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Keywords: global ocean observing system, essential ocean variables, observing strategy, in, situ

Plastic pollution from a Civic Ecology perspective: A Lanzarote case study

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This study improves the understanding of the current situation of plastic pollution in Lanzarote through (i) diagnosing the local situation; (ii) analyzing stakeholder dynamics; and (iii) engaging the dialectics between local, regional and global dimensions of the issue. Rooted in civic ecology, this ethnographic case study draws on nine years of participant observation and observant participation, along with interviews conducted with 31 participants in 2018, to inform the diagnosis of the local situation and stakeholder dynamics, through a modified grounded theory analysis of the corpora. This analysis also provides the bedrock for exploring the dialectics at play across and between geographic, temporal, and societal scales related to plastic pollution in Lanzarote. From this study, we offer an overview of the evolution of concern related to plastic pollution in Lanzarote, and propose a baseline for collaborative efforts to intervene in the issue going forward locally in Lanzarote and regionally in the North Atlantic system.

Keywords: Civic Ecology, Marine litter, Plastic Pollution, Action research, Microplastics

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From the Plastics Strategy to microplastics: the policy framework

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Plastics are used everywhere and too often they are used only once and then thrown away. Consequences of this unsustainable use are pollution of the environment and loss of a resource valuable for the economy. To address these concerns, the European Commission proposed, in the framework of the Circular Economy Action Plan, a Strategy for Plastics. The strategy focuses on four main areas:

Improving re-use and recycling

Curbing plastic waste and litter

Driving investment and innovation towards circular solutions

Harnessing global action.

To achieve its ambitious objectives, the Plastics Strategy relies on many different pieces of legislation: the Waste legislation, the proposal on Single Use Plastics, the proposal on Port Reception Facilities, the revision of the Drinking Water Directive, the evaluation of the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and the restriction of microplastics intentionally added in products and oxo-plastics under the chemicals legislation (REACH). A wide range of regulatory tools are proposed, from restrictive measures (where needed) to development of standards to measure emissions, labelling, Extended Producer Responsibility Schemes. The restriction processes that started under REACH aim to harmonise the various national initiatives launched to address some sources of microplastics. By using all available scientific data, the REACH restriction intends to demonstrate that microplastics presence in the environment causes an unacceptable risk. In this way, it will provide an impulse to other actions, including those to control microplastics unintentionally generated from the use of various products (for example, tyres and clothing) or released in the environment (plastic pellets).

Keywords: Plastic, microplastics, Plastics Strategy, REACH

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REACH Restriction on intentional uses of microplastics

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REACH (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals) is a regulation of the European Union (EU), adopted to improve the protection of human health and the environment from the risks of chemicals. REACH applies to industrial, professional and consumer uses of substances as well as uses of substances in articles (e.g. clothes and electrical appliances). REACH is implemented by the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA), in Helsinki. REACH places the burden of proof on companies who must manage the risks of the substances they manufacture and market in the EU. If the risks cannot be managed then the uses of chemical substances can be