

Party balloon industry corrects European Commission marine litter claims

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The EBPC – the largest industry association for balloon and party products in Europe – has written to the European Commission and today issued an infographic to correct misleading claims in the Commission’s new campaign against marine litter which threaten to severely damage the balloon and party industry.

The Commission had claimed in campaign materials – including fact sheets and on the official Twitter account of the Commission’s Directorate-General for Environment – that balloons and balloon sticks were among the “10 most common plastic objects found on European beaches”.

This is not the case according to the most authoritative data. Research from the OSPAR Commission – the organisation through which 15 Governments and the EU cooperate to protect the marine environment – has recorded that of the total number of plastic items found on European beaches between 2010 and 2016, balloons represented just 1% and balloon sticks 0%.

To help clarify the issue, the EBPC has therefore today issued an infographic which shows what the top 10 most common plastics found on European beaches actually are, as recorded by OSPAR Commission data. Neither balloons nor balloon sticks feature.

The EBPC has also written to the European Commission asking that they cease including mentions of balloons and balloon sticks in their campaign materials.

Correcting the European Commission’s inaccurate claims matters greatly as the Commission’s recent draft Single Use Plastic Directive is proposing to target the 10 single-use plastic products most often found on Europe’s beaches.

If balloons and balloon sticks were wrongly caught up in new regulation, it would be devastating for the industry and associated jobs without tangible environmental gain.

As a major driver of the SME sector employing an estimated 15,000 people in manufacturing alone, the balloon industry contributes more than €150 million in annual taxes for Governments across Europe in VAT, not including environmental or corporate taxes.

EBPC Operations Manager, Suteesh Chumber, said:

“The OSPAR database for Europe holds the most comprehensive marine litter classification information in the world. Analysis of the OSPAR figures shows balloons and balloon sticks are not in the top 10 amongst plastic and rubber items, and they in fact rank 36th (0.39%) in position in European Environment Agency data from 2013 – 2018.

“We call on the European Commission to recognise these facts and to ensure that the Single Use Plastic Directive does not end up destroying jobs through unnecessary regulations which will in turn deprive millions of Europeans of joy and celebration without tangible environmental gain.”

—ENDS—

Notes to Editors:

The European Balloon & Party Council (EBPC) is made up of over 40 key players in the industry who work closely to promote the safe and responsible use of balloons. The association is working hard to represent its members on key issues that arise within the EU, whilst providing members with communication on new directives and legislation. In 2016 The EBPC launched a Code of Best Practice campaign, which will reach out to consumers as well as those in the industry. This is the first campaign of its kind in Europe and encompasses the safe enjoyment and handling of balloons.

In order to comply with its mission statement: 'To educate and promote the fun use of balloons and party products safely, ethically and in respect of the environment', the European Balloon & Party Council (EBPC) does not support balloon releases in its bid to protect the environment from unnecessary litter.

Further information about EBPC can be found at <http://www.ebpcouncil.eu/>

Our Partysafe initiative can be found here: www.partysafe.eu

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