

EN
E-003532/2025
Answer given by Ms Roswall
on behalf of the European Commission
(8.12.2025)

Several EU legislative acts, policies and financing possibilities, address microplastics in the Mediterranean Sea.

The Marine Strategy Framework Directive¹ requires Member States to monitor and reduce quantities of marine litter, including microplastics, to avoid harm to coast and ocean. In 2020 experts agreed a maximum of 20 items for every 100 metres of coastline²; its revision announced in the Water Resilience Strategy³ and the Ocean Pact⁴ will further enhance marine environment protection. Other threshold values are being developed as required by the ‘good environmental status’ Decision⁵.

The EU’s Plastics Strategy⁶, the Single-use Plastics Directive⁷ and the Port Reception Facilities Directive⁸ aim to reduce litter. Measures against marine plastic litter also tackle microplastic pollution, largely generated by plastic waste. The Commission restricted the use of microplastics in products⁹. The forthcoming regulation on plastic pellets losses will strengthen this framework¹⁰; initiatives against microplastics from paints, tyres, textiles and detergents are in place or about to be adopted. Measures targeted at the Mediterranean include the EU-funded project Marine Litter Med Plus¹¹ supporting the updated Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management. The EU Mission ‘Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030’, contributes also to the prevention and elimination of microplastic pollution in the Mediterranean¹².

While there was no agreement on the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee in Geneva

¹ 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, OJ L 164, 25.6.2008, p. 19–40.

² https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/marine-environment/descriptors-under-marine-strategy-framework-directive_en.

³ https://commission.europa.eu/topics/environment/water-resilience-strategy_en.

⁴ https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/european-ocean-pact_en.

⁵ Commission Decision (EU) 2017/848 of 17 May 2017 laying down criteria and methodological standards on good environmental status of marine waters and specifications and standardised methods for monitoring and assessment, and repealing Decision 2010/477/EU.

⁶ https://environment.ec.europa.eu/strategy/plastics-strategy_en.

⁷ Directive (EU) 2019/904 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 June 2019 on the reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment, OJ L 155, 12.6.2019, p. 1–19.

⁸ Directive (EU) 2019/883 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 April 2019 on port reception facilities for the delivery of waste from ships, amending Directive 2010/65/EU and repealing Directive 2000/59/EC, OJ L 151, 7.6.2019, p. 116–142.

⁹ Commission Regulation (EU) 2023/2055 of 25 September 2023 amending Annex XVII to Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) as regards synthetic polymer microparticles, OJ L 238, 27.9.2023, pp. 67–88.

¹⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_25_1023.

¹¹ <https://www.unep.org/unepmap/what-we-do/projects/MarineLitterMED-Plus>.

¹² More information on the mission ocean and waters service portal and Horizon projects dashboard: <https://projects.research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/en/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/eu-missions-horizon-europe/restore-our-ocean-and-waters/horizon-mission-projects#content-paragraph-658>; and <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/horizon-dashboard>.

this summer, discussions are likely to be resumed in 2026. The EU, together with the Member States, will continue engaging with all partners to identify ways forward and remains committed to an agreement for the full lifecycle of plastics.