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## WFO on the New Circular Economy Package

On December 2<sup>nd</sup> the European Commission published its long awaited Circular Economy Package following the withdrawal of a previous proposal at the beginning of 2015, promising to deliver a 'more ambitious' proposal before the end of 2015 – a promise, it seems, that was not met.

Indeed, recycling targets have been weakened, a landfill ban is no longer foreseen, the recycling calculation methodology remains ambiguous, waste exports are not covered and waste sorting and quality is not tackled – measures which are all part of closing the loops in a circular economy.

Adding the right value to waste needs to be promoted by the European Institutions, encouraging the sorting and collection of waste by involving consumers and the recycling industry from the start. Nevertheless, high quality collection and sorting of waste is only useful if legislators ensure recycled material finds quality sales markets. Neither eco-design nor closing material loops can be accomplished as long as producers are not held liable for the end-of-life of their products.

WFO's Bernard Merck states: "The presence of the top 20 most littered items is ready to be solved with already existing technology, provided politicians resolve to make concrete decisions and do not settle for compromises or delayed actions."

WFO trusts that the vital components missing in the new proposal will be added by the Council as well as by the European Parliament, who has already expressed its support for a more ambitious package.

## Plastian the Little Fish & its New Sponsors

WFO is happy to communicate that the German Academy for Children's and Youth Literature ([Deutsche Akademie für Kinder- und Jugendliteratur](#)) chose WFO's book *Plastian the Little Fish* to be November's 'Environmental Book of the Month'. Founded in 1976, the Academy's promotes German literature for youngsters and designates award-winning books every month. Recently, the Academy added three categories: climate and energy, environmental protection and understanding nature and awards one 'Book of the Month' to each. Such books take on an active environmental education, participating in an ecological discourse in hopes of shaping a better environmentally sustainable future.

In addition to such recognition, WFO is proud to announce that the story of *Plastian the Little Fish* has been translated into Norwegian, made possible by Norfolier GreenTec AS. The translation of the book into Portuguese is currently in the works thanks to Logoplaste. New sponsors of the book have joined the cause in educating young children of the problem of marine litter and a need to become active in order to ensure a brighter future.

JOIN US!



[www.wastefreeoceans.eu](http://www.wastefreeoceans.eu)



WFO would like to give special thanks to its new sponsors:

B R U  
G G E



Logoplaste

NIEUWPOORT



The city of Bruges is committed to its status as a green city. The renowned historic city also has a past in clean-up operations. In the 1970s, Bruges made a drastically-needed intervention to clean its canals and provided such clean water that its swans returned to the town. For decades, the city council has worked hard to abolish any garbage from being thrown in its waterways.

Cedo Recycling is the largest manufacturer of own label and branded household disposables in Europe. Their commitment to Research & Development has resulted in full, post-consumer, closed-loop recycling capabilities, reusing materials that would otherwise have gone to landfill. Cedo furthermore maintains the lowest carbon footprint, consuming 74% less energy than current leading approaches and avoiding the need for water.

Logoplaste manufactures rigid plastic packaging for some of the most reputable companies in the world in the food and beverage, personal care, household care and oil and lubricants sectors. Logoplaste is committed to improving the environment, studying all possibilities to reduce raw materials in their packaging designs and production. Their dedication to weight reduction in packaging is an important contributor to good environmental practices.

The municipality of Nieuwpoort is located on the Belgium coast and actively participates in the fight against marine litter, from asking locals and tourists to **not disturb the seals** and leave the animals in peace, to a recent beach cleanup operation particularly targeting the local youth.

Renolit is one of the leading international manufacturers of high-quality plastic films and derived products for technical applications. Renolit played a key role in initiating the voluntary commitment of the European PVC industry to promote the sustainable production and use of PVC. Renolit also advocates the sustainable use of valuable raw materials and actively participates in projects to save scarce resources, itself avoiding energy losses by optimizing processes in all areas.

WFO also recognizes the efforts of those who made the first publishing of *Plastian the Little Fish* possible:

ecoplast

SAEGEN  
VIER  
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WFO is still calling for sponsors in order to publish the book in multiple countries. A small contribution will make a big difference!

View sponsorship opportunities [here](#).

## WFO Conference in the European Parliament: Guardians of the Sea

In October, WFO held its annual conference in the European Parliament with a special focus on 'Guardians of the Sea'. The conference was hosted by MEP Alain Cadec, WFO Champion and Chairman of the Fisheries Committee who opened the conference by rightly stating that, in the fight against marine litter, "it is crucial to collaborate with fishermen as they are best equipped to collect floating debris". The conference gathered over 60 participants coming from the plastics industry, associations, NGOs, the European Commission and the European Parliament.

Speaking at the conference, Ms Elisa Roller of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE) stressed the fact that **there remains a lack of awareness of the funds made available by the European Institutions to support the collection of waste by fishermen**. Mr Massimo Bellavista, President of Bellaria Pesca Producers Organization and Italian Member of Europêche, presented the European Project ECOADRIA-FISHERMAN, which gives local fisherman a leading role in managing sea activities and raising awareness on marine litter problems in the area. MEP Ricardo Serrão Santos, who also spoke at the conference brought to light the many other pollutants affecting the state of the oceans. Nicole Intemann, author of *Plastian the Little Fish*, told the heart-warming story of how she came about to writing a children's book on the problem of marine litter, officially launching the book and WFO's worldwide campaign on educating young children about the issue.

MEP Alain Cadec concluded that WFO offers a remarkable example of collaborating with fishermen for their knowledge and capabilities, as well as developing a true circular economy that adds value to waste.



WFO's Guardians of the Sea Conference taking place in the European Parliament



MEP Ricardo Serrão Santos (left) and MEP Alain Cadec (right), WFO Champion



Ms Elisa Roller (left) and Ms Nicole Intemann (right)



Mr Massimo Bellavista (far left), Mr Bernard Merckx (middle), MEP Ricardo Serrão Santos (right) and Ms Nicole Intemann (back)

## WFO at the Sustainable Ocean Summit



The International Business Alliance  
for Corporate Ocean Responsibility

The Sustainable Ocean Summit 2015 (SOS 2015) recently took place in Singapore under the global theme 'Sustainable Development and Growing the Blue Economy - the Next 50 Years' – ensuring the health, productivity and sustainable development of the ocean and advancing responsible ocean economic activity. The annual summit is organized by the World Ocean Council (WOC), a cross-sectoral industry leadership alliance on "Corporate Ocean Responsibility".

WFO's Stephanie Maes took part in the panel discussion: 'Reducing Industry Input of Marine Debris, Plastics and Other Wastes through Adequate Port Reception Facilities and a Circular

Economy', discussing the role and duties of port users to ensure economically viable port reception facilities worldwide contributing to sustainably reducing marine debris.

The SOS 2015 took place in Singapore this year in order to recognize the 50th anniversary of the city and its growth into a major maritime nation, bringing together the entire ocean business community to discuss their role for the next 50 years to come.

WFO Asia will soon begin its active participation in the region!

## 'Port Waste Catch' Kick Off



The Port of Rotterdam is aiming to earn the title of 'most sustainable port' by investing in reducing the flow of waste entering the North Sea with a project called **Port Waste Catch**. The city of Rotterdam is strategically located on the North Sea, directly at the mouth of the New Meuse channel leading into the delta of the rivers Rhine, Meuse and Scheldte which access the heart of Western Europe, thus deserving the city's nickname 'Gateway to Europe'.

The aim of the Port Waste Catch is to trap the waste at places in the port where floating waste accumulates naturally. The Port Authority is therefore looking for a system that provides a solution for all stages in the waste processing chain – not only the collection of waste, but also its removal, treatment and re-use.

On October 1st, a market consultation with the Port Authority on the project brought together some 80 designers, engineers, technologists and inventors, as well as companies within the shipping and maritime industry knowledge and scientific institutes, innovation-oriented companies such as start-ups, educational institutions and students. There, during a presentation, **WFO** Co-Founder Bernard Merckx specifically called upon the Rotterdam Port Authorities to increase the focus on the prevention of waste streams potentially ending up in the waterways. In ports such as Rotterdam and Antwerp, some 85 % of the vessels leave with waste still on board, often on their way to overseas destinations.

On behalf of WFO and partners, Bernard Merckx has filed several proposals to the organisers of Port Waste Catch, focusing both on remediation and cleanup operations in and around the New Meuse and Rotterdam Port, as well as a series of potential prevention measures. In the coming weeks, all proposals received will be evaluated and initial feedback is expected for early 2016.

A harmonised system in main European ports of mandatory offloading of all waste prior to sailing overseas could significantly reduce the inflow of marine debris. When taking the lead regarding such issues, internationally renowned ports like Rotterdam can serve as exemplar models and could become a blueprint for other major ports around the globe.

## The Plastic Fantastic Challenge



The Plastic Fantastic Challenge is a European-wide open innovation competition to share and contribute to business concepts that could drastically reduce plastic packaging waste. The challenge is not against plastic however, and views plastic as one of the most fantastic inventions in history. Plastic's cheap design, flexibility, indefinite lifespan, unbreakable structure and low weight is the material of choice for products and design. Nevertheless, single-use plastic packaging can cause negative environmental impacts when not properly discarded or reused.

Throughout the month of October, the Plastic Fantastic Challenge was launched by Enviu and

Impact Hub across Europe with an official kick off in Rotterdam on October 19th. Students, experts, and professionals from all over the country came over to brainstorm for solutions. WFO's Bernard Merckx was invited to give one of the key note presentations at the event to inspire the audience with his expertise in plastics recycling and schemes for closing material loops. Submissions and comments are open until December 14th on [www.plasticfantasticchallenge.org](http://www.plasticfantasticchallenge.org). Teams will then be formed based on ideas. A jury will pre-select the ten most promising teams for the business development phase and will be invited to the Plastic Fantastic Bootcamp where they will pitch their final business plan to a jury. Log on to [the Plastic Fantastic Challenge website](#) to browse through a large number of interesting ideas, including those of WFO's Bernard Merckx!

## Fishing for Litter in Catalonia

In November 2011, the port of Barcelona was one of the first European cities where WFO launched a pilot project to collect floating debris by involving local fishermen. Contacts with the Catalan Waste Agency, Barcelona Port, the Government of Catalonia and other local stakeholders have since then remained strong.

After a period of preparation, [Catalan Waste Agency](#), the [Fishermen's Guild](#) and [Barcelona Port](#) have set up the pilot project Marviva, a fishing for litter project involving local fishermen. The project aims to find out the quantity, type and features of waste in the sea by carrying out a year-long analysis of the marine waste collected by fishermen in their nets during their work days. The fishermen trained by WFO in 2011 will also participate in the Marviva project.

Once in port, the fishermen deposit the rubbish in a container, after which it is then weighed, quantified, photographed and classed. Already in October, over 225 kg of waste was collected, 63% of which were plastics, 18% textiles and 7% wood. The aim behind this project, which 11 of the Guild's vessels are taking part in, is to raise awareness of this problem among the public in general and fishermen in particular. It is being tried out in a pilot project at Barcelona Port, but the goal is to extend it to Catalonia's other fishing ports.

"Hard as it is to believe, we are the sea's sweepers", stresses José Manuel Juárez, the President of the Barcelona Fishermen's Guild.

During the kick off event, representatives from some 50 national and regional organisations were welcomed by Mr. Josep Maria Tost who informed the participants of the ambitions of the agency and the region. In addition to being the Managing Director of the Catalan Waste Agency, Mr. Tost is also President of the Brussels-based organisation ACR+, the Association of Cities for Recycling.

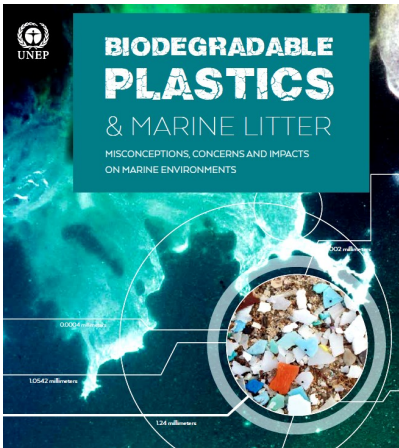


Waste caught in fishermen's nets is gathered



A fisherman analyses the collected waste

## The Ugly Truth about Biodegradable Plastics & Marine Litter



WFO applauds the latest report by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) entitled *Biodegradable Plastics & Marine Litter - Misconceptions, Concerns and Impacts on Marine Environments* which analyses biodegradable polymers and their link with marine litter.

The report concludes that **"the adoption of plastic products labelled as 'biodegradable' will not bring about a significant decrease either in the quantity of plastic entering the ocean or the risk of physical and chemical impacts on the marine environment"**. Indeed, biodegradable polymers degrade significantly slower in the marine environment than on land. Therefore, a widespread use is said to lead to continuing littering problems and its negative impacts. Furthermore, oxo-degradable polymers would only increase the quantity of microplastics in the environment and claims stating otherwise are likely motivated by commercial interests rather than scientific evidence.

Additionally, some studies suggest the 'biodegradable' label would only encourage litter to be inappropriately discarded, providing "a technical fix that removes the responsibility from the individual". Another disadvantage of the biodegradable polymers is the need to separate them from other waste for recycling so as to avoid compromising the quality of the final product.

WFO aligns itself with the conclusions of this study and encourages those who are interested in marine litter to [read the report](#) in order to understand the misconceptions of biodegradable polymers.

WFO also underlines the need to work on educational tools in order to ensure future generations make better use of our current resources and as such contribute as individuals to the circular economy – building a future where the oceans are waste free.

## Ocean of Tomorrow

Early November, the European Commission organized its third 'Ocean of Tomorrow' Conference in order to present the results of the projects funded under the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7) "The Ocean of Tomorrow" call 2012 which aimed at supporting the implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC) and the achievement of "Good Environment Status" (GES) of EU waters by 2020. Such projects contribute to innovative solutions in improving the overall health and productivity of seas and oceans. Furthermore, such results inspire new research and innovation strategies and actions to preserve coasts, seas and oceans.

During the conference, WFO's Bernard Merckx participated in the panel 'Engaging citizens towards protection and cleaning the seas and oceans - from vision to action' and highlighted the fact that the biggest fight against marine litter is on land therefore making "litter a direct consequence of choices made" by all to prevent waste from reaching rivers, seas and oceans. Bernard stressed the need for legislators to play their part in safeguarding natural resources, reinforced by Member States implementing measures such as Extended Producer Responsibility schemes and reaching minimum recycling targets.

"We need to add the right value to waste. Let's work on co-creating tomorrow."

## EREMA Joins the Fight



WFO is proud to announce a new sponsor and latest addition to the team combatting marine litter: EREMA (Engineering Recycling Maschinen und Anlagen GmbH). The Austrian company is the world's market leader in the development and production of plastics recycling systems and components of the finest quality. EREMA is an

international pioneer and one of the most innovative companies in the plastics recycling industry. Since it was founded in 1983, EREMA never stopped developing groundbreaking inventions and patents in the field of plastics recycling, adhering to the company's values of responsibility and respectfulness.

In 2016, EREMA will again be showcasing at the Save the Planet conference and exhibition, where the latest solutions in waste management, recycling and environment are presented, encouraging investments and public-private partnerships.

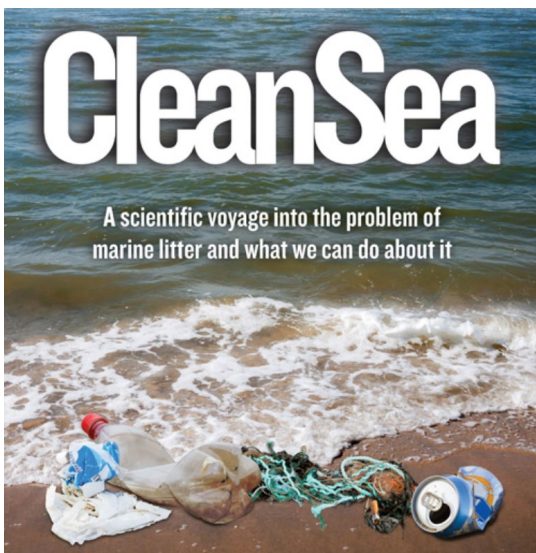
## WFO Golfinhos Alegres (Happy Dolphins) Project



Gray dolphins used to number in the thousands around the Guanabara Bay

**WFO** and its partners continues its quest for the Golfinhos Alegres Project: a Guanabara Bay so clean that its wild dolphin population is restored. Indeed, more than 90% of the dolphin population has disappeared from Rio de Janeiro's Bay as a direct consequence of its polluted waters. During a recent business trip to Brazil, the Vice-President of **WFO The Americas** Mr Luc Mellaerts met with several potential partners to explore possibilities to go forth with the cleanup operations. Improving the collecting, sorting and recycling of waste streams in the area would significantly improve the local health and sanitation problems. A local multi-stakeholder network can be set up into a business opportunity that not only closes the loops, but also restores the local wildlife.

## CleanSea Film Premiere



Can you imagine a world without marine litter? An ambitious group of European researchers asked themselves this question and got to work studying what would need to happen to achieve that. This EU-funded FP7 project, called 'CleanSea' is a 20-minute documentary film exploring the issues of marine litter. A team develops new sampling equipment and goes to sea, finds out what happens when a miniature 'plastic-filled sea' is recreated in the lab, and observes how nano-sized plastics interfere with sea urchin reproduction.

On December 3<sup>rd</sup>, **WFO** participated in the CleanSea Symposium and Film Premiere, organized at the EYE Film Institute in Amsterdam where around 200 delegates learned about the accomplishments and findings of this three-year project.

During the event, Project Coordinator Dr Heather Leslie specifically called upon EU legislators to safeguard the future livelihood of the planet by working

towards clean and productive seas and oceans. "It would be great if businesses had powerful incentives from policy to contract their designers to create products that are 'marine-litter proof'."

Hans Bruyninckx, Executive Director of the European Environment Agency, confirmed the concerns of the growing pollution and the need to significantly improve the ecological situation of the four European Regional Seas. Furthermore, he underlined that although legislative and economic instruments are in fact available for actions both on land and at sea, they are insufficiently implemented and not properly enforced by Member States.

View the film's trailer [here](#).

## European Maritime Day 2016



Every year, the European Commission organizes the [European Maritime Day Conferences](#), celebrated annually around the 20<sup>th</sup> of May. At the heart of the celebration is a two-day conference. In 2016, the conference will be held in Turku, Finland and will take place in an old locomotive hall called Logomo on 18 and 19 May. European Maritime Day is the annual meeting point for Europe's maritime community to network, discuss, and forge joint action. This year's ninth edition of the conference will focus on "Investing in Smart and Sustainable Solutions for Blue Growth". **WFO** will hold an exhibition booth and will apply for the opportunity to hold a workshop on the topic.

In the days following the conference, maritime-related public events and seminars as well as cultural activities will take place in various places in the city. Exhibitions, public happenings, concerts, networking and other events will be open to the public and

stakeholders throughout the weekend. One main attraction is the Turku Philharmonic Orchestra and Turku Music Festival proudly presenting a gala concert in honor of the Baltic Sea. The concert will be open to all and will be held on an outdoor stage by the Aura River. All proceeds will be donated to the benefit of the Baltic Sea.

View the draft programme [here](#). We hope to see you there!

## Diplomatic Council Signs an MoU with WFO

During the cocktail that followed **WFO's** Guardians of the Sea Conference last October, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the **Diplomatic Council** (DC) and **WFO**. The MoU outlines a new intensified cooperation between both globally active organisations. The DC is a United Nations registered Global Think Thank, whose main aim is to contribute the power of diplomacy for peace and sustainability everywhere on earth.



Signing the MoU with the Diplomatic Council:

WFO's Co-Founders Mr Alexandre Dangis and Mr Bernard Merckx (left side), Ms Hang Nguyen, Secretary General of the Diplomatic Council and Mr Andreas Dripke, Diplomatic Council Chief Executive Officer to the UN (right side)

## New Dates!

Last November, due to an exceptional situation in Brussels, both the **Plastics Recycling Show (PRS) Europe** and the **PETCORE Europe Conference** were postponed. New dates have been announced and PRS Europe will be taking place on 22 and 23 March 2016 at the Brussels Expo. The PETCORE Europe is scheduled for February 26 in Brussels. **WFO** remains on both programmes and will be showcasing and speaking at the events. All are welcome to join!

The PRS Europe logo features the letters 'prs' in a stylized font, with 'Plastics Recycling Show' written below it and 'EUROPE' in large, bold letters at the bottom. To the right, text provides event details: 'The European exhibition &amp; conference for the plastics recycling industry', '22 &amp; 23 March 2016', 'Brussels Expo, Hall 4', 'Place De Belgique 1', and '1020 Brussels, Belgium'. An image of colorful plastic recycling pellets is shown on the right side of the banner.

A blue-themed banner for the Petcore Europe Conference 2015. It features the Petcore Europe logo in the top right corner. The main text reads 'Petcore Europe CONFERENCE 2015'. Below this, it specifies the date '23 FEBRUARY 2016' and the location 'VLEVA CONFERENCE CENTRE, BRUSSELS'. At the bottom, the website 'WWW.PETCORE-EUROPE.ORG' is listed. The background shows a close-up of a blue plastic bottle.

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