

### Introduction

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**Welcome to the third edition of the Green Section of the Amicale's Eco-Newsletter!**

Following the first two editions, the popularity and readership continue to grow- therefore, as well as many new and interesting articles, we have upgraded the format of the newsletter! The feature article this month is on the highly relevant and important issue of plastic. We hope you enjoy!

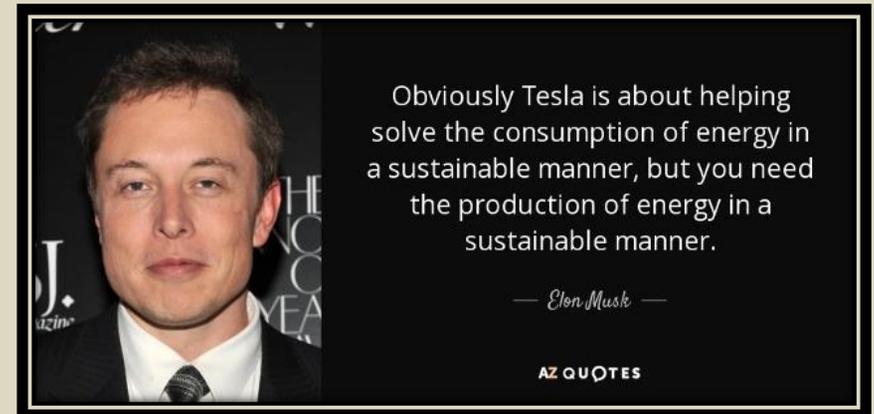
**For new readers,** here is a background of the Eco-Newsletter and the Green Section:

The Eco-Newsletter aims to function on a bi-monthly basis, and has the intention of educating staff members of the Council of Europe on environmentally-friendly and sustainable initiatives and good habits which can be adopted both at work and in general. It will also inform readers on past and upcoming events and activities, whether organised by the Green Section in the context of the CoE, in Strasbourg / Alsace, and in the

wider world. Relevant local and international news will also be summarised here.

The Green Section of the Amicale was re-launched at the end of 2016, and several successful activities were initiated throughout 2017.

Now, in 2018, we have ambitious plans, and hope to organise many wide-ranging, thought-provoking activities, participate in progressive events in Strasbourg, and encourage colleagues and the Administration to adopt sustainable practices. You will see below some of the past and planned activities.



## Green Section recent activities

**18 April- An installation of 3 new bird houses** took place in the river area of the Court. The bird houses were purchased from “La Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux” (LPO) Two old bird houses in the same area were cleaned by a representative from Espaces Verts. Colleagues from the Green Section and from the Administration took part in the installation.

**18 April- Visit of the Papuan Chief:** Participants watched the thought-provoking documentary “Brothers of the trees” on the story of Mundiya Kepanga and his home in Papua New Guinea. Afterwards, the Chief, through his friend, translator and movie producer Marc Dozier, took some questions from the audience in an entertaining and dynamic fashion. The experience of this visit is perhaps best summed up by one of the participants, a 16 year old daughter of a CoE staff member: *“This viewing in the presence of the Chief of the tribe was a true direct testimony of what is happening on the other side of the world. This makes it possible to realise the environmental problems and difficult situations that the populations of the planet must solve. Asking questions, finding out*



*about what is wrong and fighting for your beliefs is the most important thing.” (Full text in French).*

**22 April- A very successful joint cleaning of the river Ill on canoes** in co-operation with the kayak club took place. The cleaning was divided into morning and afternoon sessions. Objects such as pieces of plastic, glass and plastic bottles, a trolley, a road sign and a bike were collected by 22 Amicale volunteers. The activity was followed by a barbecue, and the whole day

was massively enjoyed by participants. We hope to take part in this event again, possibly on an annual basis.



**28 May- 1 June- “Walk to Work Week!”** The Council’s first-ever walking challenge was organised and we are delighted to share some of the statistics: **over 864 km** were walked by 23 colleagues during 5 days. Also, we calculated that, if all of the participants had driven a compact car from their respective homes to the office, a total of 580 km would have been driven, resulting in a **carbon footprint of 150 kg of CO2**. They would have also spent an average of **60€ on petrol**.

After an intense and awakening week of walking, the 3 most active walkers in the Council were **Claudia Elion (58.8 km)**; **Gulgun Gullu-Rech (60.2 km)**; and the winner, having walked a distance of **111.1 km, congratulations to Sam Yoo!** The [winners](#) received some sporty/natural prizes from the

Amicale. We hope that this challenge will become an annual event and encourage colleagues to explore Strasbourg’s beautiful surroundings on foot and also feel the health benefits!

## Green Section recent (cont.) and upcoming activities

**5 June World Environment Day-** A resolution on reduction of the ecological footprint of the Council of Europe was presented by the Green Section during the annual staff meeting on 5 June (World Environment Day). The main recommendations were to finalise the process of joining the Eurométropole's Biodiversity Charter "Tous unis pour plus de biodiversité", to participate in the "Plan Climat 2030" of the city of Strasbourg, as well as to manage the Council's energy and water resources more efficiently. The resolution was adopted by the staff and is to be followed up by the Staff Committee. The Green Section would like to thank all colleagues for their support and contributions.

**11-24 June- [Au boulot à vélo](#):** At the time of publication, this cycle to work challenge has already begun, but it is not too late to get on your bike and join in the fun! [More info](#).

**14 June- Zero waste [workshop](#):** 14 colleagues took part in this workshop on zero waste animated by Marie Hoffsess, a local journalist, eco-adviser and author of the blog "Simplifier sa vie avec Marie".

### Jardin de Marthe

A partnership is underway with the

"Jardin de Marthe". Run by the same family for three generations, this garden market guarantees organic and local products grown with care! A hamper from the garden was also one of the prizes during the "Walk to Work!" week. A big project is in preparation with their cooperation but in the meantime you can visit 9 Goeb Road in Strasbourg-Robertsau (a few minutes' walk from the Agora) or go on a tour of their [website](#)!



**[Royal wedding](#):** Meghan Markle and Prince Harry enjoy seasonal and organic food at the reception "We know the couple wanted us to make sure we used all of the local seasonal produce as much as possible throughout their menu, and this recent good weather is really helping us to achieve that."

## Tokyo 2020 Games- Zero Emissions

[Tokyo](#), which will host the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2020, is making preparations in a sustainable fashion. The traditional Athlete's Village will act as a pioneer for a low-carbon community using hydrogen, with the aim of introducing similar concepts to the rest of the city. In 2010, Tokyo introduced the world's first urban cap-and-trade program for large facilities, including office buildings. During the Games, the city plans to utilise these carbon credits that are generated from the program to reduce CO2 emissions to zero during the four days of the event's opening and closing ceremonies.

In general, Tokyo has set itself several ambitious goals by 2030, including 30% of electricity to be generated by renewable sources, a 38% reduction

in energy consumption as compared to 2000, and 30% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions as compared to 2000.

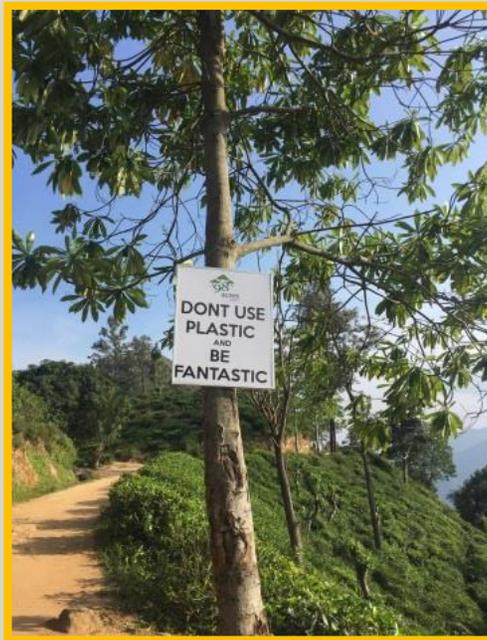
It marks another interesting example of cities as leaders for sustainable development. As the planet becomes more and more urban, it is becoming clear that cities will have a significant role to play- and may in fact become more progressive than national level policies (think of certain [US cities](#) defying Trump's withdrawal from the Paris Agreement).

If you are interested in how cities fight against climate change, and how they can contribute to sustainability, you might want to try this online free course of UN CC:Learn on "[Cities and Climate Change](#)" (must create an account).

# Feature Article: Beating Plastic Pollution

On **Tuesday 5 June**, leaders, activists and ordinary people from across the globe were physically or virtually present in India, host country for World Environment Day (WED) 2018. This year's theme was one of particular importance- "Beating Plastic Pollution". Perhaps so because the problem of plastic spreads across many environmental issues: decline of biodiversity, planet pollution, unsustainable use of scarce resources, etc. Despite the ever-growing conundrum of plastic (production up to 380 million tonnes in 2015 as compared to 20 million in the 1950's; projected to increase to 1600 million by 2050 at current rate. However only about 15% is recycled ([OECD](#))), the good news is that occasions such as WED seem to be growing in popularity. This year there was a record of more than 3000 registered events globally, with many countries announcing ambitious projects to fight plastic pollution, among other issues ([UNEP](#)).

Following the great success of the Eco Week at the CoE in March, we thought it might be a good idea to remind people of some basic tips to reduce plastic in the work environment as well as at home. It is important now more than ever to work on this, especially noting the tiny fraction of plastic that is actually recycled from our recycling bins. Here are some basic tips to get you started on your way to becoming plastic free:



**1. Fix your caffeine fix:** Bring a reusable coffee cup or flask to the Café when buying that morning coffee or afternoon tea. Not only will you reduce the amount of waste but you will save 10% on the amount you pay. This incentive is also offered by some coffee shops on the high street.

**2. Bring your own bottle:** Instead of buying a plastic bottle each time you need water, bring a reusable flask. Plastic bottles are one of the most frequently found items on beach cleans globally. The lids commonly end up in seabirds' stomachs. There are drinking water points on each floor of the Council buildings.

**3. Say no to plastic cutlery:** We generally only use plastic cutlery for up to 3 minutes before throwing it away. Even if you bring your own lunch or eat at the Council's eating facilities, bringing your own cutlery will make a big difference.

**4. Straws suck:** Plastic straws and stirrers can take up to 200 years to decompose and are one of the most commonly found objects on beaches. Opt for paper or reusable straws or just don't use them (sans paille!).

**5. Ditch the Cling wrap:** cling film cannot be recycled but foil can. Another alternative for storing your lunchbox food is [Beeswax wraps](#).

**6. Teabags:** Teabags contain microplastic and more times than not teabags come wrapped in unnecessary plastic. Stick to loose leaf tea with a tea strainer or try plastic free tea such as [Pukka tea](#). This will reduce the microplastics entering our waterways and eventually our food chain.

## Feature Article (cont.)

A French swimmer, on World Environment Day, has left a beach in Eastern Japan, heading out to sea on a mission to become the first person to swim across the Pacific Ocean — and carry out research on plastic pollution at sea.

**7. Give up gum:** On average we chew an estimated 130 sticks of gum per person each year. Chewing gum is made of plastic but there are plastic free alternatives such as [Glee](#) or mints.

**8. Cork comeback:** Choose wine bottles with natural cork stoppers instead of plastic stoppers or metal screw caps.

**9. Fresh Produce:** Prioritise where possible buying loose fruit and vegetables in the supermarket or market to avoid plastic packaging which in a lot of cases is not recyclable.

**10. Totally Awesome:** And finally ditch the plastic bag for the Tote. Remember to take one when you go to the supermarket or market. Recently a pilot whale washed up on a beach with more than 80 plastic bags in his stomach.

**Don't use Plastic and be Fantastic!**

**A third of French birds have disappeared, our bees are decimated...**



“Le plan de Hulot” wants to launch the first large-scale plan to save biodiversity in France, but it will not happen by itself. Let's break records to save biodiversity by signing en masse this open letter with simply one [CLICK](#).



### **POPE FRANCIS**

*"Civilization requires energy, but energy use must not destroy civilization,"*

Pope Francis recently met with top energy executives to appeal against the destruction of our environment, highlighting the particular effects it has on the poorest of society. The Pope has been a frequent advocate for the environment during his tenure.

## Prohibition and recycling: the EU goes hunting for plastics

**Brussels (AFP)** - Alarmed by the amount of plastic waste that has invaded the oceans, the European Commission on 28 May [proposed a series of measures](#) to try to drastically reduce the use of single-use items, from cotton swabs to medical equipment. While the move has been lauded by

most, PlasticsEurope said in a statement that this marine litter resulted rather from the "lack of implementation of legislation related to waste management at national and regional level" and called for the establishment of improved infrastructure

and the prohibition of landfills.

It goes to show that actors at all levels, from the consumer to governments to corporations to the international community need to cooperate in order to solve this issue.

## Council of Europe Actions for the Environment

The DGA has indeed been working hard of late in terms of reducing the Council's ecological footprint. We have already advertised their "[My 10 steps for the environment](#)" campaign in the past. More recently they have followed up on the feature subject of the Green Section's last Eco-Newsletter on food waste by working with EUREST and the canteens on this issue "[Let's reduce food waste!](#)": in particular, a new process of weighing the portion of salad and vegetables will hopefully encourage people to take only what they will eat "Waste not, want not – if I take it, I eat it!". A trial entailing reusable containers in the restaurants will also launch shortly. As well as that there was an article published on "[Sustainable savings in our buildings](#)", which also gives valuable information and hints on how we can all, by acting individually and together, reduce the energy use of the buildings, all while saving money. It is a win-win for everyone! Finally, the number of [printers](#) will be cut across the house, further reducing the ecological footprint.

We look forward to more crucial DGA environmental action in the future.

The [Bern Convention](#) is the first international treaty in the field of nature conservation. It aims to conserve Europe's wild flora and fauna species as well as their natural habitats. The approach of protecting both species and habitats was innovative and forward-thinking at the time of drafting as anthropogenic pressures on habitats is one of the greatest threats facing biodiversity today. The Convention is also unique for recognising the intrinsic value of wild flora and fauna, which need to be preserved and passed to future generations as they constitute a "natural heritage of aesthetic, scientific, cultural, recreational, economic and intrinsic value".

A year ahead of its 40th anniversary, the Convention is more relevant than ever, as biodiversity is still being lost at an appalling pace. The Convention counts on its well-established monitoring mechanism and strong standard setting aimed at accompanying Contracting Parties (51 in 2018, including the EU) to achieve its objectives, but also various targets set on nature conservation at UN level. New scientific data, changes in nature and expert research findings are closely followed and taken into account in the Convention's new standards and tools thanks to the numerous expert meetings organised every year.



The PACE's [Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development](#) deals with 'green issues' from the angle of sustainable development. It looks closely at challenges relating to biodiversity, good management of natural resources climate change and "greening" of the economy. Those interested in learning more about this work are invited to consult recent PACE texts: "[Climate change and implementation of the Paris Agreement](#)" [Res 2210 \(2018\)](#); "[New generation' trade agreements and their implications for social rights, public health and sustainable development](#)" [Res](#)

[2152 \(2017\)](#);

"[Draft Protocol amending the European Landscape Convention](#)" [Opinion 291 \(2016\)](#);

"[The exploration and exploitation of non-conventional hydrocarbons in Europe](#)" [Res 2140 \(2016\)](#).

The Committee is now preparing reports on "Air quality and diesel emissions in urban centres" and on "The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals – how parliaments and member States of the Council of Europe can contribute".

## CoE Actions for the Environment (cont.)

The **European Landscape Convention** defines landscape as “an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors”. It also provides that each Party shall undertake “to recognise landscapes in law as an essential component of people’s surroundings, an expression of the diversity of their shared cultural and natural heritage, and a foundation of their identity”. The landscape is recognised

irrespective of whether it is of exceptional beauty, since all forms of landscape have a bearing on citizens’ quality of life and should be taken into account in landscape policies. The scope of the Convention is extensive: it applies to the entire territory of the Parties and relates to natural, urban and peri-urban areas, including land, inland water and marine areas. It therefore concerns not just remarkable landscapes but also “ordinary”, everyday

landscapes, and degraded areas. The Convention, and the documents relating to its implementation, have led to developments in numerous States, not only in their national and regional legislation but also at various administrative levels, as well as in methodological documents and experiments with active participatory landscape policies.

## Strasbourg Upcoming Events

**24 June- Jardin de Marthe [Open Day](#):** Visit of the farmers market, agricultural machinery exhibition, children's animations, food truck, etc.

**30 June- Cosmetics [workshop](#):** also organised by Zéro Déchet, to be held in the outdoors. children with activities organised.

**1 July- “Les Activ'été : [Run for nature!](#)”:** organised by Alsace Nature and CINE de Bussierre, different races for adults and kids, with different activities.

**6 July- [Conference](#) with Jérémie Pichon:** a [family](#) who are “almost waste-free”.

**9 July- [Conference](#) on children’s health and the environment:** organised by our collaborators “[L’avis en vert](#)”.

**10 August- [Alternatiba](#) bike tour [arrives](#)** to Strasbourg.

## Contacts & Final Word

If you have enjoyed this Eco-Newsletter and wish to stay informed about Green Section activities, please visit our [webpage](#), and do not hesitate to contact us:

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[Link](#) to previous Eco-Newsletters.

Finally, many thanks to the **Contributors!**

Tania Braulio, Maguelonne Dejeant-Pons, Stephanie Denton, Carole Herdly, Isabelle Kerdudo, Natalia Kobylarz, Anastasiia Nohovitsyna, Iva Obretenova, Marie-Rose Prevost, Aiste Ramanauskaite, Carla Riquelme, and a **big Merci** to Elodie Arrighi for the excellent French translation, and to Jamie Brown for the fantastic formatting!

**We are always looking for new contributions**, and also for any “green tips” you may do at home or work. We strongly encourage you to **share your experiences!**

