

Position Paper

Country: Belgium

Committee: United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA)

**Agenda: Drastically Reducing Maritime Pollution,
Including plastic**

Oceans cover 70% of the earth. 2.01 billion tonnes of marine litter is produced in the world from which 67 million tonnes waste is produced by Belgium. Belgium committed to the preparation of a national action plan to combat maritime pollution. The scope of the national action plan will be broad, aiming to prevent macro, as well as microliter, and to reduce land-based, as well as sea-based sources. Belgium produces 9.2 million p.e of waste from which 8.1 million p.e waste is collected, from which 31.3% waste is reused. The action plan will contain several cleaning activities such as the removal of fishing nets from shipwrecks and beach cleanups. Finally, there will be an important focus on collaboration on the national level between different governmental bodies (local, regional and federal governments), and on international collaboration. In view of these priority targets, the action plan contains both measures for preventing marine litter at the source as well as measures for cleaning the sea. There will also be an emphasis on collaboration, whereby all stakeholders, whether national, international, governmental or industrial, will be invited to take their own responsibilities. This action plan will also support the realization of UN goals regarding sustainable development, and provide a response to federal actions relating to the development of a circular economy.

We have drawn up a federal action plan to combat marine litter. It has been included in the list of voluntary commitments of this Conference. The plan has a wide scope and is aimed at preventing macro and micro waste from marine and terrestrial sources. The plan, which has the ambition to be both practical and concrete, aims to facilitate and finance the cleaning of beaches and wrecks. It focuses on awareness raising among the general public, educating professionals in the marine sector, in particular fishermen, and on the circular economy.