

# UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT ASSEMBLY

## GERMANY

### DRASTICALLY REDUCING MARITIME POLLUTION, INCLUDING PLASTIC

Plastic accounts for 85 per cent of marine litter and warns that by 2040, volumes of plastic pollution flowing into marine areas will nearly triple, adding 23-37 million metric tons of plastic waste into the ocean per year. This means about 50kg of plastic per meter of coastline worldwide.

Marine Litter is one of the largest emerging environmental challenges and needs to be tackled at global, regional and national level. The plastic associations in Europe are increasingly engaged in protecting the marine environment and encouraging stakeholders from industrial, political, scientific, non-governmental and social spheres to act together to preserve the oceans and coastal areas. With this in mind, we want to address how the plastics industry and its full value chain can support and contribute to the development of action plans against litter on regional and local scale.

Less plastic-wrapped produce, more recycling, doing away with plastic straws and cutlery: Germany's Environment Ministry has issued a plan to make the country less of a "throwaway society."

Environment Minister Svenja Schulze on Monday announced a plan designed to tackle levels of plastic waste in Germany and beyond. Also called for more international commitment to reduce sea garbage and to find more sustainable uses of plastic.

The ministry's proposal advocates the following five steps to drastically reduce plastic waste:

1. **Avoiding unnecessary products and packaging:** Schulze gave the example of a banana, which "comes with its own biodegradable packaging, namely a banana skin. That will have to suffice in future."
2. **Making packaging and other products more environmentally friendly:** Companies will be encouraged to do this via new licensing rules, with less environmentally friendly packaging incurring larger fees.
3. **More recycling, more recycling stations:** The government aims to increase its plastic recycling targets from 36 percent of total waste to 63 percent by 2022.
4. **Preventing plastics from getting into organic waste:** This would also improve the quality of compost. People will be encouraged to take more care when separating their trash, a common practice for years in Germany.

5. **International efforts to limit plastic waste at sea:** Increased German aid donations are foreseen to this end, specifically to clean up the 10 rivers that are thought to account for 90 percent of the plastic waste in the world's seas.

The plan includes reducing excess plastic products and packaging, making packaging and other products more environmentally friendly, using more recycled materials and reducing the number of plastics in biowaste.