



Plastic: We will NOT Win While the Tap Stays Open

An appeal to Portugal for the Week of the Sea Without Plastic

Every second, more than 14 tons of plastic are produced worldwide.

Fourteen tons. In a single second.

While we clean beaches, collect waste and recycle, production keeps rising. If nothing changes significantly, **global plastic production could nearly triple by 2060.**

To grasp the scale of the problem: if we turned all the plastic produced in a year into one-metre cubes and lined them up, **that row of cubes would circle the Earth more than 14 times.**

We must keep cleaning, recycling and looking for solutions. But we also have to act at the source.

Because as long as the tap stays open, no matter how much we mop up, we will never win.

A pollution that has already entered our bodies

For a long time, plastic pollution was what we could see: a bottle on a beach, a bag in the sea, an animal swallowing it. But plastic doesn't disappear. It breaks down into microplastics and nanoplastics.

And today we know it also enters our own bodies.

Micro- and nanoplastics have been found in various human tissues and organs, including the brain. A study published in *Nature Medicine* compared brain tissue samples collected in 2016 and 2024: **the median concentration rose from approximately 3.3 to 4.9 milligrams per gram of tissue — an increase of nearly 50%.**

These findings do not mean that plastic alone is responsible for any particular disease. But they confirm a troubling fact: **micro- and nanoplastics are present in the human brain.**

Microplastics have also been found in **the human placenta**. This means that even before birth, plastic pollution can reach the biological environment that surrounds and nourishes a child.

We still don't know the full consequences of exposure over 50, 70 or 90 years. But we don't need every answer to start reducing the risks.

We have already waited too long in the past, as we did with asbestos or with climate change.

We don't know everything. But we know enough to act.

Knowing that plastic production could nearly triple by 2060, we should think not only of ourselves, but of our children and grandchildren.

WSWP: turning awareness into action

This is precisely the goal of WSWP – *Week of the Sea Without Plastic.*

From **2 to 9 November 2026**, we want to mobilise people simultaneously across Portugal, around the Mediterranean, and in the countries within the river basins that feed it.

Different countries, languages, cultures and religions. But the same environment, and a shared problem.

One week will not solve plastic pollution. But it can create a genuine turning point: informing thousands of people, mobilizing schools and young people, changing habits, and sparking new initiatives.

WSWP is an initiative of **End Plastic Soup**, supported by Rotary's global network: around **1.2 million members and 45,000 clubs, in more than 200 countries and territories.**

Rotary has already shown the strength of this kind of mobilisation. Since it took up the fight to eradicate polio in 1985, cases of the disease have fallen by more than 99.9% worldwide.

The lesson is simple: when thousands of people act together toward the same goal, it is possible to change the course of history.



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A week to act

WSWP is not meant to be just another conference. It aims to deliver concrete action:

- raising awareness of plastic pollution and its effects;
- bringing scientists and researchers into schools;
- educating children and mobilising young people;
- organising waste clean-ups;
- reducing unnecessary plastics;
- bringing together universities, local authorities, associations, businesses and citizens.

Because it is not enough to clean up what we have already polluted.

We must also prevent and reduce the problem at its source.

The Mediterranean unites peoples, cultures and continents. And Monaco has long been committed to its protection. In Davos, H.S.H. Prince Albert II of Monaco perfectly captured the spirit of this initiative:

«History will not ask whether we were aware, but whether we acted.»

Today, we are aware. We know enough. Now we have to decide what we do with that knowledge.

From **2 to 9 November 2026**, we want to turn knowledge into mobilisation, and mobilisation into action.

Cleaning up is indispensable.

Recycling is necessary.

Innovating is essential.

But above all, we must act.

We are counting on you. Your participation is not just a gesture of support for our cause. ***It is a gesture of love for your children and grandchildren.***

It is for them that I devote all my energy to this cause.
Now, the decision is yours.

Georges Lebeau

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End Plastic Soup Portugal - Director

WSWP – Semana do Mar sem Plástico Europa - Co-coordinator