



**TEAMING UP**

**AGAINST PLASTIC  
POLLUTION !**

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# WHAT IS THE

# INITIATIVE ABOUT?

Ocean plastic pollution has become a major challenge for marine life and ecosystem. To tackle this problem, a better understanding of the pathways of plastic litter is urgently needed. This is where the Plastic Pirates come in: The Plastic Pirates – Go Europe! initiative investigates plastic waste pollution in European rivers, oceans, and seas. Using a large-scale citizen science approach, young people gather research data that is being analysed by scientists and researchers.



# HOW DOES IT WORK?



Young people interested in science and the environment are given the opportunity to play a hands-on role in research. They decide which river, coast or sea to investigate for plastic pollution. They take the samples, measure, collect and enter the data gathered into a database. This way, they become an integral part of scientific research and gain knowledge on litter pollution of their local streams, rivers, and coastlines.

Plastic Pirates samplings take place in spring and autumn. Videos, booklets and teaching material explain how a sampling works in detail. Each step is an important building block for the scientific study and ensures that the data gathered is reliable and usable.





# WHAT ARE THE

# MAIN OBJECTIVES?



to gain and improve scientific knowledge and raise environmental awareness



to proactively engage and empower especially young European citizens to act



to increase the scientific and ocean literacy of the participants



to gather, analyse and share research data on the origins and pathways of plastic pollution from and in European rivers, oceans and seas



to help to develop systematic solutions for the prevention, reduction, and removal of marine and riverine pollution, particularly plastics



to test, replicate, and refine best-practice models for linking excellent science and citizen engagement





# PLASTIC PIRATES - GO EUROPE!

First developed in Germany in 2016, the Plastic Pirates initiative is currently under way in 12 European countries: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovenia, and Spain. Thus, Plastic Pirates samplings take place in rivers, oceans, and seas all across Europe in a harmonised and standardised manner.

The European Research Area (ERA) Policy Agenda identified Plastic Pirates as part of the [ERA action 14 “Bring Science closer to Citizens”](#). The initiative contributes to the key priority area: Taking up together the challenges posed by the twin green and digital transition, and increasing society’s participation in the ERA.

The EU Commission is funding the „Europeanisation of the Plastic Pirates citizen science initiative“ as part of the framework programme for research and innovation, [Horizon Europe](#), in the area of [the Mission “Restore our Oceans and Waters by 2030”](#). The Europeanisation particularly supports the Mission’s objective to prevent and eliminate pollution in European seas and waters as well as public mobilisation for the Mission’s objectives. The initiative also contributes to key European environmental policy objectives.

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The official Plastic Pirates website is available in 10 different European languages:

<https://www.plastic-pirates.eu/en>

