



Declaration on marine litter and plastic waste

Approved by the CPMR Political Bureau, 21 June 2018, Pärnu (EE)

The Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR):

1. Expresses its deep concern about the impact of pollution resulting from plastic waste leaked into the environment on human health, the economy and ecosystems. Such pollution is clearly visible in coastal territories and affects seashores and marine life.
2. Supports the policy approach proposed by the European Commission in its Communication “European Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy”, published on 16 January 2018. This provides a strategic vision of how plastics can be included in a circular economy approach, including via the creation of viable markets for recycled and renewable plastics. It sets ambitious objectives to be achieved at European level to improve the economics and quality of plastics recycling, curb plastic waste and littering, drive investments and innovation towards circular solutions, and harness global actions.

The European Commission also presented legislative initiatives, such as the proposals on the revision of the Port Reception Facilities, which aims at improving the availability of adequate port reception facilities and the delivery of waste, and the proposal for an EU Directive on single-use plastics published on 28 May 2018, which proposes to ban the production of such plastics in Europe.

3. Considers that, as outlined by the European Commission, this approach can provide a tangible contribution to reach the objectives of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal 14 “Life below water” and the Paris Agreement on climate.
4. Welcomes the fact the European Commission has identified suggestions for key actions to be implemented with national and regional authorities, thereby acknowledging the need for efficient multi-level governance to tackle the issue of marine litter and plastics.
5. Emphasises the important role played by regional authorities to achieve the objectives set in the new European Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy. An increasing number of regional authorities in Europe are adopting global strategies covering these dimensions.
6. Stresses the essential contribution provided by EU funds to the implementation of concrete initiatives by regional authorities, in particular via:
 - Cohesion Policy, including territorial cooperation programmes. As underlined by the European Commission, over EUR 5.5 billion has been allocated via the European Regional

Development Fund to improve waste management during the current programming period. This is expected to result in an increase of 5.8 million tonnes per year in waste recycling capacity;

- Horizon 2020, which in the future it is hoped will include marine plastics and litter as a topic in its pillar II on Global Challenges and Industrial Competitiveness. Horizon Europe Partnership Initiatives involving regions should be further developed in the area of marine litter and plastics.
7. Welcomes the proposal made by the European Commission in its Communication on the Multi-Annual Financial Framework to establish a specific own resource of the European Union based on a national contribution calculated on the amount of non-recycled plastic packaging waste.
8. Will continue to support the initiatives of its Member Regions, in cooperation with stakeholders and networks active in this field. The CPMR will be focusing on **the objective to curb plastic waste and littering**. It will in particular:
- **Support awareness raising and training initiatives**, such as beach cleaning operations. Beach cleaning exercises are planned in June in Fredrikstad (Norway), as part of of the Annual Meeting of the CPMR North Sea Commission, and in October in Madeira (Portugal), during the CPMR General Assembly.
 - **Support cooperation between regions and public-private organisations to develop initiatives in this field**. This involves:
 - Ad-hoc meetings, such as [those](#) organised by the SEArca Intergroup of the European Parliament in April 2018, to share experiences on regional strategies on plastics;
 - The development of specific European cooperation projects. The CPMR and its Geographical Commissions are already involved in the following projects:
 - [CLEAN-AT](#) (Interreg Atlantic Area Transnational Program), led by the CETMAR (Galicia), and in which the CPMR Atlantic Arc Commission is a partner. CLEAN-AT aims at improving capabilities to monitor, prevent and remove macro marine litter;
 - [PANACEA](#) (Interreg Med Programme) in which the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission is a partner. PANACEA is a capitalisation initiative which includes activities developed with the MEDSEALITTER project, aiming at developing specific marine litter monitoring protocols;
 - [CO- EVOLVE](#) (Interreg Med Programme), led by Region East-Macedonia and Thrace, and in which the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission is a partner. CO-EVOLVE will test pilot actions in the field of sustainable tourism.
 - **Implement specific measures to reduce the use of plastics such as plastic bottles and other items in the framework of the activities of the CPMR and of its Geographical Commissions.**