

EN
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Answer given by Mr Várhelyi
on behalf of the European Commission
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In 2016, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) published a statement¹ identifying data gaps on the presence of microplastics and nanoplastics (MNPs) in food and their effects on human health that required further research, to enable a safety risk assessment for consumers. At the EFSA scientific colloquium on MNPs in food² in 2021, it was confirmed that still further efforts are needed to generate the data necessary for a comprehensive human health risk assessment. So far, no evidence is available that the current dietary exposure to MNP causes health risks, therefore no maximum levels for microplastics in food have been established yet neither for domestic nor imported fish that would need to be enforced by Member States.

The Commission does not rank the performances of individual Member States in terms of plastic waste management. Under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD)³, Member States must monitor the quantities of plastic litter and microplastics in coasts and seas, including the seafloor, assess their impacts and take measures to reduce both quantities and impacts. Although there are still gaps, most Member States have made progress. The Commission services just published a report⁴ on coastline litter quantities, which shows a clear downward trend, mostly attributed to the measures taken by Member States under the MSFD.

¹ EFSA Journal 2016;14(6):4501, <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/4501>

² EFSA Supporting publication 2021 : EN-6815, <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/events/event/update-scientific-colloquium-25-coordinated-approach-assess-human-health%20>

³ Directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2008 establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy.

⁴ European Coastline Macro Litter Trends 2015 – 2021 <https://mcc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/main/dev.py?N=41&O=468>