EU staff to clean up on the Belgian coast on Sunday 14 May

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To raise awareness about the increasing challenges posed by marine litter, the European Commission is organising the first major beach clean-up by EU staff on 14 May. The initiative, with the support of the Surfrider Foundation Europe, will take place on the Belgian coast and is expected to involve hundreds of EU staff and their families. EU agencies and embassies around the world have been invited to host similar events.

Every year millions of tons of trash end up in the ocean. It is estimated that by 2050 there could be more plastic than fish in its waters. The European Union is determined to prevent this bleak prospect from becoming a reality and is committed to protecting the oceans and seas, while ensuring their sustainable use.

The beach clean-up takes place ahead of the [#OurOcean](#) [1] conference, hosted for the first time by the EU (Malta, 5-6 October), where global leaders, including from industry, will present ambitious and measurable commitments to ensure cleaner, healthier and safer seas.

The EU is pursuing a set of initiatives that target the problem of marine litter. The approach proposed in the [Circular Economy](#) [2] Action Plan focuses on preventing waste and on recycling and reusing materials in order to tackle the issue at its very source. In addition to this, the Commission is currently preparing a dedicated [plastics strategy](#) [3]. The implementation of the [Marine Strategy Framework Directive](#) [4] aims at reducing all pressures and their impacts on the European Seas. The revision of the [Port Reception Facilities Directive](#) [5] addresses marine litter produced by ships and is one of the key initiatives of the EU Maritime Year 2017. The [Integrated Maritime Policy](#) [6] provides an overarching strategy to use the EU's ocean resources sustainably – and the [International Ocean Governance](#) [7] initiative includes a list of actions for marine litter in the EU and globally. [Horizon 2020](#) [8] addresses the scientific aspect by supporting ocean research.

Marine litter is a global challenge that needs the collective effort of everyone at every level to be addressed. The beach clean-up on Sunday 14 May underlines the readiness of EU staff to take concrete action as concerned citizens against a growing and alarming phenomenon.

Links:

[Our Ocean conference](#) [9]

[Maritime Affairs and Fisheries](http://ec.europa.eu/info/departments/maritime-affairs-and-fisheries_en) [10]

[Environment](http://ec.europa.eu/info/departments/environment_en) [11]

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Links
[1] https://twitter.com/hashtag/ourocean
[2] http://ec.europa.eu/environment/circular-economy/index_en.htm
[3] http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/plastic_waste.htm
[4] http://ec.europa.eu/environment/marine/eu-coast-and-marine-policy/marine-strategy-framework-directive/index_en.htm
[5] http://www.emsa.europa.eu/implementation-tasks/environment/port-waste-reception-facilities.html
[6] http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/policy_en
[7] https://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/policy/ocean-governance_en
[8] http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/area/aquatic-resources
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