



**4th meeting of the Ad hoc open-ended expert group on marine litter
and microplastics (AHEG4)**

(9-13 November 2020)

*General statement on behalf of
the European Union and its Member States*

The EU and its Member State continue to stress that plastic pollution is a transboundary problem that can only be tackled at global level by addressing all stages of plastics life-cycle, while building on existing efforts.

Having ruled out the status quo as option already at the first AHEG meeting - and with a view to the aggravating pressure in the coming decades by increasing plastic production and its mismanagement - we consider the urgent establishment of a new global agreement as the only efficient, effective and long-term response to this crisis.

The agreement should aim to close gaps that the existing instruments do not address, especially at the upstream part of the plastic life-cycle, and help to streamline and coordinate efforts by all stakeholders involved by providing an overarching framework to achieve the overall goal that is the elimination and prevention of plastic waste and marine litter.

A decisive next step has to be taken at UNEA5 for achieving this ambition.

At the same time we also acknowledge that any such global agreement cannot be put into place immediately which is what makes existing efforts at national, regional and international level all the more important for dealing with the parts of the problem of plastic pollution they can address in the immediate term. These actions are complementary and will continue to be complementary under the new global agreement that we are proposing for the sustained, long-term action.

Central elements of such global agreement, voluntary and/or legal binding in nature, should build on existing work and knowledge and could include to:

- Define a common vision and comprehensive and measurable goals as well as frame and strengthen existing instruments and provide efficient coordination mechanisms;
- Cover all stages of plastics life-cycle while focusing on existing gaps the upstream part: Sustainable production (e.g. quality specifications on materials and additives used and product design in terms of durability, repairability and recyclability, labelling and certification) Extended producer responsibility,. phase out avoidable plastic products, harmful compounds and additives and intentionally added microplastics;
- Foster national action plans, including monitoring plastic litter and microplastics and their impacts at rivers, sea and coasts, that would enable countries to adjust their measures to the nation-specific context;
- Promote development of best available technologies and environmental practices for regional and international measures on source prevention, waste and wastewater, including stormwater, management and pollution mitigation;
- Harmonise monitoring and reporting and establish of dedicated scientific body to periodically assess progress and guarantee science-based action;
- Support implementation efforts by financial resources and support knowledge exchange and capacity building

The EU and its Member States stress that the global agreement on plastics being put forward as a response option is needed to address the plastic pollution problem, with all the elements above included in that regard, and its effectiveness clearly recognised.