



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
 DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
 ENVIRONMENT
 Directorate B - Circular Economy & Green Growth
 ENV.B – The Director

Brussels, **07 NOV. 2017**
 ENV.B.3 MM/hk Ares (2017)

Subject: Petition to stop the plastic flood

Dear Mr Neubauer,

Dear Petioners,

On behalf of Commissioner Vella, I would like to acknowledge receipt of the petition "*Plastik-Flut stoppen!*" asking for measures to reduce plastic pollution of the oceans, addressed to President Juncker, First Vice-President Timmermans, Vice-President Katainen and Commissioner Vella.

Marine litter is not only a European but indeed a global problem requiring urgent action. In the context of the Circular Economy Package, the Commission has therefore committed to adopting by the end of 2017 a comprehensive EU Strategy on Plastics, for which a range of policy options is currently being considered with the aim of addressing issues such as microplastics, reduction of littering and increase of the recyclability of plastics so that all plastic packaging on the EU market would be recyclable by 2030.

Besides the upcoming plastics strategy, the European Union is already tackling the plastic and microplastics marine pollution through a series of measures.

On the legislative level, the European Union addresses marine pollution through the implementation of marine environment, waste management and port reception facilities legislation. In the context of the Circular Economy Package adopted by the Commission in December 2015, the waste management legislation is currently being revised. Given the land based origin of most marine litter, modern waste management is crucial. The aim of this ambitious revision is to achieve a decrease in the generation of waste as well as better waste management, including increased recycling, reducing landfill of waste and reducing littering of plastic items and packaging. As reflected in the Joint Inter-institutional Declaration of 2017, swiftly finalising this legislative process is a priority of the European institutions.

Moreover, European Union funds, such as the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF), LIFE, H2020 and also other EU funds offer funding opportunities in support of filling the knowledge gap on impacts of litter and microplastics on the environment and human health as well as for innovative and promising demonstration projects and pilot initiatives.

On the international level, the EU's commitment to tackling the negative externalities of plastics is demonstrated by our active involvement in all regional initiatives with our neighbours and participation in all international fora supporting the implementation of the UN Environment Assembly resolutions on plastic marine litter and microplastics.

Yours sincerely,

Kęstutis Sadauskas