



Document title	Analysis of the linkages between the RAP on ML and the EU Plastic Strategy
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Background

The European Commission adopted on 16th January 2018 its Strategy for Plastics ([Strategy](#) and [Annexes](#)). Among other issues, it envisages reduction options for single use plastic items. Specifically, [Annex 2](#) of the Strategy contains “List of measures recommended to national authorities and industry” where key measures encouraged for regional authorities to conduct are listed.

This document contains an analysis of the linkages between the actions in the RAP on ML and the list of encouraged actions to regional authorities contained in the EU Plastic Strategy in relation to the most frequently occurring beach litter items at Baltic Sea scale.

Action requested

The Workshop is invited to consider the analysis of the linkages between the actions in the RAP on ML and the list of encouraged actions to regional authorities contained in the EU Plastic Strategy in relation to the most frequently occurring beach litter items at Baltic Sea scale.

Analysis of the linkages between the RAP on ML and the EU Plastic Strategy

The European Commission adopted on 16th January 2018 its Strategy for Plastics ([Strategy](#) and [Annexes](#)). Among other issues, it envisages reduction options for single use plastic items. Specifically, [Annex 2](#) of the Strategy contains “List of measures recommended to national authorities and industry” where key measures encouraged for regional authorities to conduct are also listed. This document contains an analysis of the linkages between the actions in the RAP on ML and these encouraged actions to regional authorities.

The measures which national and regional authorities are encouraged to conduct are grouped into four categories:

- Key measures to improve the economics and quality of plastics recycling;
- Key measures to curb plastic waste and littering;
- Key measures to drive investments and innovation towards circular solutions; and
- Key measures to harness global action.

In the sections below a comparison of these measures and the contents of the regional actions within the Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter (RAP ML) and other relevant HELCOM activities is carried out.

Key measures to improve the economics and quality of plastics recycling

As it can be seen in the scheme below there are two actions within the RAP ML (in yellow) that are aligned with the measures encouraged for national and regional authorities in the Plastic Strategy (in green): RL11 and RL5. It is important to point out that the establishment of taxation measures is to be conducted at national level.

Favour **reusable** and **recycled plastics** in **public procurement**

Make better use of **taxation** and other economic instruments to:

- reward the uptake of recycled plastics and favour reuse and recycling over landfilling and incineration
- step up separate collection of plastics waste and improve the way in which this is done

Put in place well-designed **EPR schemes** and/or **deposit systems**, in consultation with the relevant sectors

Make **voluntary commitments** in support of the strategy’s objectives, in particular as regards the uptake of recycled plastics

RL11 - Cooperate on the establishment and/or further development of **deposit refund systems** for bottles, containers and cans (e.g. glass, **plastics** and aluminum) in the HELCOM Contracting Parties in accordance with national law as appropriate.

RL5 - Establish a **dialogue and negotiate on solutions** with business and industry to (i) develop **design improvements** that reduce the negative impacts of products entering the marine environment, and (ii) **reduce over- packaging** and promote wise packaging

Key measures to curb plastic waste and littering

In relation to this group of measures, not only are there several specific actions in the RA RAP ML (in yellow) aligned with the measures detailed in the Plastic Strategy (in green) but also on-going HELCOM efforts on the regional harmonization of marine litter monitoring as countries recently committed in the [2018 Ministerial Declaration](#) (para. 32). One of this efforts has enabled the recently agreed¹ [HELCOM guidelines for beach litter monitoring](#), which are aligned with the EU guidance provided in the frame of the TG ML.

Raise awareness of littering and consider fines, where they do not exist already; **promote beach clean-up activities**

RL15 - Establish an **exchange platform** for spreading experiences **on good cleaning practices in beaches**, including **cleaning beaches actions**

Step up **waste collection**, particularly near the coasts, & improve **coordination** between **authorities** responsible for waste management, water & marine envir.

RL2 - Provide HELCOM guidelines on **best practice routines with regard to cleaning and collection systems** to prevent litter from land entering the aquatic environment

Step up efforts to eradicate **illegal and non-compliant landfills**

RL14 - Address **landfills** or dumpsites including historic ones which may eventually pose a risk to the marine environment

Develop **national monitoring** of marine litter on the basis of **harmonised EU methods**

HELCOM guidelines to monitor beach litter are aligned with EU methodology. HELCOM follows up and contributes to the work of TG ML. **Ministerial Declaration 2018** "... 32. WE ALSO COMMIT to strengthening regional research and **developing harmonised monitoring methods** on the sources, distribution, amounts and impacts of marine litter including micro-plastics, **in coherence with similar work undertaken by Contracting Parties in other relevant fora**, and to improving assessment of the effectiveness of measures;"

Engage in **regional seas conventions**, in particular to develop **regional plans** against **marine litter**

HELCOM RAP on ML adopted in 2015

Consider introducing **EPR**, in particular to provide incentives for collecting **discarded fishing gear** and recycling agricultural plastics

RS8 - Identify the options to address **key waste items from the fishing and aquaculture industry**, which could contribute to marine litter, including deposit schemes and **EPR**.

Consider introducing **deposit refund schemes**, in particular for **beverage containers**

RL11 - Cooperate on the establishment and/or further development of **deposit refund systems** for bottles, containers and cans (e.g. glass, **plastics** and aluminum) in the HELCOM CPs in accordance with national law as appropriate. Investigate and strive for **bilateral and multilateral solutions** between the countries for establishment of **such systems** in relation to **passenger ships**

¹[Outcome of STATE&CONSERVATION 8-2018](#), para. 3MA.22.

Key measures to drive investments and innovation towards circular solutions

Unfortunately no clear regional link has been identified in relation to these two measures (see green boxed below), which is linked again to the fact that the RAP ML does not contemplate economic measures.

Make better use of **economic instruments**, especially to raise the cost of landfilling and incineration and promote plastic waste recycling and prevention

Not clear regional link identified

Make greater use of **public procurement** and funding to support plastic waste prevention and recycling of plastics

Key measures to harness global action

Of the two measures listed under this heading, only one is to be applied at regional level: engage in international fora to develop a global response to the increase in marine litter. The other measure “to take domestic action to reduce the leakage of plastics in the environment, prevent plastic waste and increase recycling” would be within the national scope of action. As it can be seen below, in addition to one specific action in the RAP ML dealing with third parties (RL 13), and recent commitments in the [2018 Ministerial Declaration](#) (see para. 31 and 32 already listed above) there has been and there is on-going HELCOM participation in global process, in particular in the forum of United Nations.

Engage in international fora to develop a global response to the increase in ML

RL13 - HELCOM CPs to seek **cooperation with the River and River Basin Commissions**, as appropriate, in order to include impacts of litter on the marine environment from riverine inputs

Ministerial Declaration 2018: “...31. WE RE-COMMIT to preventing and reducing marine litter from land and sea-based sources and to achieving a significant quantitative reduction by 2025. To that end WE COMMIT to regional work on developing baselines and threshold values for maximum levels of marine litter in the Baltic Sea, **in close coordination with work undertaken by Contracting Parties in other relevant fora**. If additional efforts are needed to achieve those levels, WE COMMIT to developing ambitious, regionally coordinated, quantitative targets to reduce input of litter;”

EU RSCs informal cooperation on the implementation of RAP ML: started in 2014. EU attended the meeting in 2017. Recent meeting: 4-5 July 2018, **UN Environment/GPA presented recent developments on ML**

Attendance to **UN events** and echoing of **campaigns**.

Contribution to **UN reports**:

- “Marine Plastic Debris and Microplastics: Global Lessons and Research to Inspire Action and Guide Policy Change, UNEP/AHEG/2018/1/INF/4”
- “Combating marine plastic litter and microplastics: An **assessment of the effectiveness of relevant international, regional and subregional governance strategies and approaches**, UNEP/AHEG/2018/1/INF/3”

G7 Workshop on the **relevance** of the **regional** dimension in the **implementation** of the **G7 Action Plan on ML** (Rome, April 2017)

Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment, 2018/0172 (COD)

Earlier this year, in May, the European Commission published a [proposal for a Directive on the reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment](#), which once adopted shall apply to single-use plastic (SUP) products listed in the [Annex](#) to the proposal and to fishing gear containing plastic. The table below, complemented from the explanatory memorandum of the proposal, provides an overview of the measures addressing single-use plastic items and fishing gear as foreseen in the proposal. It also presents synergies found between the EU proposal and the actions contained in the RAP ML.

Please note that Art. 11-18 from the proposal are not addressed in this analysis since they are linked to the follow up of the implementation of the proposal and related legislative procedures.

Regional actions within the RAP ML	EU proposal							
		Consumption reduction (Art. 4)	Market restriction (Art. 5)	Product design requirement (Art. 6)	Marking requirements (Art. 7)	EPR ² (Art. 8)	Separate collection objective (Art. 9)	Awareness raising measures (Art. 10)
RL 5 - Establish a dialogue and negotiate on solutions with business and industry to (i) develop design improvements that reduce the negative impacts of products entering the marine environment, and (ii) reduce over-packaging and promote wise packaging. RL12. Initiate an activity on what certification schemes could be addressed, which existing criteria could be promoted for potential inclusion in international certification systems together with ways and means how to help approving those.	Food containers	X				X		X
	Cups for beverages	X				X		X
	Cotton bud sticks		X					
	Cutlery, plates, stirrers, straws		X					
	Sticks for balloons		X					
	Balloons					X	X	X
RL11 - Cooperate on the establishment and/or further development of deposit refund systems for bottles, containers and cans (e.g. glass, plastics and aluminium) in the HELCOM Contracting Parties in accordance with national law as appropriate. Investigate and strive for bilateral and multilateral solutions between the countries for establishment of such systems in relation to passenger ships.	Packets & wrappers					X		X
	Beverage containers, their caps & lids - Beverage bottles			X		X	X	X
	Tobacco product filters					X		X
RL8- By 2017 an assessment of the importance of sewage related waste coming from the upstream waste flow is produced. By 2018 share assessment with River and River Basin Commissions and identify measures including the implementation of related regulations; missing elements are identified and guidelines for improvement are presented.					X	X		X
	Sanitary items: - Wet wipes - Sanitary towels				X			X

² EPR stands for extended producer responsibility.

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<p>RL10 - Define and implement appropriate instruments and incentives to reduce the use of plastic bags, including the illustration of the associated costs and environmental impacts (e.g. establishment of levies, deposit fees, taxes or bans on plastic bags). Support regional coordination in the Baltic Sea of the implementation of the future revised Directive 94/62/EC on packaging and packaging waste to reduce the consumption of lightweight plastic carrier bags, for HELCOM Contracting Parties being EU members.</p>	Lightweight plastic carrier bags					X		X
<p>RS5 - Promote and disseminate best practice in relation to all relevant aspects of waste management within the fishing sector. By 2018, based on the OSPAR outcome, select best practices to be disseminated in the Baltic Sea.</p> <p>RS6 - Through a multinational project, such as the MARELITT Baltic project, together with the fishing industry and other stakeholders, develop and promote best practice in relation to ALDFG and derelict fishing gear and their removal.</p> <p>RS7 - Compile information and elaborate guidelines on best practices to reduce the input of ALDFG from commercial and recreational fishing to the Baltic Sea taking into account geographical particularities; utilize UNEP RSC report and FAO on ALDFG as a starting point and focus on regional specifics</p> <p>RS8 - Identify the options to address key waste items from the fishing and aquaculture industry, which could contribute to marine</p>	Fishing gear					X		X

Regional actions within the RAP ML	EU proposal							
		Consumption reduction (Art. 4)	Market restriction (Art. 5)	Product design requirement (Art. 6)	Marking requirements (Art. 7)	EPR ² (Art. 8)	Separate collection objective (Art. 9)	Awareness raising measures (Art. 10)
<p>litter, including deposit schemes and extended producer responsibility.</p> <p>RS9 - Investigate the use and prevalence of dolly ropes (bunches of polyethylene threads used to protect the cod end of demersal trawl nets from abrasions; synthetic fibre) in the areas of the Baltic Sea where they are used and consider the need to act.</p> <p>RS10 - Mapping of snagging sites or historic dumping grounds and a risk assessment for identifying where accumulation of ghost nets pose a threat to the environment and should be removed.</p> <p>RS11 - Based on the risk assessment conducted in RS10 and identification of accumulation areas, initiate removal of ghost nets and their safe management on land.</p> <p>RS12 - Enter into the partnership with international and regional organizations (e.g. KIMO, NABU, OSPAR Commission) as well as port authorities, to encourage implementation of passive Fishing for Litter schemes, to collect litter caught in fishing nets during normal fishing activities.</p> <p>RE1 - To prepare information sheets to assist Contracting Parties in developing material for education programs, especially for professional seafarers including fishermen, highlighting the marine litter problem and including codes of practice in cooperation with relevant organisations including IMO.</p>								