



To: President of the European Parliament, Mr Tajani

11 April 2018

Re: Banning single use plastics from the European Parliament

Dear President Tajani,

A year ago, the organisations that today make up the Rethink Plastic Alliance sent a letter to you - as well as to the Presidents of the European Commission and of the Council - requesting that the European Institutions lead by example and ban single use plastics from their meetings, events and buildings. While the European Commission and the Council have responded to our request and started to put measures in place, we notice that the European Parliament has not taken measures to end the use of single use plastics in its premises.

At the end of February this year, the Vice-President of the Commission, Mr Katainen challenged the European Parliament to a friendly competition to see which European Institution will be the most circular and the first to break free from single use plastic water bottles¹. The chance is now yours to take the lead, to commit to a circular economy and thus to set the example for parliaments all over Europe.

We are aware that the European Parliament, through its commitment to implement an environmental management system in line with EMAS is taking some measures to reduce plastic waste generation. However, the Parliament still extensively uses single use plastics, judging from the large amount of plastic water bottles, single use plastic cutlery and straws that we see in its facilities. Meetings in the European Parliament are still full of single use plastic water bottles that have no place in a circular economy. This is all the more disappointing as the European Parliament has an exemplary role to play in implementing the circular economy and sustainable procurement practices.

¹ Mr Jyrki Katainen, Vice-President of the European Commission and Commissioner for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, in a presentation during the European Parliament ENVI Committee meeting 20 February 2018.

Single use plastics are consistently in the top 15 items found on European beaches during marine litter monitoring. They are a potential source and carrier of harmful chemicals. The need for an urgent change has been recognised by EU Member States, Institutions and organisations of which many are developing own measures to tackle marine litter and reduce single use plastics. In January 2018, the European Commission presented a European Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy, in which it was specified that additional measures at EU levels will be developed to reduce the unnecessary generation of plastic waste, especially waste from single use items. The Commission has further communicated that a proposal for legislation on single use plastics will be presented later in 2018².

Taking its own policies at heart, the Commission has at the same time committed to reducing its own use of plastic. It has started to phase out all single use plastic cups in water fountains and vending machines in its facilities and is working on reducing the use of other single use plastics in its buildings and at events as part of a staff awareness-raising campaign³. We now look forward with anticipation to the Parliament's response to Mr Katainen's suggestion for a friendly competition to see which European Institution will be the first to break free from single use plastic bottles.

So our question to you is: will you take up Mr Katainen's challenge and champion a single use plastic free world by ending the use of single use plastic bottles in the facilities of the European Parliament?

We hope you will. We are rooting for the European Parliament to win this challenge, and thus to set the example for parliaments all over Europe.

Sincerely,



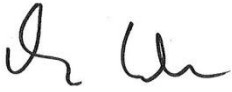
Dr Monica Verbeek
Executive Director of Seas At Risk



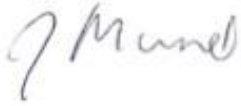
Joan Marc Simon
Executive Director of Zero Waste Europe

² See European Commission, Press release, Strasbourg, 16 January 2018; http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-18-5_en.htm

³ Mr Karmenu Vella, Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries in a speech given in the European Parliament, 8 November 2017; https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2014-2019/vella/announcements/marine-plastic-need-european-action-wednesday-8th-november-2017_en



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