

# Press Release

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## Microplastics in Europe's lakes: tackling a rising concern

*In three years, the average concentration of microplastics per km<sup>2</sup> has increased in the waters of Lake Garda, Trasimeno and Bracciano. The LIFE Blue Lakes project aims to reduce and prevent the presence of microplastics in the Italian and German lakes through a series of actions involving institutions, local authorities, companies and citizens. Funded by the European Commission's LIFE Programme and co-financed by PlasticsEurope, the four-year LIFE Blue Lakes brings together both local and international partners to deliver on this ambitious project, coordinated by [Legambiente](#), an Italian environmental association.*

Microplastics are increasingly entering the Italian lakes impacting water quality, biodiversity and potentially human health. Results of data tracking their presence in the waters of Lake Garda, Trasimeno and Bracciano are indicating an alarming increase in the average concentration of plastic microparticles per km<sup>2</sup>. Despite their different morphological and ecosystem characteristics, particles found in these three lakes went from 135,188 in 2017 to 549,020 in 2019 per km<sup>2</sup> - a combined increase of more than 400% in just three years.

Virginia Janssens, Managing Director of PlasticsEurope, said: *"Plastic waste is unacceptable in any environment. Our participation in the Blue Lakes project reflects our commitment to finding solutions to some of our most pressing environmental issues, in particular marine litter. We know that tackling the problem at source is crucial and to be truly effective requires multi-stakeholder collaboration at local, European and International level. PlasticsEurope is proud to be a key supporter of this project alongside players from across the value chain, environmental organisations, civil society and policymakers. It is with an open and ongoing collaborative approach to joint initiatives and programmes such as this, that we can drive the change urgently needed."*

LIFE Blue Lakes will focus its actions on three Italian and two German lakes to design and test standard protocols on pilot areas, with the aim of developing and implementing good practices extended to other European lake communities.

PlasticsEurope is actively involved in the ongoing scientific assessment of the potential impact of microplastics on human health and environment. Collaborating with key partners in identifying the science gaps, and contributing to the development of standard methodologies, protocols and analytical methods\*.

For more details on the European Commission's LIFE Blue Lakes project, go [here](#).

\* See [here](#) an article commissioned by ECETOC's Microplastics Scientific Platform, 'Towards improved understanding of the ingestion and trophic transfer of microplastic particles – Critical review and implications for future research'

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**Editors' note**

PlasticsEurope is one of the leading European trade associations with centres in Brussels, Frankfurt, London, Madrid, Milan and Paris. We are networking with European and national plastics associations and have more than 100 member companies, producing over 90% of all polymers across the EU27 member states plus Norway, Switzerland, Turkey and UK.

The European plastics industry makes a significant contribution to the welfare in Europe by enabling innovation, creating quality of life to citizens and facilitating resource efficiency and climate protection. Over 1.6 million people are working in close to 60,000 companies (mainly small and medium sized companies in the converting sector) to create a turnover of more than 360 bn EUR per year. The plastics industry includes polymer producers - represented by PlasticsEurope, converters - represented by EuPC and machine manufacturers - represented by EUROMAP.

For further info see the web links: [www.plasticseurope.org](http://www.plasticseurope.org), [www.plasticsconverters.eu](http://www.plasticsconverters.eu), [www.euromap.org](http://www.euromap.org).