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**COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT**  
**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

**Single Use Plastics & Fishing Gear**

*Accompanying the document*

**Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council  
on the reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment**

{COM(2018) 340 final} - {SEC(2018) 253 final} - {SWD(2018) 254 final} -  
{SWD(2018) 256 final} - {SWD(2018) 257 final}

## **The problem**

The amount of plastic marine litter in the seas is growing, threatening ecosystems, biodiversity, human health as well as tourism, fisheries and shipping. The problem is transboundary.

Plastics makes up 85% of litter items on European beaches. Half is ‘single-use plastic’ used only once, for a short time, before being discarded. Abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear (ALDFG) accounts for another 27%.

European policies on water, marine, waste, product and fisheries do not yet adequately address marine litter with many measures left to Member States' discretion, fragmenting the internal market.

## **Why should the EU act and what is the objective?**

Joined-up and proportionate action at EU level can reduce marine litter while ensuring a single market and legal certainty for businesses.

The general objective is to reduce the environmental harm from certain plastic products, while promoting the transition to a circular economy with innovative and multi-use alternatives.

## **Policy options**

The analysis focussed on fishing gear and the 10 most found single use plastics (around 86% of single-use plastic ): cigarette butts; drinks bottles and caps; cotton bud sticks; crisp packets; wet wipes; sanitary towels; cutlery; straws; stirrers; drinks cups; food containers as well as fishing gear.

A range of options were analysed against a baseline that includes the ongoing revision of the Fisheries Control Regulation and the Port Reception Facilities Directive as well as the Plastic Strategy and the reviewed waste legislation.

## **The preferred option**

This option will **significantly reduce the amount of marine litter**. For single use plastics, measured by counts, **the reduction is about half**. It includes:

- Extended Producer Responsibility for the cost of prevention and cleaning up litter from cigarette filters, drinks bottles, crisp packets, wet wipes, sanitary towels, drinks cups, food containers, balloons and ensure proper waste management of damaged, end-of-life and fished-up fishing gear;
- Incentives for fishers to return damaged, end-of-life and fished-up gear delivered to the port;
- Product design measures to tether caps to drink bottles;
- Reduction targets for single-use plastic versions of drinks cups, wet wipes, and food containers;
- A ban of single-use plastic versions of cotton bud sticks, plastic balloon sticks, cutlery, straws and stirrers.

In 2030, for single-use plastic, this option would save 2.6 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent. It would avoid environmental damages (equivalent to €11 billion). There would be compliance costs for business (around €2 billion) and waste management (€510 million). Consumers would save money (around €6.5 billion), but face some inconvenience.

An additional measure, a Deposit Refund or equivalent system, would further significantly reduce marine litter, at an acceptable extra cost (around 1,4 billion €).

The preferred option for fishing and aquaculture gear is the introduction of Extended Producer Responsibility for producers of plastic incorporated in fishing and aquaculture gear and financial incentives to encourage the returning of gear to shore. This would result in costs to the industry of about 0.16% of revenue. It will complement measures targeting fishing gear and make sure plastic material from fishing gear enters the waste and recycling stream, involving the producers of plastic material for fishing gear and increasing recycling rates for fishing gear material.