

RETHINK PLASTIC

Brussels, 18th December 2019

Dear Executive Vice-President,

The EU is now a global leader in the fight against plastic pollution. Adopting the Directive on Single-use Plastics, in part thanks to your decisive leadership, was pioneering. As Executive Vice-President of the European Commission responsible for driving an EU Green Deal, you have a unique opportunity to scale-up this leadership. And we are ready to support you.

The Rethink Plastic alliance in Brussels and the Break Free From Plastic movement are inviting the European Commission to build on the work initiated on plastic pollution and to prioritise measures tackling pollution at source. This means addressing the exponential increase in both the production and use of plastic, eliminating major sources of plastic pollution including microplastics and preventing hazardous chemicals from entering the material cycle.

Plastic production is one of the largest contributors ⁽¹⁾ to global greenhouse gas emissions – nearly all plastics come from fossil fuels, and greenhouse gases are emitted at each stage of the plastic lifecycle. Plastic is also largely impacting the resilience of the ocean, a vital climate regulator. You have highlighted that to address the Climate and Biodiversity crisis, “our answer must be truly transformational” and “reboot our society”. We fully agree, and believe that to achieve that we should focus on reducing plastic production and consumption, and redesigning products and systems. This is what EU citizens are asking for ⁽²⁾.

Furthermore, we are ready to support you in:

1. Prioritising reducing the overall production and use of plastics in the EU in the European Green Deal, notably the new Circular Economy Action Plan, and in the Commission Work Programme.
2. Implementing, progressing, and addressing the weaknesses of the European Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy so that it speeds the transition away from the linear economy.
3. Defining what concrete steps you are going to take, and within what timeline, to reduce all microplastic emissions and phase-out hazardous chemicals in plastic products.

Tackling plastic pollution presents the EU with an unprecedented opportunity for innovation, toxic -free ecodesign, new business models and delivery systems which could stimulate local employment while protecting public health and the environment, and contributing to the EU's circular economy and decarbonisation agendas.

We would very much appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to explain in greater detail the extent of this opportunity, and how we can support you in realising it.

Yours sincerely,



Center for International Environmental Law



ClientEarth



European Environmental Bureau



ECOS



Environmental Investigation Agency



Friends of the Earth Europe



Greenpeace European Unit



Seas At Risk



Surfrider Foundation Europe



Zero Waste Europe



Zero Waste Europe

1. Report by CIEL published in May 2019 available at: ciel.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Plastic-and-Climate-FINAL-2019.pdf
 2. Special barometer 468 published in November 2017 available at: data.europa.eu/euodp/en/data/dataset/S2156_88_1_468_ENG

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The Rethink Plastic alliance brings together ten leading European NGOs, representing thousands of active groups, supporters and citizens in every EU Member State. We are part of the global #breakfreefromplastic movement, which consists of over 1,400 NGOs and millions of citizens worldwide. Collectively, this growing global movement systematically addresses the environmental, economic and social impacts of plastic pollution while promoting solutions.

