

Goal of the Rendez-Vous:
Share the Plastique à La Loupe protocol and identify the different protocols used around the Mediterranean.

Quick context :
Beyond Plastic Med (BeMed) was created at the initiative of 5 NGO : the Fondation Prince Albert II of Monaco, the Tara Ocean Foundation, Surfrider Foundation Europe, the MAVA Foundation and the International Union for the Conservation of the Nature (IUCN). BeMed became independante in 2019, but still has a close relation to its founders. That is why, Romain Trouble, is the CEO of Tara Ocean Foundation, but also the President of BeMed.
During the Monaco Ocean Week of 2023, he suggested that the Protocol "Plastique à la loupe" aka plastic under the microscope was presented to the Community !

Why engage in participatory sciences ?

- A useful tool for raising awareness among the public (children and adults), political authorities and economic stakeholders
- The data collected can provide a better understanding of plastic pollution (areas of accumulation, quantities, types of waste found, most frequently found objects, etc.)
- The data can help science (e.g. Tara's Plastic Protocol)
- This data can help change regulations (e.g. SFE's Ocean Initiatives)

Our speakers



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Plastique à la loupe protocol (aka plastic under the microscope protocol) :

A protocol set up following the **Tara Microplastics mission in 2019**, which was held in a number of European rivers. Jean François, who led the expedition, and other scientists expressed the need to collect more data. On the other side were teachers who wanted to get involved through participatory science protocols that could be applied with pupils, with the data being shared with scientists.

The data collected can be used to **write scientific articles**, giving politicians a factual account of why urgent action is needed on both plastic pollution and water quality (this is possible because a non-simplified version of the entire OSPAR protocol is used - **26 criteria**) from the OSPAR protocol.

On the scientific side, they are trying to produce several studies:

- An article validating the protocol
- An article on the creation of a **Global Litter database** - soon to be available and usable by everyone (provided that the OSPAR protocol is used and the data is valid).
- A future article will look at **the fragmentation of mesoplastics into microplastics**. Don't know if they will be able to work with stakeholders outside France initially. Working with several partners in France to **study the chemical composition of microplastics**. It's a database shared with other scientists to study the fragmentation and toxicity of plastics.
-> **They are not just focusing on beaches, but also rivers.**

They were unable to use the **EMODnet** (European Marine Observation and Data Network) database, which is used by many, because it was too restrictive in relation to the protocol (does not take meso- and microplastics into account). There is an open source database. For the moment, it's mainly scientists who use it.

But what does it mean for you ?

The Tara Foundation offers you support to implement the **"Plastique à La Loupe"** protocol. The data collected will be used for scientific research, and in exchange, the data can be used in awareness-raising activities.
Meeting to be scheduled to guarantee the quality of the data and to know more about the conditions.

Objective:
The pupils go on the field to collect data in autumn, share it with the database and then, TARA gives the pupils automatic feedback with posters and all the data.
Can be used as a means of raising awareness and lobbying local players, and identifying the SUPs most commonly found on beaches (which may vary from one area to another).

Protocol for river banks and beaches :

1. Delimitation area (100m of the beach)
2. On that part they collect all macrodebris (>2.5cm).
3. Back to the classroom : identification, classification and counting the debris following the protocol.
4. Fill in an Excel spreadsheet with all the items.
5. Add the file to the database
6. Send the results in report card format to the class

Links between Ocean Initiatives and Plastique à la loupe ?

There are many data collection initiatives, but the data collected is not suitable for science. Most organisations use simplified protocols to make data collection easier. The OSPAR protocol is long and difficult to implement with the public. With schools, they have more time to accompany and explain. That's why they had to create their own database.

Because Surfrider's protocol is different, it's not possible to exchange data. If any data is missing, they have to remove it. The large mesh results are the same, but when you want more precise data, you need the full list of items.
Working with SFE allows you to achieve other objectives (lobbying public authorities and private players). It depends on your objective.

The "Photo souvenir"



Explore a Map of different protocols used by the members

