

Public consultation on reducing marine litter: actions on single use plastics and fishing gear

Fields marked with * are mandatory.

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Introduction

Plastics are an important material in our economy and present in many aspects of our daily lives; but they also have relatively low rates of reuse and recycling and are prone to littering.

Plastics make up 85% of beach litter; single use items represent 61% and fishing related items 20% of these plastic items. The most found single-use plastics items in beach litter are cigarette butts, drinks bottles and their caps/lids, cotton bud sticks, sanitary towels (which are typically 90% plastic), bags, crisps packets and sweets wrappers, straws and stirrers, balloons and balloon sticks, food containers, cups and cup lids, and cutlery. Together these account for about three-quarters of such SUP litter.

Another issue of concern is plastic waste from the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, in particular from fishing gear that is lost by accident (for example due to weather conditions) or discarded when it is no longer fit for use.

The Commission's Plastic Strategy in early 2018 will address possible approaches to address other single-use plastic items and marine litter including lost or abandoned fishing gear. Follow-up proposals by the Commission will be considered in the near future on the basis of available data and analysis. This consultation is intended to contribute to developing this knowledge base and guide such future actions.

How to complete the questionnaire

- Section A contains questions designed to establish information about you as a respondent. Your answers here (and particularly to question 9) will define whether you are directed to Section B, Section C, or both.

- Section B asks for your positions on the issue of Marine Litter and Single Use Plastics.
- Section C is focused on abandoned and lost fishing gear, and some questions may require some more specialised knowledge.

The option of 'don't know' is available for all questions if you believe you are not in a position to answer. Questions marked with an asterisk (*) require an answer to be given. In general several answers are possible. Completing this questionnaire could take up to 30 minutes. Once you start filling in this questionnaire, the maximum time allowed by the system to complete is 90 minutes. Partial responses will not be saved. It is therefore recommended to download the full questionnaire as a PDF and prepare your answers in advance.

An eight week consultation period is foreseen. A synopsis report, with a summary of all consultation activities' results, will be published on the consultation page.

Your opinion matters to us. Thank you very much for taking the time to contribute to this consultation.

A. Personal information

*** 1. In what capacity are you responding to this consultation?**

- ☐ As an individual in a personal capacity
- ☐ As an individual in a professional capacity
- ☒ On behalf of an organisation, business or institution

*** 2. Where are you based?**

- ☐ Austria
- ☐ Belgium
- ☐ Bulgaria
- ☐ Croatia
- ☐ Cyprus
- ☐ Czech Republic
- ☐ Denmark
- ☐ Estonia
- ☐ Finland
- ☐ France
- ☐ Germany
- ☐ Greece
- ☐ Hungary
- ☐ Ireland
- ☐ Italy
- ☐ Latvia
- ☐ Lithuania
- ☐ Luxembourg
- ☐ Malta

- ☐ Netherlands
- ☐ Poland
- ☐ Portugal
- ☐ Romania
- ☐ Slovak Republic
- ☐ Slovenia
- ☐ Spain
- ☐ Sweden
- ☐ United Kingdom
- ☒ Other

If other (non-EU), please specify:

Switzerland

***3. Which category best describes you or the organisation you represent:**

- ☐ Industry or trade association
- ☐ Business
- ☐ Consumer association
- ☒ Non-governmental organisation (NGO)
- ☐ Trade union
- ☐ Regional Sea Convention
- ☐ Fisheries organisation
- ☐ Government or public authority
- ☐ Intergovernmental organisation
- ☐ Academic or research institute/educational institution
- ☐ European institution
- ☐ International body
- ☐ Other

If other, please specify:

4. If a business or industry association, please specify the sector (select one or more answers):

- ☐ Manufacturers
- ☐ Research and development
- ☐ Importers
- ☐ Retailers
- ☐ Food outlets & restaurants
- ☐ Wholesalers
- ☐ Large selling brand
- ☐ Collectors (plastic waste)
- ☐ Recyclers (plastic waste)
- ☐ Plastics converters
- ☐ Fisher

- ☐ Tourism
- ☐ Port authority
- ☐ Aquaculture sector
- ☐ Other

If other, please specify:

If you represent a private company, what size is it?

- ☐ Micro enterprises: fewer than 10 persons employed;
- ☐ Small enterprises: 10 to 49 persons employed;
- ☐ Medium-sized enterprises: 50 to 249 persons employed;
- ☐ Large enterprises: 250 or more persons employed.

If responding on behalf of an organisation/association/authority/company/body, please provide the name:

Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL)

*** 5. Please indicate below if you want your contribution to remain anonymous**

Please note that contributions received from this survey, together with the identity of the contributor, will be published on the European Commission's website, unless the contributor objects to publication of the personal information.

- ☒ I give permission for my contribution to be published with my personal information: I consent the publication of all information in my contribution in whole or in part including my name or my organisation's name, and I declare that nothing within my response is unlawful or would infringe the rights of any third party in a manner that would prevent publication.
- ☐ My contribution can be published provided that I remain anonymous: I consent to the publication of any information in my contribution in whole or in part (which may include quotes or opinions I express) provided that it is done anonymously. I declare that nothing within my response is unlawful or would infringe the rights of any third party in a manner that would prevent publication.

Please find below the Commission's guidelines regarding how your personal data is protected. Please note that regardless of the option chosen your answers may be subject to a request for public access to documents under Regulation (EC) No 1049 /2001. In such cases, the request will be assessed against the conditions set out in the Regulation and in accordance with applicable data protection rules.

Respondents should not include personal data in documents submitted in the context of the consultation if they opt for anonymous publication:

Privacy Statement

[Privacy_statement.doc](#)

*** 6. Is your organisation or institution registered on the EU Transparency Register?**

- ☒ Yes
☐ No
☐ Do not know

If yes, please provide your Register ID number:

001245815997-85

Click below to view the EU Transparency Register:

<http://www.test.ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/public/homePage.do?redir=false&locale=en>

*** 7. Please provide us with your full name:**

David Azoulay

8. Please provide us with your email address:

dazoulay@ciel.org

*** 9. Please select the statement(s) that best apply to you.**

(Your choice(s) will define the parts of the survey that you have access to).

- ☐ You are an interested citizen with a general interest in marine litter and single use plastics
☒ You have specific knowledge and/or interest about single use plastics
☐ You have specific knowledge and/or interest about marine litter including fishing gear and/or aquaculture.

B. Questionnaire on Marine Litter and Single Use Plastics

The problems caused by marine litter and single-use plastics

1. What importance do you give to the following issues and impacts linked to marine litter and single use plastics?

	Very important	Quite important	Less important	Not important
* Loss of valuable resources through wasteful use and disposal	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* Harm to animal welfare (ingestion, entanglement etc)	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* Human health risks (microplastics in water and food, toxicity)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* Impact on ecosystem services [1]	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* Impacts on fisheries and aquaculture	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* Impacts on shipping and ports	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* Impacts on coastal communities and tourism	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* Clean up costs of litter	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* Aesthetic impact of litter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

[1] For example flood protection, provision of food, materials and energy, recreational, cultural and touristic use, science and education

Other (please specify):

The importance of action

*** 2a. Please indicate whether you think action to address the amount of Single Use Plastic in the environment is:**

- ☐ Not necessary
- ☐ Necessary but not urgent
- ☒ Necessary and urgent
- ☐ No opinion

*** 2b. Please indicate whether you think action to address the amount of marine litter (including fishing gear) in the seas and on beaches is:**

- ☐ Not necessary
- ☐ Necessary but not urgent
- ☒ Necessary and urgent
- ☐ No opinion

Where action should be taken

3. Who do you think has an important role in taking any further action for reducing leakage of single use plastic into the (marine) environment?

	Very important	Fairly important	Important	Slightly important	Not at all important	No opinion
* European Union	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* Member States (countries)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* Local and Regional authorities	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* Other international bodies	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* NGOs	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* Individuals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* Private Sector	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* Other	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If "other" please specify

The EU also has a major role to play in spearheading and leading global action on the topic. By 2025, production capacity is expected to increase 33%-36% for both ethylene and Propylene. If constructed, this massive expansion in capacity could lock in plastic production for decades, undermining efforts to reduce consumption and reverse the plastic crisis (see attached analysis). Actions from the Private sector should not be limited to waste managers and plastic users but be undertaken by plastic producers as well.

*** 4. To what extent do you consider that there needs to be further responses at European level?**

- ☐ There should be no new measures at the European level – this should be dealt with at the local or national level.
- ☐ There should be certain measures at the European level - for example ensuring shared objectives, a level playing field and respect of single market and competition rules – but these should also encourage, frame and complement further measures at the local or national level.
- ☐ The problem should be dealt with largely at the European level.
- ☒ The EU should support mandatory instruments at global level.
- ☐ No opinion
- ☐ Other

If "other", please specify

How much action?

5. The Commission identified the types of plastic litter most commonly found on beaches. For each type, and for fishing gear, to what extent do you agree that action should be taken to reduce their presence in the environment?

	Weak case for action	Moderate case for action	Strong case for action	No opinion
* Cigarette butts with filters	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* Drinks bottles	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* Caps and lids	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* Cotton bud sticks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* Sanitary towels[1]	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* Crisps packets and sweets wrappers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* Light weight shopping bags	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* Straws	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* Balloons and balloon sticks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* Food containers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* Cups	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* Cutlery	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* Fishing related items	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

if "Other" please specify

As described in previous response, there is a strong case for going beyond the focus on specific littered items and reduce plastic production overall.

[1] nappies, wet wipes and panty-liners typically contain about 90% plastic polymers.

6. Whilst some measures may have no costs attached to them, or even lead to financial savings in the medium term, other measures could have costs.

- ☐ Action to address marine litter should not lead to additional costs for consumers.
- ☒ I am willing to pay a little more for alternative measures that would result in reducing marine litter.
- ☐ (producers only) My company would accept that initiatives to reduce marine litter may involve changes in the purchase price of single use plastic products.
- ☐ (producers only) My company would accept that initiatives to reduce marine litter may involve further producer obligations or charges in relation to single use plastic products.
- ☐ No opinion

7. In your opinion, which types of actions against marine litter should be supported with public funds?

- ☐ Recovery of lost fishing gear.
- ☒ Recovery of marine litter found in fishing nets during normal fishing activities ("passive fishing for litter")
- ☒ Active "fishing for litter"
- ☐ Beach cleaning actions
- ☒ Regular quantification of marine and beach litter
- ☐ Other

What kind of action?

(at sub EU level)

10. What, if anything, do you think should be done to promote a switch from single use drinks cups to re-usable cups for drinks consumed "on-the-go" (outside of the home or restaurants and food outlets)?

- ☒ Direct measures (such as restrictions or charges)
- ☒ Awareness raising measures that encourage people to carry their own reusable cups

- ☒ Reductions for people that bring their own cups to restaurants and food outlets
- ☐ Non of the above
- ☐ No opinion

11. Would you support policies which phased out disposable non-biodegradable plastic tableware (such as cups, plates, cutlery and stirrers) in favour of those made with more biodegradable materials or reusable alternatives?

- ☒ Yes, even if there were a small price increase
- ☐ Yes, but only if there were no price increase
- ☐ No
- ☐ No opinion

12. For some sectors there are rules that require companies responsible for the impacts of their products after sale ("extended producer responsibility"). Should cigarette companies contribute financially to the costs of clearing up cigarette butts?

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ No opinion

Similarly, should producers of sanitary items contribute financially to the costs of clearing up sanitary towels?

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ No opinion

What kind of action?

(at EU level)

13. How effective do you think the following measures would be in reducing plastic pollution in particular in the marine environment?

	Very effective	Effective	Slightly effective	Not effective at all	I don't know
* Maintaining status quo:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* No new EU measures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* More effort to change the behaviours that cause litter, for example awareness campaigns about littering and additional information on packaging	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* Voluntary measures by businesses: such as using biodegradable alternatives to plastic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* Stronger enforcement of existing EU laws on waste collection, recycling, extended producer responsibility schemes etc,	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
* New EU measures: For example, reduction targets for Single Use Plastics (following the example of the targets for reduced use of plastic bags)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you think other EU measures would be relevant, please specify them:

By 2025, production capacity is expected to increase 33%-36% for both ethylene and Propylene. If constructed, this massive expansion in capacity could lock in plastic production for decades, undermining efforts to reduce consumption and reverse the plastic crisis (see attached analysis). EU actions should also focus on reducing the overall plastic production.

Additionally, the ubiquity of plastic is the result of all health and environmental costs of plastics production and use, being entirely externalized on society. Full internalisation of all health and environmental costs is key to reduce plastic use and disposal.

14. Single use plastic products are diverse and will require diverse approaches to effectively reduce their environmental impacts. We have divided them below into three categories. For each product please indicate the approach(es) you consider as appropriate (effective, proportionate, economically efficient and socially acceptable).

A. Packaging items covered by existing legislation and already captured today in separate waste collection schemes

	Deposit return schemes	Reduction target for use	Minimum design requirements (incl. delivery models)	Don't know/ No opinion
* Drinks bottles	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
* Light weight shopping bags	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

B. Items that could be replaced by more sustainable alternatives

	Legislative requirement to better design or produce from materials with lower life cycle impact	Reduction target for use	Minimum design requirements (incl. delivery models)	Don't know/ No opinion
* Food containers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

* Crisps packets and sweets wrappers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
* Caps and lids	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
* Cups	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
* Cotton buds	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
* Cutlery	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
* Straws and stirrers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

C. Items not fully covered by existing legislation for which there is no obvious proportionate alternative

	Extended Producer Responsibility schemes	Legislative requirement to produce from materials with lower impact	Minimum design requirements (incl. delivery models)	Don't know/ No opinion
* Cigarette butts	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
* Sanitary towels	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
* Balloons	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

15. If you can provide useful data sources or indicators regarding the economic, social and environmental impacts of single use plastics, or the costs and impacts of production, please provide upload files here.

The maximum file size is 1 MB

... or provide a link here

<http://www.ciel.org/reports/fuelingplastics/>

Contact

env-marine-litter@ec.europa.eu
