



European Commission



Changing the way we use plastics

It's light, it's cheap, it's everywhere and we can't live without it. Plastic is fantastic, but it has serious downsides as well. It's time to rethink plastic, and ask some tricky questions:

- How can we get away from single-use plastics?
- Can we make recycling it easier?
- And how can we stop plastic from ending up where it doesn't belong?

EUROPE PRODUCES A HUGE AMOUNT OF PLASTIC: 58 MILLION TONNES EVERY YEAR



Most of the raw material is fossil fuel based. Thus, if the current production trends continue, **by 2050** plastics could account for 20% of oil consumption, 15% of greenhouse gas emissions, and **there could be more plastics than fish in the sea.**

Source: PlasticsEurope

EUROPE PRODUCES 25 MILLION TONNES OF PLASTIC WASTE



Source: PlasticsEurope, 2014

EU initiatives like higher recycling targets and more effective legislation for drinking water (cutting the need for bottled water) are improving the situation, but stronger action is needed.

More than 60% of plastic waste still comes from packaging, but only 40% of that packaging is recycled.

Sources: PlasticsEurope and Eurostat

Plastic leakage

Plastics are very durable, so they accumulate in nature, damaging ecosystems we rely on. In the oceans they break down into tiny fragments, which enter the food chain. The microplastics are eaten by plankton, which are eaten by fish, which are eaten by... us.



Source: IP-13-1017



Many of these items are packaging for food and drink and most were designed to be used only once (“single-use plastics”). That’s a waste of valuable resources.

It’s time to rethink plastics

It’s time to change the way we design, produce, use and dispose of them. Let’s reinvent plastics!

The EU has a new strategy to address the whole life-cycle of plastics. The aim is to make them:



We also need to stop using plastic where there are better alternatives available, and ensure that the plastics we use keep their economic value for as long as possible, and don’t end up in landfills.

By 2030, all plastic packaging placed on the EU market should be reusable or recyclable. As well as cutting the industry’s carbon footprint, this will reduce plastic waste and marine litter, and slow the proliferation of microplastics.



THE EU GENERATED 15.88 MILLION TONNES OF PLASTIC PACKAGING WASTE IN 2015

Source: Eurobarometer



EU average



31 kg/person of plastic packaging waste was generated (2014)



40% of plastic packaging waste was recycled (2015)

What are you doing about plastic waste?



EU average

Source: Eurobarometer



65%

separate waste for recycling



34%

avoid single-use goods like cutlery & cups



24%

avoid buying over-packaged products



75%

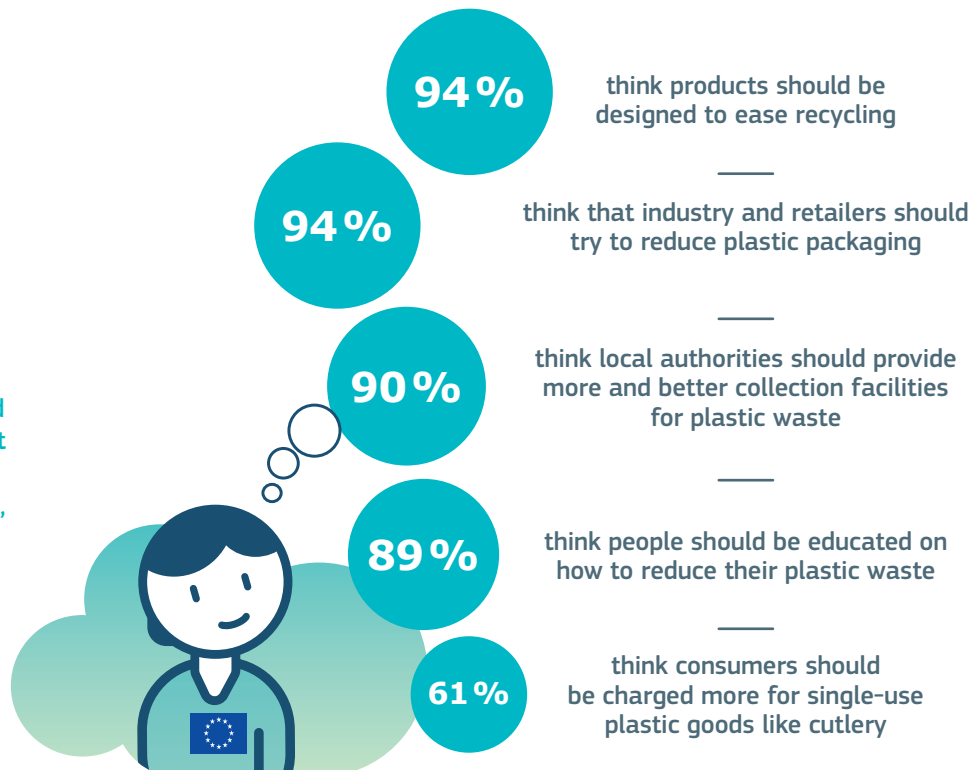
use fewer single-use plastic bags

How would you tackle the plastic challenge?

Most Europeans back measures to cut plastic waste.

With 87% of Europeans worried about the environmental impact of plastic, and 74% worried about its impact on their health, people have the drive to tackle the plastic challenge, but what do they think should be done?

Source: Eurobarometer



#PlasticsStrategy

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