

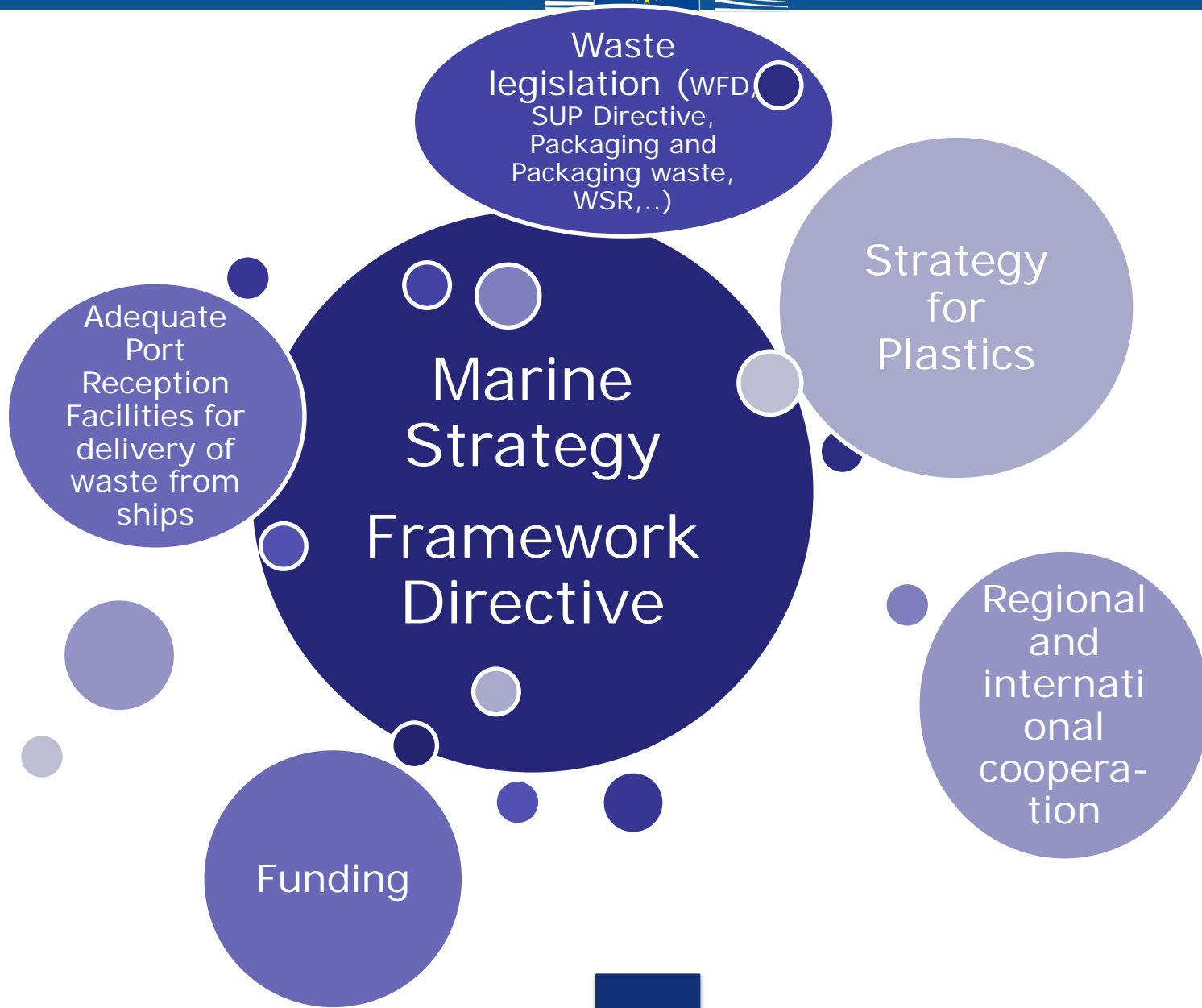


The EU approach on microplastics

FanPLESStic-SEA Final Conference
30 November 2021

Directorate General Environment
Marine Environment and Water Industry Unit





The European Green Deal

zero pollution actions



The EU as a global leader

A European Climate Pact

Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability

Zero Pollution Action Plan for Air, Water & Soil

Many Green Deal actions already contribute to the Zero Pollution ambition

- Circular Economy (e.g. microplastics)
- Biodiversity (e.g. Farm to Fork (e.g. nutrients), CAP (e.g. pesticides/fertilisers))
- Climate & Energy initiatives (including Airpact)
- Cancer Plan (e.g. air pollution)
- Mobility Strategy
- Renovation Wave Strategy
- Industrial Strategy
- Pharmaceuticals
- Trade Policy Review & Multilateralism

Joined up

Holistic

Integrated

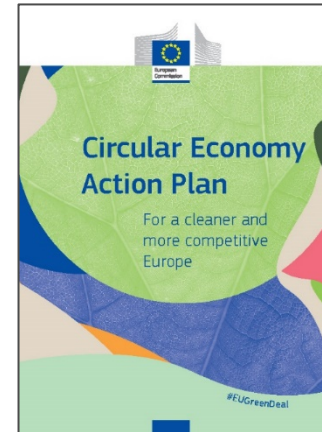




The zero pollution targets for 2030

Under EU law, Green Deal ambitions and in synergy with other initiatives, by 2030 the EU should reduce by 50% plastic litter at sea and by 30% microplastics released into the environment

Circular Economy Action Plan



In addition to reducing plastic litter, addresses microplastics by:

- *restricting intentionally added microplastics and tackling pellets (with European Chemicals Agency)*
- *developing labelling, standardisation, certification and regulatory measures on unintentional release of microplastics, including measures to increase the capture of microplastics at all relevant stages of products' lifecycle*
- *further developing and harmonising methods for measuring unintentionally released microplastics, especially from tyres and textiles, and delivering harmonised data on microplastics concentrations in seawater*
- *closing the gaps on scientific knowledge related to the risk and occurrence of microplastics in the environment, drinking water and foods.*

Elements of the restriction for intentionally used microplastics



Prohibition on 'placing on the market'

Uses where microplastic releases to the environment are inevitable



Derogated uses

Natural/biodegradable polymers; uses with no microplastic release; already regulated



Mandatory 'safe use information'

uses where microplastic release can be minimised with instructions for use and disposal



Mandatory 'reporting'

Generic identity, description of use (function), releases

Microplastics: legislative and non-legislative work per sources

Cosm Specific study by DG ENV

- 12 months duration
- Addressing the presence of microplastics in the environment, emitted from three source categories i.e. pellets, textiles and tyres
- Looking at policy options in order to reduce such presence
- Providing the Commission with recommendations on the best way forward, be it regulatory or voluntary action, supporting an open and comprehensive analysis
- Consulting stakeholders through open public and targeted consultation



Updates

The Impact Assessment (IA) and proposal of the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive and the Evaluation of the Sewage Sludge Directive are due to be published in Q2 2022

IA support study on unintentionally released microplastics investigates major sources of microplastics (pellets, tyres and synthetic textiles) while also giving indications on possible other sources deserving EU analysis e.g. marine paints; targeted consultation ongoing, Call for Evidence by end of November and Open Public Consultation starting early 2022

ECHA process covers microplastics with an intentional use in chemical products; first restrictions could be in place by Q4 2022

By end of 2022 we will have clearer view of what can be expected at EU level

Marine Strategy Framework Directive

- Beach litter baselines available

<https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/publication/eu-marine-beach-litter-baselines>

- Joint List of Litter items adopted
- Beach litter threshold adopted

<https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/publication/european-threshold-value-and-assessment-method-macro-litter-coastlines>

- Updating of monitoring protocols ongoing
- Coordinated determination of GES

Microlitter



Towards the development of baselines for microlitter

- Availability information collection of Microlitter datasets closed 3.3.2021
- Confirmation of the availability of large numbers of data, though unbalanced in time, space and methodology.
- Data on floating microlitter was agreed to be collected through the National Oceanographic Data Centres NODCs, coordinated by EMODnet. Deadline for data submission (communicated on 31.5.2021) was on 18.6.2021.
- To date only few datasets have been ingested.
- TG ML microlitter core group workshop on 26.+27.10.2021, aiming at removing “roadblocks”, discussing issues on strategy, methodology and data management

Microlitter baselines

Ingestion of available marine microlitter data in EU is ongoing

- Matrices: Beach, Floating, Seafloor, Biota
- Temporal scope 2012 - 2020



Marine Microlitter data in EU 2012 - 2020

Beach Microlitter	680
Floating Microlitter	2540 of which 508 are ingested (6.10.2021)
Sediment Microlitter	550
Biota Microlitter	6448

Ca. 20 % data ingestion so far

→ MS are kindly invited to be in touch with their National Data Centres in order to complete the data collection on floating microlitter. How can JRC/EMODnet help? If not viable, an alternative way for data ingestion must be found.

Towards a global agreement on plastics

Lead efforts at international level to reach a global agreement on plastics, and promote the **uptake of the EU's circular economy approach** on plastics:

- ❖ No dedicated international instrument in place specifically designed to **focus on the production and consumption elements relating to plastic**
- ❖ To address both **land and sea-based sources** as well as intentionally added and un-intentionally released **microplastics**
- ❖ Building on and complementing **Basel Convention, International Maritime Organisation (IMO)** and **regional seas conventions (RSCs)**
- ❖ Possibly launched at the next meeting of the **United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-5, February 2022)**





http://ec.europa.eu/environment/marine/good-environmental-status/descriptor-10/index_en.htm

https://ec.europa.eu/environment/strategy/zero-pollution-action-plan_en



Thank you for your attention!