

Jointly organised by Japan and the European Commission

**G7 Plastics Workshop
in the context of 2030 Agenda implementation
and towards G7 collaborative activities**

Brussels, 22-23 March 2018

Rationale

At the G7 summit in Ise-Shima in 2017, heads of state and government expressed their determination to take ambitious domestic action in order to contribute substantially to the global transition to sustainable economies. When designing voluntary collaborative activities, G7 environment ministers recognized the benefits of focusing on standout activities that could catalyse other countries' actions on the SDGs. They therefore encourage the continuation of ongoing discussions and collaborations between working-level officials on such specific collaborative activities.

In this framework the workshop hosted by the Ministry of the Environment of Japan and the Environment Directorate-General of the European Commission will discuss successful and joint approaches to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), notably concerning plastic management.

Context

Plastic is an important and ubiquitous material in our economy and daily lives. It has multiple functions that help us tackle a number of the challenges facing our society. However, the way plastics are currently produced, used and discarded harms the environment and fails to capture the economic benefits of a more resource-efficient and circular approach. Rethinking and improving the functioning of such a complex value chain requires efforts and greater cooperation by all its key players.

Better plastic management across the world can make a contribution to the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by developing sustainable consumption and production practices, improving waste prevention and recycling, preventing marine litter and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. A number of Sustainable Development Goals, notably 6, 8, 9, 12, 13 and 14, are thus particularly relevant.

The United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) has consistently highlighted marine litter, including micro-plastics, amongst the issues of global importance, and has adopted resolutions in its second (UNEA-2, May 2016) and third (UNEA-3, December 2017) sessions. UNEA-3 has also heard the results of an assessment by

UNEP of the effectiveness of relevant international, regional and subregional governance strategies and approaches for combating marine litter¹.

The circular economy² is gaining increasing currency as a strategy to achieve resource efficiency. In contrast to the take-use-dispose paradigm in a traditional linear economy, in a circular economy, resources are kept in use for as long as possible, extracting their maximum value. This is akin to the 3Rs approach of reduce, reuse and recycle material and waste, to curb unsustainable consumption of natural resources and minimise associated life cycle environmental impacts (Kobe 3R Action Plan)³. Plastic is a case in point of a sector that would profit from more circularity.

The *Toyama Framework on Material Cycles*⁴, adopted by the G7 Environment Ministers' Meeting in July 2016 in Toyama (Japan), underlines the importance of reducing the consumption of natural resources and promoting recycled materials so as to remain within the boundaries of the planet and achieving a sustainable low-carbon society.

The *Five-Year Bologna Roadmap*⁵ on resource efficiency, adopted by the G7 Environment Ministers' Meeting in June 2017 in Bologna (Italy), contains the following: 'Assess the economic benefits and opportunities for improved product design and address barriers to recycling and reuse of plastic, in view of reducing the use of primary resources, the negative environmental and economic impacts over its life-cycle and avoid plastics leakage into the environment, in particular the seas and oceans (in coordination with relevant G7 work)'

The European Commission adopted a Plastics Strategy⁶ in mid-January 2018.

Objective

The Ministry of the Environment of Japan and the Environment Directorate-General of the European Commission organise this Plastics Workshop in the context of 2030 Agenda implementation and towards G7 collaborative activities This workshop also contributes to the G7 Alliance on Resource Efficiency and the Five-Year Bologna Roadmap.

The objective is to take forward the G7 Bologna Roadmap plastics aspects and deliver the strategic direction of the Kobe 3R Action Plan and the Toyama Framework on Material Cycles in relation to the resource efficiency of plastics, including the realisation of related climate change benefits. This will also contribute to achieving the aims of the G7 Action Plan to Combat Marine Litter.

¹ [UNEP \(2017\). Combating marine plastic litter and micro-plastics: An assessment of the effectiveness of relevant international, regional and subregional governance strategies and approaches \(EA.3/INF/5\).](#)

² http://ec.europa.eu/environment/circular-economy/index_en.htm.

³ <https://www.env.go.jp/en/focus/attach/080610-a5.pdf>.

⁴ <http://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000159928.pdf> (pp. 15-22).

⁵ http://www.g7italy.it/sites/default/files/documents/Comunicu%C3%A9%20G7%20Environment%20-%20Bologna_0.pdf (pp. 13-15).

⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/plastic_waste.htm.

The workshop is provided as a forum for discussion among experts, including beyond the G7, to deliver recommendations for further consideration by relevant stakeholders.

Themes

Themes that will be discussed during the G7 Plastics Workshop include promoting clean plastic value chains; collection and recycling systems for plastic waste streams; promotion and upgrade of recycled plastic materials; addressing single use plastics and microplastics; and reducing leakage of plastic waste from all sources to water-courses and oceans.

The contribution that better plastic production and consumption can make to addressing climate change and best practice in preventing plastic marine litter will be cross-cutting themes.

Logistics

The G7 Plastics Workshop takes place on Thursday 22 and Friday 23 March 2018 at the Martin's EU Hotel, Martin's Brussels EU Hotel, Boulevard Charlemagne 80, 1000 Brussels, Belgium.

While participation is free of charge, the organisers regret that they will not be able to cover travel or lodging expenses of participants.

For information about accommodation in Brussels, please refer to the web site of the Brussels' Tourist Office under <https://visit.brussels/en>.