

PLASTIC PIRATES

The other day I have come across a Newsletter from »Plastic Pirates«. This is how primary schools are involved in dealing with plastic waste and help with activities through the "Plastic Pirates" project. Now young people from many countries in Europe are taking part and form the Plastic Pirates – because avoiding plastic waste and researching the causes and relationships are tasks that we in Europe can best tackle together.

We - DA SAŠA as one of the PLASTIX's partner and project "Plastic Pirates" have at least two things in common. We both address the river system as the first in a chain of downstream that is responsible for transporting plastic waste all the way to the oceans and highlight micro and macro plastic waste management.

I took time, read their story behind the project, and decided to share it with you.



THE PROJECT

Europe is taking a joint approach to this task – a task with global importance. Water makes up nearly two-thirds of the earth's surface, and seas and the ocean have an enormous impact on the stability of our climate. Due to their diversity, bodies of water around the globe are a unique habitat for flora and fauna.

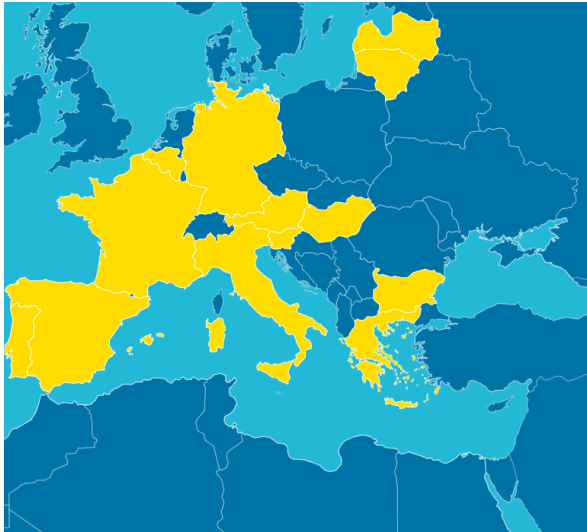
Unfortunately, it's not just ships, fish and plant residues that make their way to the sea via rivers. Different types of plastic waste as well – particles hardly visible to the human eye (microplastic) as well as yogurt pots or entire plastic bags in equal measure – ultimately find their way to the ocean.

In 2020, 'capturing' this waste on the riverbanks and near bodies of water becomes the Europe-wide task of the Plastic Pirates. By collecting plastic waste and uploading data on the amount of waste found, participants – together with their school class or extracurricular youth group – can help conduct research on the pollution of bodies of water. Uniform experimental guidelines and working steps for all teams which participate ensure that, throughout Europe, the data collected is comparable and will become visible step by step on an online map.

On the one hand, the joint campaign of the ministries of education, science, and research of the three countries is intended to raise awareness throughout Europe for the importance of rivers as common lifelines, as well as for protecting our natural resources. On the other hand, the campaign aims to emphasize the importance of international research collaboration.

Slovenian crew:

- *Katja Sreš* from Ecologists Without Borders (public relations),
- *Mateja Grego* from National Institute of Biology (coordinating the action in Slovenia and oversees microplastic analysis),
- *Štefan Trdan* from Institute for Water of the Rep. of Slovenia (analyzing macrolitter of Slovenian riverbanks).



Currently, 13 European countries are actively taking part in Plastic Pirates' campaigns: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovenia, and Spain.

The Plastic Pirates family is expanding its crew in the Mediterranean! They were thrilled to announce that in spring 2024, France will be joining the Plastic Pirates

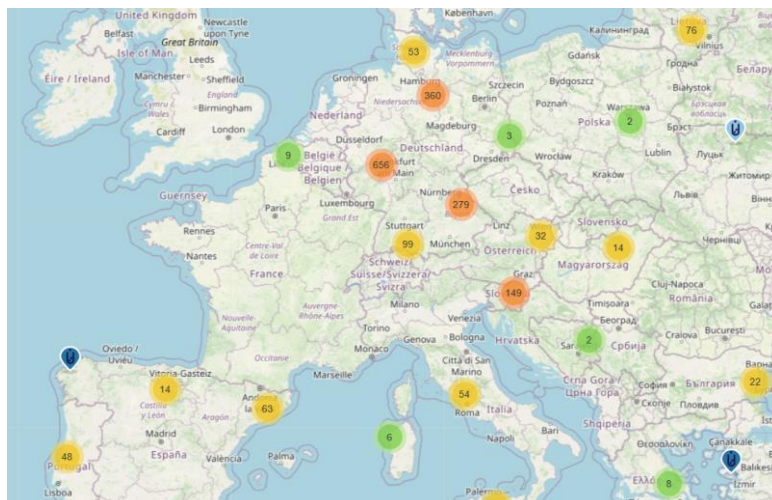
WHY PARTICIPATE?

We are all tasked with protecting the ocean and all bodies of water – regardless of whether we live on the coast or further inland. Even plastic that is thrown away on inland riverbanks can eventually make its way into the sea. And the harm that this causes to animals and their food sources is a cross-border problem. Starting as “The Plastic Pirates – This is where the sea starts!” the collection campaigns took place for the first time in Germany in 2016 as part of the Science Year 2016*17 – Seas and Oceans. Now young people from many countries in Europe are taking part and form the Plastic Pirates – because avoiding plastic waste and researching the causes and relationships are tasks that we in Europe can best tackle together. We all – as citizens of Europe – are called upon to use our curiosity and our dedication to support scientists and researchers.

INTERACTIVE MAP

During the project they have developed interactive map that allows browsing and filter the groups that have participated throughout the years in several countries.

The information presented in the groups' pages have not yet been verified by the scientific team.



You can read more about »Plastic pirates« here on their web site [Plastic Pirates](#) 😊.