

OUR VIEW

Plastic pollution is a global issue that should be solved with global regulation i.e. to be agreed by the UN's Maritime Organisation, IMO.

Danish Shipping supports the IMO Action Plan to Address Marine Plastic Litter from Ships.

Danish Shipping supports the development of mandatory regulation in the IMO to prevent plastic pellets in the ocean.

Danish Shipping supports the EU directive on Port Reception Facilities as a stepping stone to a global approach strengthening adequate port reception facilities.



Plastic in the ocean

Since the ocean is a critical resource and a significant part of our natural environment it is our duty to protect it. In our opinion, responsible shipping companies do not dispose plastic into the ocean, and we are currently pushing for binding regulation on transport of plastic pellets.

Having strong maritime roots as a seafaring nation, the ocean is a corner stone of Danish identity and close to the heart of the thousands of seafarers that travel the oceans every day. For the past 30 years, the shipping industry has been guided by international regulation that prohibits the discarding of any kind of plastic anywhere at sea.

Even though there are multiple regulations for preventing plastic litter pollution, unfortunately it still occurs. Therefore, the IMO made the Action Plan to Address Marine Plastic Litter from Ships, whose purpose is to reduce plastic litter, improve port reception and facilities, and create better awareness and understanding of the issues with plastic litter pollution into the sea.

This action plan was adopted in 2021 and will be reviewed in 2025 as all the actions should be in progress or already completed.

The IMO is also working on regulations to better secure and store plastic pellets in order to prevent pollution from plastic pellets, most recently with the IMO regulatory guidelines from April 2024. In the recommendations from the IMO, focus is

on three elements: good quality packing of pellets, clear identification on containers with pellets, and ensuring that containers are properly stowed and secured – preferably under deck. The IMO is currently working on a draft guideline on cleaning up plastic pellets.

Danish Shipping's position on the issue is clear; plastic does not belong in the ocean. It poses a serious threat to the ocean's ecosystems and claims the life of thousands of marine animals and about one million seabirds every year. Plastic in the ocean breaks down into microplastics due to exposure to sunlight, oxygen, and the force of waves. These tiny plastic particles can absorb chemicals from the ocean and be mistaken for food by marine animals, leading to their death. Additionally, marine animals can become entangled in plastic and ultimately starve.

As a founding partner of the Ocean Plastic Forum, Danish Shipping naturally supports initiatives tackling ocean plastic, such as avoiding further plastic pollution or gathering the plastic already polluting the ocean.

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Through these initiatives, Danish Shipping agrees to support a common norm that plastic in the ocean is unacceptable, spread ideas on how to tackle further pollution and handle the tonnes of plastic that are already scattered on the beaches, at the ocean surface, and spread widely on the sea floor.

Furthermore, several members of Danish Shipping engage in a range of activities that address ocean plastic pollution.

There are good options for plastic recycling and promoting joint industry initiatives on circular economy, but it requires e.g. targeted sorting and handling at the port recipient facilities. Therefore, these facilities must be strengthened globally, so that they meet demands adequately and the waste sorting taking place on board is not in vain.

FACTS

- **According to the OECD Global Plastic Outlook, almost 8 million tonnes of plastic end up in the ocean, rivers, and on coasts each year.**
 - **IMO is the global standard-setting regulator for the safety, security and environmental performance of international shipping. The MARPOL convention has prohibited the disposal of all plastic anywhere at sea since 1988.**
 - **The provisions in Annex V of the MARPOL Convention prohibit any commercial vessel from disposing of waste at sea.**
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