

4th October 2018

Dear Member of the ENVI Committee,

We are writing on behalf of the undersigned organisations representing hundreds of thousands of citizens across Europe, the Rethink Plastic alliance and the #BreakFreeFromPlastic movement, comprising over 1,200 groups and civil society organisations around the world who have come together to end plastic pollution.

Next week, as a member of the European Parliament's ENVI Committee, you will vote on the Commission's proposal to reduce pollution from single-use plastics and fishing gear. This gives you the historic opportunity to lead in stopping the tide of single-use plastics. We are increasingly seeing how plastics are polluting the land and ocean, killing and injuring wildlife and posing a risk to human health. The Commission's proposal for reducing the impacts of single-use plastic items and preventing lost or abandoned fishing gear from plaguing the ocean is an opportunity for the EU, and the European Parliament in particular, to be at the vanguard of tackling plastic pollution.

EU citizens are calling for action on plastic pollution – over 90% of citizens highlighted this in a Eurobarometer poll¹ and almost 700,000 citizens signed a petition² asking for action at the EU level. Earlier this month, Break Free From Plastic organisations across Europe got their hands dirty cleaning up plastic pollution and measuring the top polluting items and brands. The mass clean-up revealed several of the world's most powerful corporations as the biggest plastic polluters. Next week, we are asking you to raise your hand and be counted, making sure that the EU takes ambitious steps to reduce the pollution of our environment.

The Commission's proposal is good, but we trust that the Parliament has greater ambition. We call on you to:

1. Ensure reduction and reuse come first: we need to reduce the quantity of single-use plastics we use by incentivising reusable alternatives, ensuring concrete reduction targets for food containers, cups and bottles and extending the list of items subject to market restrictions to include polystyrene containers, very lightweight plastic carrier bags and oxo-degradable plastics.
2. Support the Commission's definition of plastics, and of single-use products, ensuring products with a plastic lining are included. Discourage the development of a "marine biodegradable" standard – biodegradable and compostable single-use plastics aren't a solution to the plastic pollution crisis.
3. Support strong Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes for single-use plastics that include coverage of clean-up and waste management costs. Support collection and recycling targets and new EPR schemes for fishing gear.
4. Ensure much higher collection of plastic waste by having significantly improved marking and product requirements, as well as new collection targets, deposit-refund schemes (DRS), and a minimum recycled content target for beverage containers.

If adopted, these measures could reduce plastic pollution by more than 50% for the most littered single-use items, avoiding environmental damage which would otherwise cost €22 billion by 2030, and avoid emitting 3.4 million tonnes of CO₂ by 2030. The only thing required to achieve this ambition, or even exceed it, is your support. We encourage you to seize the opportunity of next week's vote, and to take the lead in tackling plastic-pollution.

Yours,



Delphine Levi Alvares

Coordinator of the Rethink Plastic Alliance & Break Free From Plastic Europe

¹ European Commission, 2014. Attitudes of Europeans towards Waste Management and Resource Efficiency, Flash Eurobarometer 388; http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/flash/fl_388_en.pdf

² <https://act.wemove.eu/campaigns/483>



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