

Bundesverband Meeresmüll e.V. | Grimm 12 | 20457 Hamburg

## Environment Ministers of the EU Member States

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15.12.2020

### OPEN LETTER

To the EU Environment Ministers

#### Stop the plastic flood

Dear Ms/Mr Minister,

When meeting with your fellow Environment Ministers of the EU Member States on December 17th in Brussels, we urge you to take a decisive stand against plastic waste – hazardous to human health and the environment. Across the EU, an increasing number of disposable packaging and products, some of which are toxic, are being brought to market. At the same time, reusable products represent only a minor share, and high-quality and toxic-free recycling is not gaining any traction.

On Thursday, you can progressively shape the Council's Conclusions on the Circular Economy Action Plan (CEAP) and support action that will drive a fast transition to a sustainable and non-toxic circular economy, while ensuring that the EU Recovery Fund spurs such a transition. This includes promoting reusable systems, repair services, sharing models and, safe and high-quality recycling systems.

The plastic crisis must be stopped at its source in order to solve the associated risks to human health, environment and climate. To achieve this, the EU waste hierarchy must be implemented in a consistent manner, which can only be done through binding waste prevention targets, reusable quotas and minimum input quantities for recyclates. We need to move away from burning and landfilling plastic. Environmentally friendly and healthy reusable systems, such as reusable beverage bottles, coffee-to-go cups and transport packaging, are being introduced in more and more EU countries. These solutions provide a way to avert the plastic waste crisis and must be promoted throughout the EU.

Public Procurement has a critical role to play in achieving a circular economy. EU comprehensive, mandatory requirements for the purchase of reusable packaging, remanufactured products and those which are made from recycled materials, should be established. We call on you and the Environment Council to highlight these requirements in the conclusions for the Circular Economy Action Plan.

In order to achieve a non-toxic circular economy, hazardous chemicals should no longer be present in plastics. Recycled plastics should be subject to the same requirements regarding chemicals content as virgin materials. Therefore, we ask you to support the swift implementation of the measures proposed as part of the EU Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability, and to ensure the complementarity and consistency of action undertaken under the different strategies and action plans of the European Green Deal.

We also ask you to fully support the development of a strong global treaty on plastic pollution at UNEA-5, building on the October 2019 Council conclusions “More circularity – Transition to a sustainable society”. The plastic crisis is a global challenge and does not recognise national borders.

We call on you to act decisively to solve the plastic crisis across Europe, implementing these demands! Please send us any questions you may have; we are happy to answer them all.

Yours faithfully,

the undersigned organizations

## WAYS OUT OF THE PLASTIC CRISIS DEMANDS FROM GERMAN CIVIL SOCIETY



[www.exit-plastik.de](http://www.exit-plastik.de)



**#break  
free  
from  
plastic**

*#BreakFreeFromPlastic is a global movement envisioning a future free from plastic pollution. Since its launch in September 2016, nearly 1,900 organizations from across the world have joined the movement to demand massive reductions in single-use plastics and to push for lasting solutions to the plastic pollution crisis. In Europe alone, 90 core organizations are active in more than 30 countries. These organizations share the common values of environmental protection and social justice, which guide their work at the community level and represent a global, unified vision. Sign up at [www.breakfreefromplastic.org](http://www.breakfreefromplastic.org)*

