



Reducing our plastic footprint: experiences from the EU

25 April 2019 Smith College Museum of Art

Giuliana Torta, EU Delegation to the US, Washington DC



Solutions and innovations
How San Francisco is leading the way out of bottled water culture



Plastic Bags to Be Banned in New York; Second Statewide Ban, After California



Marine litter: a global challenge



Health concerns



Degradation of marine ecosystems (13 billion Euros a year)



Impact on fisheries and aquaculture (1-5% of total fleet revenue) and ports/shipping



Tourism and coastal communities (\approx 630 million euros)





06.2018

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

PLANET OR PLASTIC?

8 mill tons/yr in oceans
= 5 grocery bags of plastic every foot of coastline in the world.

18 billion pounds of plastic ends up in the ocean each year. And that's just the tip of the iceberg.

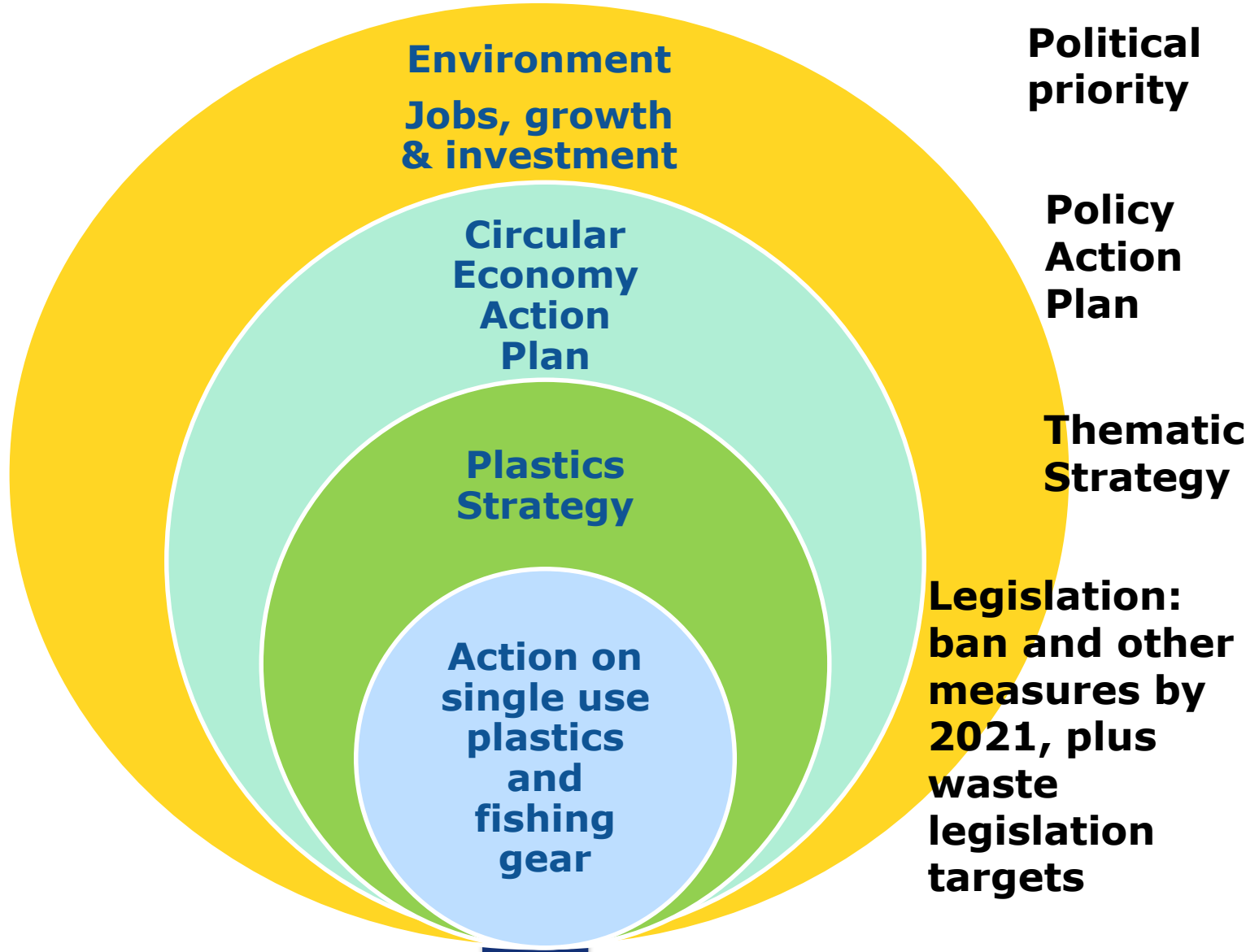
85% of beach litter is plastics

Exporting garbage



- **EU exported 3 mill ton plastics to China until 2018, US and other countries did the same**
- **6 main plastic polluters are in the Asian region, where we export our garbage: coincidence?**





Towards Circular plastics?



49 million tonnes of EU plastics demand in 2015



EU: 31,1% collected for recycling (2016). +79% in 10 years

US: 8% recycled but going down (6%)

A EUROPEAN STRATEGY FOR PLASTICS IN THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY



**Improve
the economics
and quality
of plastics
recycling**



**Curb plastic
waste and
littering**



**Drive
investments
and innovation
towards circular
solutions**



**Harness
global
action**



Policy Objectives



Stimulate design for circularity

**Better separate waste collection (waste
legislation/Extended Producer Responsibility)**

increase recycled content

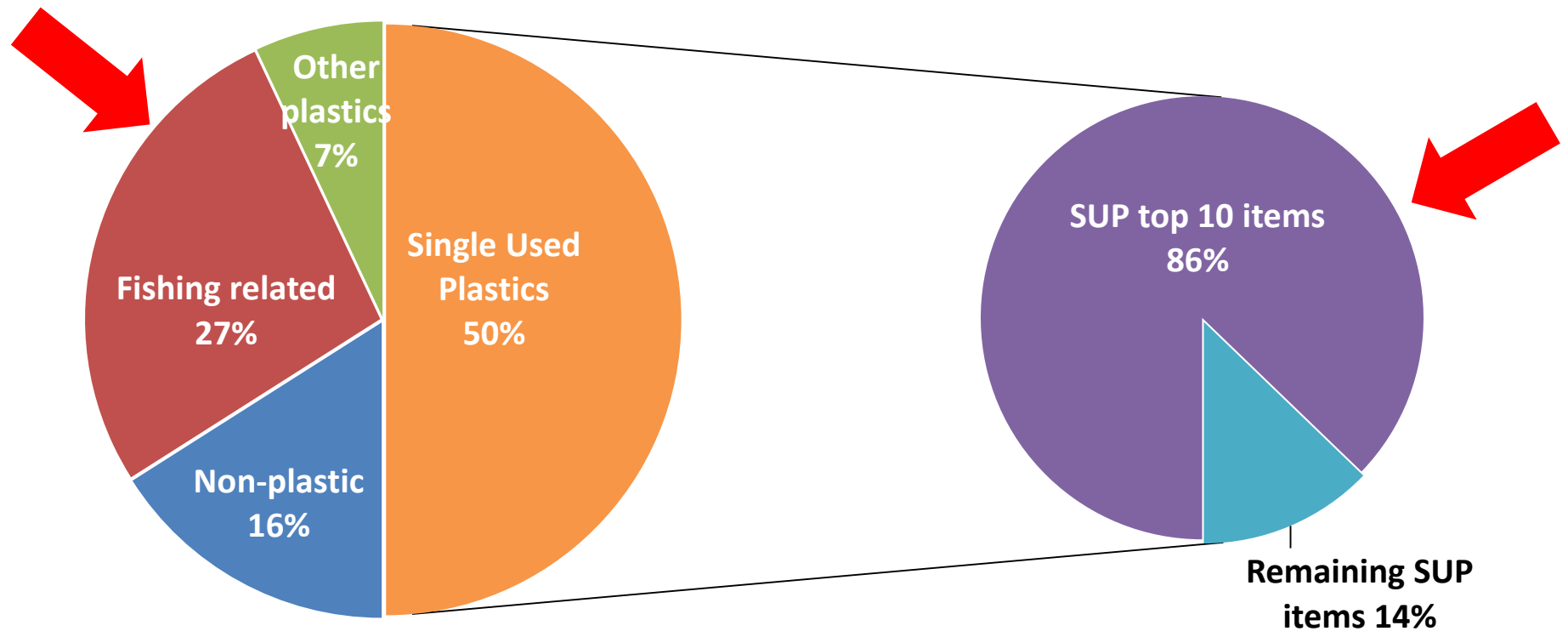
Quality standards for sorted/recycled plastics

➔ By 2030

- All plastics packaging reusable or recyclable
- Sorting & recycling capacity X 4 (vs. 2015)
- 55% packaging recycling target (waste package)



Most found marine litter items on European beaches



- 70% covered of all marine litter: top 10 SUP (43%) + fishing gear (27%)
- Source:
 - Joint Research Center - European Regional Seas Conventions
 - Marine Strategy Framework Directive



European
Commission

**Curb plastic
waste and
littering**

Action on single-use plastics and fishing gear



Different measures for **each item** taking into account:

- **consumer behaviour/needs**
- **opportunities for businesses**

10 most common plastic objects found on European beaches

Cigarette
butts

Balloons
and balloon
sticks



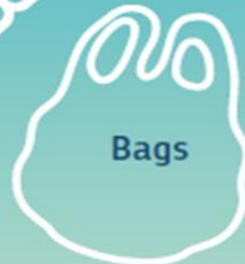
Food
containers



Cups & lids



Drink
bottles



Bags



Cutlery,
straws &
stirrers



Crisp
packets/
sweet
wrappers

Sanitary
applications



Cotton
buds

Single-use
plastic items
represent

50 %
of marine
litter

Ranking



Ranking	Item
1	Drinks bottles, caps and lids
2	Cigarette butts
3	Cotton buds sticks
4	Crisp packets / sweet wrappers
5	Sanitary applications
6	Plastic bags
7	Cutlery, straws and stirrers
8	Drinks cups and cup lids
9	Balloons and balloon sticks
10	Food containers including fast food packaging

Proportional approach

	Consumption reduction	Market restriction	Product design requirement	Marking requirements	Extended producer responsibility	Separate collection objective	Awareness raising measures
Food containers	X				X		X
Cups for beverages	X				X		X
Cotton bud sticks		X					
Cutlery, plates, stirrers, straws		X					
Sticks for balloons		X					
Balloons				X	X		X
Packets & wrappers					X		X
Beverage containers, their caps & lids			X		X		X
- Beverage bottles			X		X	X	X
Tobacco product filters					X		X
Sanitary items: - Wet wipes				X	X		X
- Sanitary towels				X			X
Plastic carrier bags					X		X
Fishing gear					X		X

Micro plastics: a bigger problem



- **EU**
- **Framework for biodegradable plastics**
- **Report on oxo-degradable plastics → REACH restriction (microplastics)**
- **Curb microplastics pollution:**
 - intentional added to products → REACH
 - unintentional release (tyres, textiles and plastics pellets)

USA:

- **2015 Microbead Act** on cosmetics, toothpaste
- Trash Free Waters programme: <https://www.epa.gov/trash-free-waters>
- Water is a priority for EPA Administrator A. Wheeler

Micro plastics: **Intentionally added** or unintentionally released



Cosmetics,
detergents,
paints,

- Towards general ban
- REACH



Tyres, Textiles

- Harmonization
- Labelling, minimum requirements



Plastic pellets

- Chain certification
- Permitting



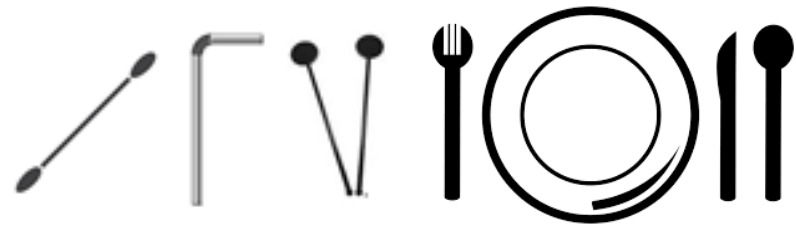
Others

- Research
- Urban waste water treatment

Market restriction

- **Restrictions** only target the plastic content, not the product itself
- Only products with readily alternatives (single & multi use):

- Cotton bud sticks
- Cutlery
- Plates
- Straws
- Beverage stirrers
- Sticks for balloons



- **Product design requirement** for the top littered item (single-use beverage containers): plastic caps and lids must remain attached during use



Consumption reduction

- **Significant reduction** of consumption of on-the-go products:

- Food containers
- Cups for beverages



- **Member States choose the appropriate measures**
 - Consumption reduction targets
 - Economic instruments
 - Increase the availability of alternatives e.g. re-usable

Labelling

- Balloons
- Other products that are inappropriately disposed of through the sewers: sanitary towels and tampons/applicators & wet wipes
- Implementing Act to define harmonised labelling requirements



Awareness raising and education campaigns by Member States for all products not subject to market bans



Separate collection



- **90% separate collection target by 2025** for plastic beverage bottles (inter alia by Deposit Refund Systems and targets for EPR)



CO₂ BENEFITS OF PLASTICS RECYCLING



- **Guidance on Extended Producer Responsibility fees**
- **Strategic Research Innovation Agenda for Plastics (2018)**
- **H2020 additional €100 million investments (up until 2020)**
- **Support the development of alternative feedstocks**
→ **lifecycle assessments** including biomass



- **Call for global action**
- **Support for multilateral initiatives on plastics**
- **Promote international industry standards development**
- **Development in cooperation funding**

EU Plastics Strategy: examples of international actions



- Projects to reduce plastic waste and marine litter in **East and South-East Asia**
- €9,2 million capacity building programme for **ACP/Regional Seas, including marine litter** (DEVCO, about to be launched)
- Adoption of **Ocean Charter** and **G7 Innovation Challenge**.
- **G20** Japan's Presidency in 2020
- **Ad Hoc Open Ended Working Group** on marine plastics litter and microplastics launched by UNEA3
- **Global Plastic Platform** launched at a side-event at UNGA 73 hosted by FVP Timmermans and UNEP's Executive Director Solheim





European Commission

4,542 views | Apr 18, 2019, 7:06 pm

Jason Momoa Shaves His Beard, For The Ocean's Sake

Dani Di Placido Senior Contributor ⓘ

Media

I write about film, television, pop culture, and other fun stuff.



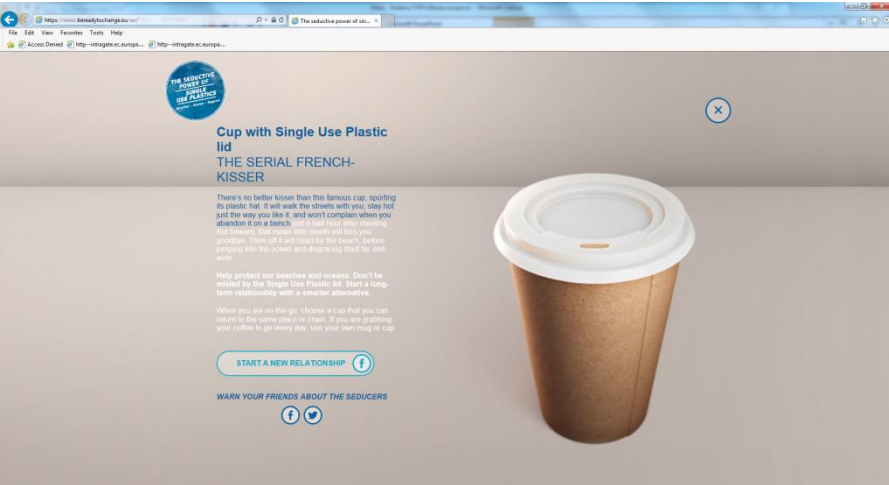
Jason Momoa arrives at the Oscars. (Photo by Jordan Strauss/Invision/AP)

What can we do?

3R! (reduce, reuse and recycle) + collect



www.bereadytochange.eu/en/



THE SEDUCTIVE POWER OF SINGLE USE PLASTICS

Cup with Single Use Plastic lid THE SERIAL FRENCH-KISSER

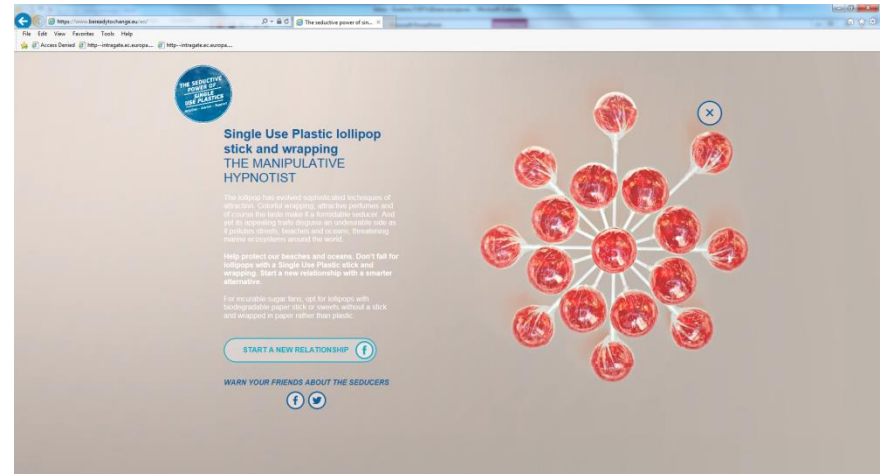
There's no better kisser than this famous cup, sporting its plastic lid. It will walk the streets with you, day in, day out just the way you like it, and won't complain when you abandon it on a bench. It's not from the planet, but it's from the trash can. It's made from plastic, and its mouth will kiss your garbage. That's why it will need to be broken. Before jumping into the ocean and disappearing fast far and wide.

Help protect our beaches and oceans. Don't be seduced by the Single Use Plastic. Get started a long-term relationship with a smarter alternative.

When you are on-the-go, choose a cup that you can return to the same place or trash. If you are grabbing your coffee to go every day, use your own mug or cup.

[START A NEW RELATIONSHIP](#)

[WARN YOUR FRIENDS ABOUT THE SEDUCERS](#)



THE SEDUCTIVE POWER OF SINGLE USE PLASTICS

Single Use Plastic lollipop stick and wrapping THE MANIPULATIVE HYPNOTIST

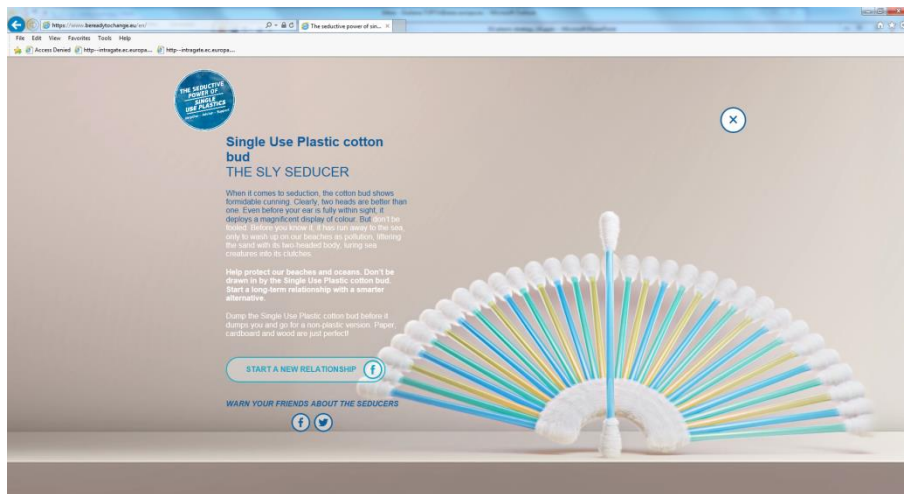
The lollipop has evolved sophisticated techniques of seduction. Colorful packaging, attractive packaging and of course the licks make it a formidable seducer. And with its experience with customers, it seduces not only as if you're thirsty, hungry and so on. Remember, because it's seductive, it's also addictive.

Help protect our beaches and oceans. Don't fall for lollipops with a Single Use Plastic stick and wrapping. Start a new relationship with a smarter alternative.

For reusable sugar fans, opt for lollipops with biodegradable paper sticks or sweets without a stick and wrapped in paper rather than plastic.

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THE SEDUCTIVE POWER OF SINGLE USE PLASTICS

Single Use Plastic cotton bud THE SLY SEDUCER

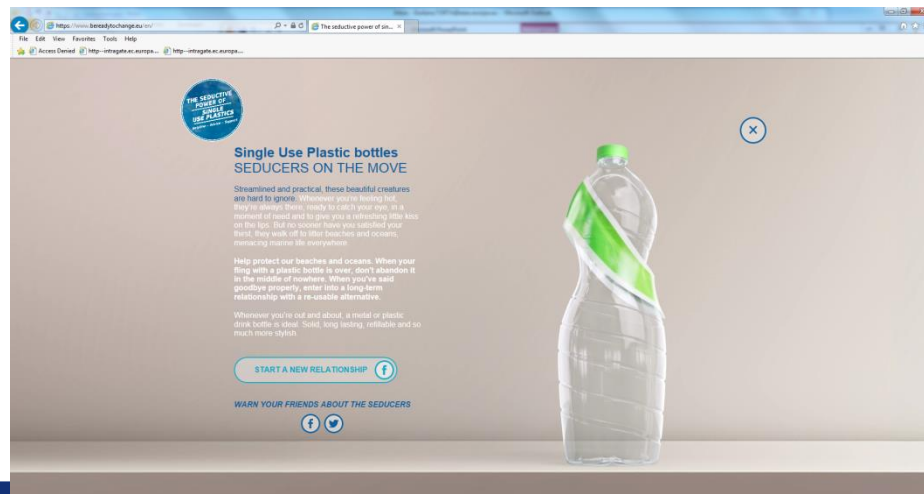
When it comes to seduction, the cotton bud shows formidable cunning. Clearly, two heads are better than one. Even before your ear is fully within sight, it displays a magnificent display of colors. But, it's not fooled. Before you know it, it has run away to the sea, only to wash up on our beaches and oceans, leaving the sand with its two-headed body, turning its creature into its clutch.

Help protect our beaches and oceans. Don't be drawn in by the Single Use Plastic cotton bud. Start a long-term relationship with a smarter alternative.

Dump the Single Use Plastic cotton bud before it dumps you and go for a non-plastic version. Paper, cardboard and wood are just perfect!

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THE SEDUCTIVE POWER OF SINGLE USE PLASTICS

Single Use Plastic bottles SEDCERS ON THE MOVE

Streamlined and practical, these beautiful creatures are hard to grow. Whenever you're heading out, they're always there, ready to catch your eye. In a moment of need and to give you a refreshing sip on the go. But no sooner have you satisfied your thirst, they wash off to our beaches and oceans, menacing marine life everywhere.

Help protect our beaches and oceans. When your fling with a plastic bottle is over, don't abandon it to the mercy of rivers. When you've said goodbye properly, enter into a long-term relationship with a re-usable alternative.

Whenever you're out and about, a metal or plastic drink bottle is great. Solid, long lasting, reliable and so much more stylish.

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What Lies Under - Ferdi Rizkiyanto - 2011



Learn more about the EU plastics strategy and circular economy

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