

May 2023

Open Letter Mr Frans Timmermans, Executive Vice - President, European Commission.

Stop plasticene, protect human health.

Dear Mr Frans Timmermans,

The undersigned Members of the European Parliament are deeply concerned about the impact of microplastics on human and animal health and the limited action undertaken by the European Union (EU) in this area. A wealth of scientific studies has demonstrated that citizens inhale, ingest and absorb microplastics in their daily life¹.

Human exposure to microplastics can adversely affect the metabolism and induce severe illness as well as compromise adequate foetus developments². The distribution and abundance of microplastics is so wide that the historical time we live in has been defined as 'Plasticene'³. Microplastic particles, with hazard potential, have been detected in the environment, marine water, freshwater, agroecosystems, atmosphere, food, drinking-water, ecosystems, animals, plants, feedstocks, and other locations. This means that around 450 million citizens are being exposed to harmful microplastics on a daily basis.

The EU has made some progress on this issue. Steps forward have been achieved with prohibiting intentional microplastics in cosmetics, although allowing too much time for the phase out of a few products, as well as the use of certain single-use products. The introduction of precautionary measures to prohibit and minimize both the intentional and unintentional release of microplastics is the only effective solution to secure public health.

Crucially, the recent EU Global Health Strategy⁴, whose objective is to deliver better health and well-being of people across their life course, does not mention the word 'microplastic' once, and there is no specific roadmap set for the phase out of unintentional microplastics.

We therefore call on the European Commission to deliver in this area and propose tangible solutions which would put an end to 'Plasticene' and protect the health of EU citizens. The Commission should take a firm stand and show real leadership by prohibiting and minimizing the intentional and unintentional release of microplastics while promoting advanced technological developments supporting this change.

Signed by:

- Sirpa Pietikäinen (EPP)
- Sara Cerdas (S&D)
- Martin Hojsik (Renew)
- Malte Gallée (Greens)
- Frédérique Ries (Renew)
- Anja Hazekamp (Left)
- Margrete Auken (Greens)
- Martin Buschmann (NI)
- Michèle Rivasi (Greens)
- Henna Virkkunen (EPP)
- Aurore Lalucq (S&D)
- Karen Melchior (Renew)
- Jakop Dalunde (Greens)
- Pär Holmgren (Greens)
- Alice Bah Kuhnke (Greens)
- Marie Toussaint (Greens)
- Maria Arena (S&D)
- Tilly Metz (Greens)

- Jutta Paulus (Greens)
- Maria Angela Danzi (NI)
- Tiziana Beghin (NI)
- Fabio Massimo Castaldo (NI)
- Laura Ferrara (NI)
- Mario Furore (NI)
- Sabrina Pignedoli (NI)

The Open Letter is promoted with the support of the not-for-profit organization the [Plastic Soup Foundation](#).

¹ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0160412022001258>

² <https://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/doi/10.1289/EHP10873>

³ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0025326X19308707>

⁴ https://health.ec.europa.eu/publications/eu-global-health-strategy-better-health-all-changing-world_en

The Letter will be published on relevant media once the collection of signatures is completed.