



**To: President of the European Council, Mr Tusk
President of the European Commission, Mr Juncker
President of the European Parliament, Mr Tajani
Minister Dr Herrera**

31st March 2017

Re: Single use plastics and marine litter: EU institutions to set the example

Dear Sirs,

Europe has made a bold international commitment to significantly reduce marine litter, and is leading the way in efforts to implement the Sustainable Development Goals 14 and 12 to reduce marine pollution and sustainably reduce waste generation, principally with the ground breaking Circular Economy programme.

While we the undersigned actively support and promote the efforts of the European Union to become a circular society, we cannot help but notice the failure to act at the closest level. Every meeting in the EU institutions is populated by single use plastics, whether water bottles, coffee cups or plastic milk cartons; waste prevention is clearly not at the forefront of the Institutional procurement policies. Preventing waste is at the top of the European Waste Hierarchy, but all too often is the step that is most often neglected.

While plastic water bottles are highly recyclable, they are also the easiest form of waste to prevent with reusable alternatives; as should be the priority according to European legislation. Plastic bottles, caps, food containers and cutlery are found to be among the most prevalent 15 beach litter items in every European sea basin. It is clear that urgent change is required.

We would like to see the European Commission, Council, and Parliament lead the way in demonstrating the benefits of better public procurement and waste prevention measures. We therefore call on you:

- to announce at The Ocean Conference SDG14 on 5-9th June 2017, your commitment to turn the EU institutions' buildings single use plastic free;
- to make this commitment a reality by the time of the Our Ocean Conference in Malta in October, which offers a great opportunity to showcase the EU institutions as a role model on green public procurement; and
- to ensure that the 2017 Our Ocean conference in Malta is 100% single use plastic free, and showcases the multiple options for sustainable alternatives that are already available.

In these endeavours you will have the full support of civil society organisations from across the world. With the global Break Free From Plastic movement we are striving to raise awareness about the link between marine litter and consumption - production patterns on land. Green public procurement has an important role to play in conveying such messages to the public as well as to industry. We therefore look to the EU institutions for leadership in helping public authorities, industries and citizens make the right choices.

Best regards,



Dr Monica Verbeek
Executive Director of Seas At Risk

On behalf of the following organisations:

European Environment Bureau

Surfrider Foundation Europe

Healthcare Without Harm

Zero Waste Europe

Environment Investigation Agency

Friends of the Earth Europe

CC:

Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Mr Vella

Chair of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, Ms Vălean MEP

Parliament Quaestor, Ms Morin-Chartier MEP

Permanent Representation of Malta to the European Union Environment Attaché, Mr Vernon