possible including LCA)
- Assessment of progress for a **standard on biodegradability** of SUP in the marine environment

Thank you



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