

Preliminary position paper - Italy

1. Name of the organization: Ministry for the environment, land and sea, www.minambiente.it

2. Your view on major barriers to combatting marine litter and micro plastics:

- Cultural and behavioural barriers are crucial. Measures aimed at appropriately guiding consumers and producers' behaviours to prevent and combat marine litter are of huge importance, as well as the full involvement of all relevant stakeholders representing civil society and production;
- Technological and production related barriers. Today this kind of barrier seems to be surmountable and largely affordable if accompanied through a large array of tools, including incentives;
- Lack of specific policy targets and timetable to address marine litter. The definition of targets and deadlines can be useful to raise the attention of public decision-makers on policies aimed at facing marine litter. At the same time targets and timelines cannot represent a decisive instrument. Setting aspirational goals as in the new EU Waste Framework Directive, accompanied by the obligation to undertake concrete measures, may be appropriate.
- Perverse incentives promoting single-use products should be identified, if any, and properly addressed.

3. Your view on potential national, regional and international response options and associated environmental, social and economic costs:

Potential response options are provided at different levels by different legislation:

- At the EU level, a general policy framework addressing marine litter exists and mainly the MSFD (Marine Strategy Framework Directive), the Waste Framework Directive and the Landfill Directive compose it. The "Waste Package" introduced an aspirational target for the reduction of marine litter in the Directive 2008/98/EC (Waste Framework Directive) and the obligation for Member States to act in order to prevent and reduce marine litter. This new regulatory framework has a high potential to implement efficient measures to combat marine litter. Italy has already put in place strong measures for the reduction of marine litter as the ban on non-biodegradable and compostable plastic bags. Based on the results achieved with this intervention Italy is implementing other similar measures of prevention. The EU MSFD addresses marine litter through a specific "Descriptor (n. 10)"; specific goals, targets, indicators and operational measures have been included in the Marine

Strategies to reduce, minimize and, as far as possible, eliminate marine litter. The process has now started a second cycle and GES (Good Environmental Status) and Targets are currently under review. Regional Seas Conventions, and, in particular, the Barcelona Convention (UNEP/MAP) and its Protocol on Land Based Sources as well as its Action Plan for the marine litter management in the Mediterranean are also highly relevant. In this context, Italy signed a *Memorandum of Understanding* with UNEP/MAP aimed at implementing the Convention activities, with particular reference to the enhancement of marine litter management. This component of the *memorandum* includes three work streams:

- Fishing for Litter and Port Reception Facilities;
 - Initiatives to identify gaps and issues to better understand the issue of sea-based sources;
 - Assessment of marine litter hot spot at sea in areas close to selected SPAMIs, with a focus on developing a common methodology for hot spot accumulation assessment. All activities include public awareness initiatives with the involvement of the stakeholders.
- Italy is also supporting the role of Regional Sea Conventions and Programmes as the most adequate framework to implement policies and tools relevant for the marine litter issue; to this aim, a specific workshop was organized during its G7 Presidency and Italy is now discussing with UNEP/MAP how to follow-up this initiative.

4. Your view on the feasibility and effectiveness of different response options

Marine litter originates from many different sources including direct dumping at sea and land-based *sources* (including river inlets).

Tackling marine litter issues implies to put in place a strategy and responses that cut across different geographic levels, institutional competences as well as production and consumption related responsibilities. Therefore, a joint and concerted action by relevant actors and stakeholders is necessary and needs to consider:

- Political willingness
- Institutional framework and capacity
- Better implementation of existing regulations and programmes
- Investing in waste prevention and management
- Extending producer responsibility and strengthening corporate social responsibility
- Informing consumer choices
- Enhancing citizen behaviour
- Implementing remediation measures

Italy has identified, in the framework of the national implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, some specific measures to address and reduce pollution by marine litter:

1. *Design and implementation of measures to improve the management of waste generated by fishing and aquaculture, including dismissed fishing equipment, and to facilitate their reuse, recycling and recovery.* This measure includes also some pilot actions to experiment the use of fishing nets produced in biodegradable material (project IPA-ECOSEA).
2. *Study, design and creation of a value-chain for the collection and disposal of waste accidentally collected by fishermen (fishing for litter).*
3. *Implementation of measures for training and awareness rising in order to improve the knowledge and enhance the education of the public and of the economic operators to prevent and reduce marine litter.*

Cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness analysis were also carried out for each of these actions, even though mostly on qualitative data, and generally resulted in positive outcomes.

4. Any other inputs

Existing Studies:

- Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and related Assessment Criteria (IMAP), UNEP, 2017
- Marine Litter Assessment in the Mediterranean, UNEP, 2016
- Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production in the Mediterranean, UNEP, 2017
- The Way Forward - *The relevance of the regional dimension in the implementation of the G7 Action Plan on Marine Litter.* G7 Workshop on Marine Litter “Mainstreaming the work of the Regional Sea Programmes towards the better implementation of the G7 Action Plan and the achievement of the global commitments on marine litter” (Rome, Italy – 20-21 April 2017).

Flagship project:

Project “Plastic Busters MPAs: preserving biodiversity from plastics in Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas”: a series of concrete prevention and mitigation actions and approaches are intended to be developed, tested and promoted during the project in several pilot areas in the Mediterranean basin. Following a life cycle thinking and a circular economy approach, the project will also carry out a systemic evaluation of the feasibility, reliability and sustainability while involving relevant stakeholders such as port authorities, fishermen and municipalities. Over a 4-year period, the project will address

the entire management cycle of marine litter, from monitoring and assessment to prevention and mitigation, as well as actions to strengthen networking between and among pelagic and coastal marine protected areas located in Albania Croatia Greece Italy, France and Spain. The project also foresees the transfer and capitalisation of results and achievements to the Mediterranean basin at large. Project's webpage: <http://plasticbusters.unisi.it/plastic-busters-mpas/>