

## **Aquatic litter monitoring in Europe: approach and results**

### **Topic: “Plastics and Marine Litter”**

*Silvère André, Marine Paul, Kevin Tallec and Camille Lacroix*

Aquatic litter pollution represents a global threat due to its adverse effects on ecosystems and associated services, on human health and welfare, affecting the economy and representing an obstacle to sustainable development. Monitoring aquatic litter thus appears critical for understanding its sources, distribution, and impacts, which in turn informs policy and mitigation strategies. International cooperation plays an important role to address aquatic litter.

Regional seas conventions such as OSPAR in the North East Atlantic or the Barcelona Convention in the Mediterranean Sea, provide bases for cooperation among nations through the development of coordinated environmental monitoring programmes, aiming to deliver comparable data from across the maritime areas, and setting out regional action plans to prevent inputs of and reduce marine litter. Furthermore, in Europe, the implementation of the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) puts forward a constitutive framework for internationally harmonised monitoring at Member State level.

For instance, the monitoring of aquatic litter and its impacts in the different compartments of the marine environment (beach, floating and seafloor macro and micro litter, litter ingested by biota and entanglement with litter) is organised in France following the guidelines provided in the context of the EU MSFD. In that global context, Cedre is especially coordinating national monitoring networks for litter on the coastline and on riverbanks, involving local trained operators.

Therefore, the results obtained on the scale of the French coastline are thus harmonised and comparable with those obtained from the monitoring programmes of the EU Member States. This enables work to be undertaken on a European regional scale, in particular for the definition of threshold values adopted at EU scale or the elaboration of European-wide reduction measure (e.g. EU directives).

This talk will present the global approach used to monitor aquatic litter in Europe through the programmes coordinated by Cedre in France, including the identification of monitoring sites corresponding to selection criteria set out in the guidelines, the selection and training of the local operators to ensure the quality of monitoring data, and use of the beach litter monitoring results.

These results are incorporated into annual and multiannual assessments of aquatic litter pollution that will also be presented in this talk, either on a national scale as part of the EU MSFD or on a regional scale such as the OSPAR Quality Status Report. In addition to providing data on the quality status of the environment, these assessments are also used to assess the effectiveness of the reduction measures arising from operational directives or action plans.