



## **KIMO RESOLUTION 3/11\***

**Presented by KIMO Sweden/Secretariat**

### **Identifying and Improving Legislation to Reduce Marine Litter**

Marine litter is now present in every ocean and poses numerous threats to the marine environment. Marine litter is defined as “any persistent, manufactured or processed solid material discarded, disposed of or abandoned in the marine and coastal environment. Marine litter consists of items that have been made or used by people and deliberately discarded into the sea or rivers or on beaches; brought indirectly to the sea with rivers, sewage, storm water or winds; accidentally lost, including material lost at sea in bad weather (fishing gear, cargo); or deliberately left by people on beaches and shores.”

Despite many programmes and initiatives and legislation to reduce marine litter it remains one of the most significant environmental problems yet to be addressed and affects the marine environment on a worldwide scale. Around 20,000 tonnes is dumped into the North Sea alone every year. Of that, 70% sinks to the sea bottom, 15% floats on the surface and 15% washes up on beaches<sup>1</sup>.

Plastic, the predominate type of marine litter, can cause entanglement or be ingested by marine mammals and birds killing 100,000 and 1,000,000 respectively world wide each year. Studies as part of the Save the North Sea project showed that 96% of Fulmars in the North Sea had plastics in their stomachs and a recent study by Plymouth University has highlighted the abundance of microscopic plastic fragments in the marine environment.

Municipalities throughout the Northeast Atlantic region also continue to face high costs associated with the removal of beach litter, which have increased by 37%, in some cases, over the past 10 years<sup>2</sup>. For most municipalities, the

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1 OSPAR Summary Record IMPACT 95/14/1-E WORKING GROUP ON IMPACTS ON THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT (IMPACT) STOCKHOLM: 10-13 OCTOBER 1995

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<http://www.kimointernational.org/Portals/0/Files/Marine%20Litter/Economic%20Impacts%20of%20Marine%20Litter%20Low%20Res.pdf>

potential economic impact of marine litter on tourism provides the principal motivation for removing beach litter. Given the considerable pressure to reduce expenditure, municipalities are finding it increasingly difficult to balance limited budgets with increasing demand for service provision. It is also clear that in this case the polluter does not pay, as municipalities must find the resources and funds to deal with litter caused by other parties. Similarly, it is important to acknowledge that although the repeated beach clean-up efforts reduce the amount of litter on the shore in the short-term, they do not directly address the underlying problem.

Currently legislation at the European level, such as the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) is only just starting to address marine litter. However, as highlighted at the Cutting Edge Sustainable Marine Litter Management for a Competitive Europe conference held in Brussels in November 29, 2010 (organised by local authorities in northern Bohuslänand, the Region Västra Götaland and the County Administrative Board of Västra Götaland) to actually reduce the marine litter problem a wide range of European and National legislation needs to be addressed. Waste from industry and consumers, packaging, waste treatment, reception facilities etc. is still entering the marine environment although these sectors all have specific EU legislation addressing them. Therefore;

**KIMO urges the European Commission and Member States to:**

**1) Review all existing waste legislation to identify why it is failing to prevent litter entering the marine environment, including, but not restricted to:**

- **Directive 2006/12/EC on Waste**
- **Directive 2000/59/EC on Port Reception Facilities for Ship-Generated Waste and Cargo Residues**
- **Directive 1999/31/EC on the Landfill of Waste**
- **Directive 94/62/EC on Packaging and Packaging waste**
- **Directive 91/271/EEC concerning Urban Waste-water Treatment**
- **Directive 96/61/EC concerning Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control**
- **Directive 2000/60/EC EU Water Framework Directive**

**2) Where deficiencies are identified amend existing legislation or introduce new legislation to address those deficiencies.**

**KIMO members:**

**Agree to submit this Resolution to all National Governments, the European Commission and other relevant organisations.**

\*This Resolution was agreed unanimously by Delegates at the 21st KIMO International Annual General Meeting in Aberdeen, United Kingdom on October 9th, 2011 and became KIMO policy upon that date.