

The President

Dr Monica Verbeek

Executive Director of Seas at Risk

Rue d'Edimbourg 26, 1050 Brussels

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Dear Madam,

Thank you for your letter raising concerns on the use of plastic bottles in the European Parliament.

The Parliament is fully aware that single use plastics, and plastic drink containers, in particular, are major contributors to two of the most important environmental impacts of its activities, namely carbon emissions and waste production.

Bearing this in mind, one key priority of the Parliament's catering policy has been the continuous reduction of the use of plastic water bottles not only in official meetings, but also in vending machines, for catering providers and at events. In this context, the European Parliament has already taken several measures.

Since November 2017, 166 tap water fountains have been installed in the three places of work and their number is meant to be increased for full coverage of meeting rooms and corridors. In parallel, and with a view to increase their use, a communication campaign has been launched, including initiatives to increase the visibility of water fountains.

As from July 2017, Parliament has introduced biodegradable cups in Brussels and the contract with the general waste collector has been amended to integrate such cups into the paper/cardboard recycling cycle.

During the Waste Week in November 2017, 1000 refillable glass bottles were distributed by the EMAS unit in Brussels to Members and staff.

Moreover, a number of actions are in place to improve the environmental impact of catering activities such as:

- the gradual replacement of plastic cups, cutlery and straws by biodegradable ones;
- the acquisition of trays made out of biowaste and paper for Self-service restaurants;
- the introduction of coffee machines with paper capsules;
- the adoption of reusable salad jars in all Self-service restaurants in the three places of work.

Parliament is evaluating an ambitious roadmap to further reduce single-use plastics and curb plastic waste. Once adopted, the roadmap may include immediate measures, such as:

- further encouraging Members, staff and visitors to make use of water fountains in corridors and adjacent to meeting rooms;
- distributing reusable cups, jugs or mugs made of environmentally-friendly materials to guests attending the events;
- providing individual plastic bottles of mineral water at short official meetings only upon request;
- not distributing plastic water bottles during large-scale events, such as the European Youth Event or the Open Days, on Parliament's premises;

- abolishing the provision of plastic water bottles at committee meetings which have expressed their intention to do so.

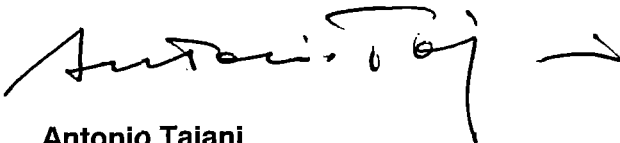
Once adopted, the measures listed above could pave the way for stopping the distribution of single-use plastic water bottles as from next year, i.e. with the beginning of the new legislative term in mid-2019, provided that approval is granted by the Governing Bodies of the European Parliament. Plastic bottles for water and soft drinks in vending machines will be equally phased-out. Single-use drink containers sold through those should be made out of cartons, aluminum cans and glass.

I take this opportunity to inform you also of the following major achievements by the Parliament in order to improve its environmental performance, including waste management, in line with Regulation 1221/2009 on the voluntary participation of organisations in a Community Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS):

- since 2008, the European Parliament uses 100% "green" electricity, i.e. electricity obtained from renewable sources;
- a paperless programme has gradually been introduced and expanded since 2012, starting with the launch of the E-committee approach and E-meeting application in the work of the parliamentary committees, and now encompassing a wide range of activities in the legislative and administrative spheres;
- since 2013, all food waste at the three sites undergoes a process of biometanisation in order to produce usable biogas;
- the European Parliament was the first EU institution to launch a comprehensive food donation programme in 2016, whereby unsold food is donated to charity instead of being thrown away;
- Parliament is the only EU institution to have developed and implemented a systematic institution-wide approach to greening public procurement;
- since 2016, Parliament is the first EU institution to become carbon neutral, as, after making all possible efforts to reduce its CO₂ emissions, it offsets 100% of its irreducible emissions;
- in October 2017, the Bureau adopted a new target for the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions by at least 40% in 2030 compared to 2006 in line with the EU-approach under the UN Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

I trust you will find this information useful and I can give you my assurance that the European Parliament will continue in its endeavour to constantly improve its environmental performance.

Yours sincerely,



Antonio Tajani

Copy: Mr Joan Marc Simon, Executive Director of Zero Waste Europe
 Mr Jeremy Wates, Secretary General of European Environment Bureau
 Mr Jagoda Munič, Director of Friends of the Earth Europe
 Mr Jacques Beall, Vice-Chairman of Surfrider Foundation Europe
 Ms Mary Rice, Director of Environmental Investigation Agency
 Ms Laura Degallaix, Director of European Environmental Citizens Organisation for Standardisation
 Mr James Thornton, Chief Executive Officer of ClientEarth