



Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz Deutschland



FRIENDS OF THE EARTH GERMANY



SEA FIRST



NaturSkyddsforeningen



U MARINU



BAST A GOLO MEDITERRANEE



FOR PROTECTION OF THE BALTIC SEA ENVIRONMENT



HÅLL SVERIGE RENT



Liga para a protecção da natureza



grupo de estudos de ordenamento do território e ambiente



LEGAMBIENTE



DPPVN



OCEANA

Protecting the World's Oceans



NTM nature trust (malta)



NABU



MEDASSET Mediterranean Association to Save the Sea Turtles

ECOVITAE



The Danish Society For A Living Sea



SURFRIDER FOUNDATION EUROPE



Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives Global Anti-Incinerator Alliance



Brussels, 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 2012

CC: Commissioner Potočnik and Commissioner Damanaki

**RE: Reducing marine litter under the MSFD: Let's not waste the opportunity**

Dear Minister,

On behalf of all the environmental organisations supporting this letter, we are writing to you in regard to the EU's Marine Strategy Framework Directive and the specific requirement for Member States to set marine litter reduction targets.

We are deeply concerned that Member States are **on the verge of wasting this huge opportunity** to put on paper their ambition to resolve the problem of marine litter.

Setting targets is vitally important. Not only do they act as a tool to gauge progress in achieving overarching objectives, they also act as an incentive for action itself. With weak targets, weak measures are likely; with ambitious targets, ambitious measures become more likely.

**We want your country to be a leader.** We want to see ambitious targets in place that can pave the way towards addressing the problem of marine litter and plastic pollution and we want you to set the agenda both on a regional seas basis but also across the European Union.

We urge you to strongly consider setting targets that go beyond merely downward trends or overall reductions, but instead to set a quantitative **minimum reduction of 50%**.

There are multiple tools available to measure the amounts of litter items across the marine environment and here we recommend you do so for beach litter, marine biota and across the water column. Each marine region has different monitoring protocols that are more or less appropriate to that region but it is very clear that in the case of beach litter, **all EU Member States can put in place beach litter monitoring and programmes of measures that can allow for a 50% reduction target.**

Not only is such a target fair and just (for environmental, social and economic reasons) but a **50% reduction target is also achievable** as indicated by the EU's 2011 technical subgroup report on marine litter that showed how significant reductions can be achieved, and have been achieved in the past, through low cost and targeted measures.

Lastly, we ask that you liaise not only with your national experts but also with other EU Member States so as to ensure that a 50% reduction target is supported across the region and to ensure a coordinated approach. **Marine litter knows no boundaries and it will take a coordinated response to solve the problem in each country's marine waters.**

This is a big opportunity for your country to make its mark on marine litter and we would encourage you to lead the way in doing so.

*For more information please see the attached document: 'Environmental NGO advice on marine litter for public consultations on the implementation of the MSFD' that was produced by Seas At Risk member organisations.*

Yours sincerely, and on behalf of all the supporting NGOs listed at the start of this letter,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Verbeek', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Monica Verbeek, **Executive Director, Seas At Risk**