ADDRESSING MARINE LITTER IN THE ATLANTIC REGION

How different sectors within society can contribute to solutions

This participatory workshop focused on showcasing successful initiatives, governance platforms and educational tools, and exploring opportunities across sectors and/or countries, to help prevent and minimise marine litter in the Atlantic region.

Promoters: *Coastal & Marine Union (EUCC*, Netherlands), *Surfers Against Sewage* (SAS, United Kingdom), *Marine Litter Portuguese Association* (APLM, Portugal) and *Marine Litter Spanish Association* (AEBM, Spain)

Panellists, Facilitators and Supporters: the session was chaired by Joana Veiga, was enriched by the presentations of Richard Thompson and Andy Cummins, while the hands-on activity was facilitated by Lia Vasconcelos and Kathrin Kopke, with the valuable support of Juan Pablo Pérez Gómez, Flávia Silva, Paula Sobral, Pilar Zorzo and Estibaliz López-Samaniego.

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Andy Cummins
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Participants: **45 people** attended this workshop. Approximately 50% were from Academia/Research Centres. Other sectors present included Local or National Authorities, Coastal recreation/Tourism, NGOs and Fisheries/Aquaculture.

1. Key messages

- Marine litter is an emerging issue of concern, with considerable **ecological and socio-economic impacts but also with not yet fully-understood risks for human health**. Addressing the issue of marine litter requires an **integrated approach, at different levels of the life-cycle of the products** (from design, to disposal). Different approaches to prevent waste production, to improve waste management and to directly mitigate marine litter exist. **Several examples of initiatives involving different sectors can be further exploited and implemented in the Atlantic region**.

- The above was recognised and reflected on the proposals put forward by participants, i.e. there is **no single solution and that progress can only be made by coupling the product and its usage; via appropriate design and effective strategies for waste management including recycling** at the end of the product lifetime. Nevertheless, solutions need to be product and, in some cases location specific, for example according to the items and materials of most concern and available waste management infrastructure.

- The fact that proposals of participants fell into categories of solutions that are well known and have been acknowledged for some time, clearly indicates that **progress is not limited by a lack of technology or clarity on ways to reduce the accumulation of waste in the environment. Rather we need to find new ways to facilitate active engagement with these solutions, whether this be top-down** (e.g. by legislation)**, bottom-up** (*e.g.* by awareness raising) **or a combination of both.**

2. Summary and structure of session

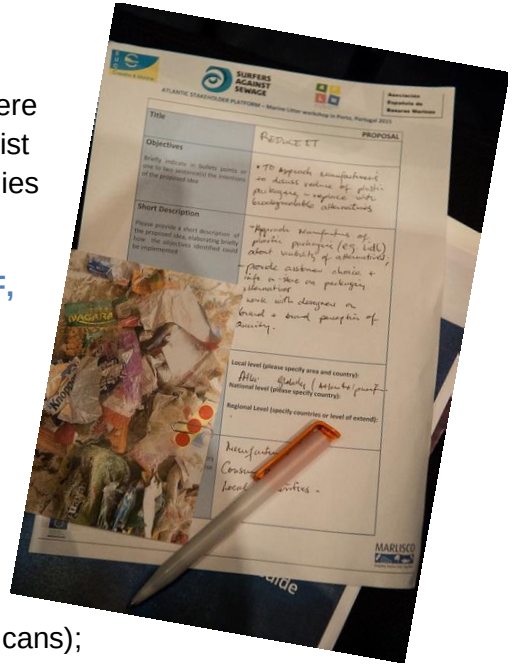
- **Short Animation on Sources and Impacts of ML** – screening of a 3min short animated documentary showing the multiple sources and impacts of marine litter https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=017bBeXhYz4

  - **Richard Thompson –** The need of multiple approaches, sectorial collaboration and more efficient use of resources, gaps within production and use of products that need to be addressed; examples of effective regulatory measures (plastic bag tax in Ireland); MARLISCO legacy in terms of educational tools; The marine litter national associations in Portugal (APLM) and Spain (AEBM); a few examples of initiatives across sectors (e.g. *Fishing for Litter*, *Healthy Seas*).

- **Andy Cummins** - Overview of approach of Surfers Against Sewage and examples of hands-on initiatives to tackle the issue of marine litter.

- **Group exercise with participants** – session participants were randomly assigned to one of the 10 formed groups at the start of the session. In each group, a real example of a marine litter type was displayed as a group identifier and to better illustrate the most frequent marine litter items deposited in the beaches on the Atlantic Region. Groups were invited to discuss and come up with a proposal of an action or initiative that could be set up in the Atlantic Region to address marine litter. Each group presented briefly in plenary the title of their proposal and provided a short description of what it entailed. The different proposals were listed and individual participants were given 3 votes each that could be attributed to the proposal(s) they found the most promising/interesting (see list of outcomes in Annex).

3. Outcome and proposals from participants



Most participants focused their proposals on the litter item that had been attributed to their group and which represented the most frequently found and abundant marine litter items in this region. In total, 10 proposals were presented (i.e. 1 per group) and evaluated by all participants. The ideas put forward by the groups (complete list and description in Annex), not only considered a wide variety of specific items but fell within a range of strategies that are already widely recognised as being appropriate directions for progress:

1) Promote **proper disposal of waste** either through incentives or awareness raising **(proposals A, D, F, H, J)** → *e.g.* encourage fishermen to bring ashore end-of-life cordage and fishing gear;

2) **Reduce** the quantity of plastic items produced and used, either at production or consumption phase, especially where these present particular problems for the environment **(proposals A, C, E)** → *e.g.* A suggestion for **legislation to phase out** use of expanded polystyrene as a material for packaging;

3) Promote **re-use** of beverage containers **(proposal A)** → Incentives to re-use cups in coffee shops;

4) **Re-design** products to make them more environmental friendly and/or increase compatibility with **recycling (proposals C, G)** → *e.g.* Redesign bottle caps/lids attached to bottles (similar to aluminium cans);

5) **Raise awareness in general about the problem and the solutions (proposals G, I, J)** → creative awareness campaigns *e.g.* with celebrities dressing up with litter or concentrating improper disposed plastic litter in a central point of the city;

4. Follow up

The participants put forward a series of proposals for actions that could contribute to prevent marine litter in the North East Atlantic (see list of outcomes in Annex). No specific further follow-up actions to implement these activities have been defined during the workshop, as time available was limited.

5. Reporting back progress made at the next Atlantic Stakeholder Platform Conference

YES

ANNEX – List of proposals from breakout groups

Title	Objectives/description	Stakeholders	Nr of votes
A) Don't be a mug – your coffee doesn't cost the cup	Incentive to bring your own cup or deliver it back for recycling/reuse (e.g. reduced coffee price / loyalty scheme)	Industry, Public, NGOs, Advertising	**9**
B) Project - Risk assessment of marine litter hotspots	Locate main areas of accumulation, using ocean and coastal 3D models + river discharges + particle tracking models (e.g. provided by MARETEC/IST, Meteo Galicia) vicente.perez@meteogalicia.es rodrigo.maretec@ist.utl.pt	University/Research Centres, Operational Institutions, NGOs	**8**
C) Polystyrene Bead Attack	Phasing out polystyrene, through: Use impact assessment; Ecotax to encourage Ecodesign and replacement for more environmentally friendly alternatives; awareness-raising; pilots to test new item materials.	Research Centres, Industry, Government, Public	**12**
D) *Butt Box*	Produce portable ashtray as part of cigarette packaging	Industry	**18**

Title	Objectives/description	Stakeholders	Nr of votes
E) Reduce It	At manufacturer/Industry level – Reduction of plastic packaging and/or substitution with biodegradable alternatives; Reduction at source via branding marketing information for consumer	Manufacturers, Consumers, Local Authorities	**4**
F) Cotton bud sticks on the Bin	Awareness campaign towards consumers to encourage appropriate disposal of cotton bud sticks (e.g. information label on product)	Industries, Consumers, Local authorities	**8**
G) Mind the (bottle) Cap	School children education about marine litter + strategy for redesign bottle cap as not separable from bottle	Schools, Ministries of Education, local communities, NGOs, Industry	**8**
H) String along	Encourage / educate fishermen to bring ashore end-of-life cordage and nets for recycling. This could include: rewarding fishermen; develop products with recycled material; reflect good behaviour in certification schemes.	Harbour Authorities, Fishermen, Development Agencies, ENGOs	**9**
I) Litter dressing / Addressing litter	Awareness campaign on social media, based on pictures of celebrities dressed on litter		**15**
J) Don't Let it Fall	Broad awareness campaign on improper disposal of plastics – e.g. during one day in urban areas, citizens collect plastic items that were improperly disposed. The collected waste is deposited e.g. in a main square of the city	Local authorities, NGOs, general public	**3**