

7 Breakthrough Propositions for litter prevention

Clean Europe Network (litter prevention NGOs and charities) welcome inclusion of shared responsibility for litter and prevention of littering in EU circular economy plan

14 March 2017, Strasbourg: The Clean Europe Network welcomes the 7 breakthrough propositions for sharing responsibility for litter prevention included by Parliament and Commission as part of the revision of the EU's 2008 Waste Directive, designed to promote a circular economy in Europe.

“If they are serious about making a difference, EU Member States must accept and implement these smart, no-nonsense measures to share responsibility for litter and prevention of littering,” says Derek Robertson, current President of the Clean Europe Network and chief executive of Keep Scotland Beautiful. *“The Clean Europe Network’s goal to achieve a litter free Europe by 2030 is a step closer today. These recommendations by MEPs and the Commission will help get it done – with the people of Europe, producers, local authorities and central governments all working together.”*

The Clean Europe Network estimates that litter clean-up costs the EU taxpayer €11 to €13 billion annually, public money which could, in part at least, be better spent on other priorities. The wind and waterways carry litter all across the continent to the seas and the ocean. As 80% of marine litter comes from the land, the problem in our seas cannot be tackled realistically without stopping littering on land. **The seven breakthrough propositions add up to a major step forward for litter prevention across the EU.**

Breakthrough Proposition 1:

The first ever definition of “litter” at EU level was put forward today by the European Parliament. Agreeing a definition opens the way to clear implementation in the 28 EU member states of **shared responsibility for litter and prevention of littering**, as proposed by the Commission.

→ **Commission¹ - Article 1 – paragraph 1 – point 2 – point f d (new)**

→ **EP² Amendment 97**

Breakthrough Proposition 2:

For the first time, it is proposed that dropping litter become an offence in all EU countries. Citizens who do not take their responsibility seriously will be breaking the law and subject to fines or other sanctions.

→ **Commission - Article 36- point 1**

¹ COM (2015)595 Proposal for a directive of 2 December 2015 Amending Waste Directive 2008/98/EC

² EU Parliament Plenary Vote - 14 March 2017

Breakthrough Proposition 3:

For the first time, member states must develop a national litter prevention strategy as an integral part of national waste management plans. Research by the Clean Europe Network shows that the vast majority of existing national waste management plans contain no substantive strategy whatsoever on litter prevention. In future, national plans will be required “*to combat all forms of littering and clean-up all types of litter*” (that could include, for example, tobacco waste, chewing gum, packaging, newspapers and magazines, paper personal hygiene products, and others).

→ **Commission³ Article 1 – paragraph 1 – point 16 – point a – point ii**

→ **EP⁴ Amendment 206**

Breakthrough Proposition 4:

For the first time, it is proposed to develop a common European methodology to measure litter so that member states can monitor and assess their litter prevention measures. Without having a common method to measure, it is hard to make any sense out of litter reduction targets, on land or in the sea. The good news is that the Clean Europe Network has already developed the first ever common European litter measurement and monitoring methodology.

→ **Commission Article 1 – paragraph 1 – point 9**

→ **EP Amendment 150**

Breakthrough Proposition 5:

For the first time, member states must identify the products that are the main sources of littering in the natural environment and take measures to reduce them. This can help address the marine litter problem.

→ **Commission - Article 1 – paragraph 1 – point 9**

→ **EP Amendment 146**

Breakthrough Proposition 6:

For the first time, producers will be required to pay for public information and communication campaigns on prevention of littering: today’s on-the-go lifestyles increase the risk of products being dropped as litter.

→ **Commission - Article 1 – paragraph 1 – point 7 – point c**

→ **EP Amendment 126**

and

→ **Commission - Article 1 – paragraph 1 – point 8**

→ **EP Amendment 132**

Breakthrough Proposition 7:

For the first time, the definition of municipal waste has been explicitly extended to cover collected litter: by doing this the Commission and Parliament have clarified the share of responsibility for litter that falls to local authorities covers cleansing activities.

→ **Commission - Article 1 – paragraph 1 – point 2 – point a**

→ **EP Amendment 81**

³ COM (2015)595 Proposal for a directive of 2 December 2015 Amending Waste Directive 2008/98/EC

⁴ EU Parliament Plenary Vote - 14 March 2017

The Clean Europe Network is delighted to see the Parliament and the Commission aligned on this set of breakthrough propositions for litter and prevention of littering in Europe and urges the 28 EU member states to accept and fully implement the whole package.

“The Commission and Parliament have started a process at EU level which we believe will lead to a better sharing of responsibility for litter prevention among all stakeholders. The EU is giving impetus to work that will make a difference to the everyday lives of hundreds of millions of Europeans,” says the Clean Europe Network’s Robertson. *“Given our unique reach to citizens concerned with litter across Europe, the members of the Clean Europe Network are eager to assist national governments, public agencies and industry bodies to develop meaningful action plans and long term strategies that will engage the public and deliver positive change to the littering behaviour of many millions of people across Europe.”*

More explanation on the 7 Breakthrough Propositions

Breakthrough Proposition 1:

The first ever definition of “litter” at EU level was put forward today by the European Parliament. This simple action is of major significance because the familiar English word “litter” does **not** translate in many European languages. Now we have a proposed definition: *“waste of small size in publicly accessible areas that has been improperly discarded in the environment, whether wilfully or by negligence.”* Agreeing a definition opens the way to clear implementation in the 28 EU member states of **shared responsibility for litter and prevention of littering**, as proposed by the Commission.

Breakthrough Proposition 2:

For the first time, it is proposed that dropping litter become an offence in all EU countries. Citizens who do not take their responsibility seriously will be breaking the law and subject to fines or other sanctions. It is the consumer’s responsibility not to drop litter. Rather, he/she should bring his/her rubbish home or to some other point where it can be reused, recycled or properly disposed of, as appropriate. Amazingly, dropping litter is not forbidden in national law in all EU countries. Parliament and Commission want to change that.

Breakthrough Proposition 3:

For the first time, member states must develop a national litter prevention strategy as an integral part of national waste management plans. While the litter problem grows, governments are not acting. Research by the Clean Europe Network shows that the vast majority of the 49 national or subnational waste management plans it identified in the EU contained no really substantive litter prevention strategies. From now on, these national plans must include a litter prevention strategy that will need *“to combat all forms of littering and clean-up all types of litter”* (that could include, for example, tobacco waste, chewing gum, packaging, newspapers and magazines, paper personal hygiene products, and others).

Breakthrough Proposition 4:

For the first time, it is proposed to develop a common European methodology to measure litter: MEPs propose to delegate the task of quickly establishing a common method to the Commission. Without having a common method to measure, it is hard to make any sense out of litter reduction targets on, land or in the sea. The good news is that the Clean Europe Network has already done this work. In 2016 it successfully piloted the first ever common European litter measurement and monitoring methodology in 50 locations in 10 European countries.

Breakthrough Proposition 5:

For the first time, member states must identify the products that are the main sources of littering in the natural environment and take measures to reduce them. This can help address the marine litter problem.

Breakthrough Proposition 6:

For the first time, producers will be required to pay for public information and communication campaigns on prevention of littering: today's on-the-go lifestyles increase the risk of products being dropped as litter. The Commission and MEPs want producers of goods that often end up as litter to take their share of responsibility in changing consumer behaviour by adequately financing awareness campaigns to encourage consumers to do the right thing with their rubbish. Member states need to make sure that producers of tobacco products, chewing gum, newspapers & magazines, paper personal hygiene products, and other common litter items, also pay their fair share along with the packaging sector.

Breakthrough Proposition 7:

For the first time, the definition of municipal waste has been explicitly extended to cover collected litter: by doing this the Commission and Parliament have clarified that the share of responsibility for litter that falls to local authorities covers cleansing activities. The municipal waste to be managed by local authorities should also cover *“market cleansing waste and waste from street cleaning services, including street sweepings, the content of litter containers, waste from park and garden maintenance.”*

About the Clean Europe Network

The **Clean Europe Network** (the **Network**) is a pan-European platform where organizations active in the field of litter prevention share experience, expertise, best practice and research with a view to improving litter prevention across the EU. It aims to develop common programmes/methodologies in areas where there is added-value in a European approach. Work covers communications to stakeholder audiences (especially to citizens) to promote litter prevention; measurement and assessment of litter and littering; and, practical improvement of litter management. The **Network's** work programme is directly relevant to many priority objectives under **the EU's 7th Environmental Action Programme** (7EAP); to furtherance of **EU Waste policy**; and to the EU's overarching programme to become a **Resource Efficient Europe**.

For more information: Visit our website [here](#)

Clean Europe Network members include:

An Taisce – The National Trust for Ireland (IE)
AVPU - Association des Villes pour la Propreté Urbaine (FR)
Håll Sverige Rent (SE)
Hold Norge Rent (NO)
Hoia Eesti Merd (EE)
Hold Denmark Rent (DK)
IG saubere Umwelt (CH)
MooiMakers (Flanders/BE)
Keep the Baltic Tidy
Keep Britain Tidy (England/UK)
Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful (Northern Ireland/UK)
Keep Scotland Beautiful (Scotland/UK)
Keep Wales Tidy (Wales/UK)
NederlandSchoon (NL)
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