

Survey on expanded plastics (EPS/XPS) from buoys, floats or docks, including pontoons

This survey is related to the implementation of the [HELCOM Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter](#), more precisely action RS 2, led by Denmark, which reads: “Encourage the development and use of buoys, floats and docks, which do not release expanded polystyrene (EPS) and other problematic materials to the marine environment with the aim to phase out the use of those containing unprotected EPS and problematic materials”. The action, as indicated in its [implementation plan](#), aims to develop a guidance on reduction of buoys etc. of EPS/XPS with unprotected surfaces or other problematic materials.

Littering of expanded plastics (EP), especially in the form of expanded polystyrene (EPS) is a growing environmental concern due to the unique set of properties of these materials and the frequency in which they are found during litter clean-up operations. Due to the low density of EPS/XPS and other foamed plastics as compared to other plastics, it is expected that a high share of these plastics would end up on the beaches.

Beach litter monitoring in the Baltic areas indicates that EPS/XPS accounts for about 10% of the total sum of plastic beach litter items, although with a significant variation between different beaches.

In practice, two types of polystyrene foam are used: expanded polystyrene (EPS) and extruded polystyrene (XPS). As the environmental fate and possible effects of the two types are similar, no distinction will be made between them.

EPS/XPS foams have many names, where the most “common used” names are flamingo and styropor. Other names are sunpor, jackopor and air-pop.

Below is a series of questions where your contribution, to respond to the extent possible, would be highly appreciated.

For aquaculture related issues, please see the dedicated separate section, if there is additional or specific information on the use of these material in this industry in your country.

If possible, it will be very beneficial if you can distinguish between floats used in professional/leisure fishing (using trawls, nets, gill nets, cages etc.) and angling (using fishing poles).

Beside the use encompassed by the action, it is also proposed to address the use of EPS/XPS in fishing boxes, as this is a potential source to EPS/XPS found and is also used in the marine environment.

The survey should take about 20-30 minutes to complete. You are kindly invited to complete it by **1 June 2023**.

Thank you very much for your contribution!

In case of doubts, please contact Frank Jensen (FJE@mim.dk).



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Identification

1. Country

- ☐ Denmark
- ☐ Estonia
- ☐ Finland
- ☐ Germany
- ☐ Latvia
- ☐ Lithuania
- ☐ Poland
- ☐ Russia
- ☐ Sweden
- ☐ Other, please specify

2. Name

3. Job title

4. Organisation

5. Phone number

6. Email address

☐ Yes, I give permission to be contacted in case clarification on my replies is needed

☐ Yes, I am willing to be informed of the results of the questionnaire

☐ No, please do not contact me

☐ E-mail address:



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Losses

7. What are the potential sources of EPS to the marine environment?

8. Why do these losses occur?

9. What can prevent the losses?

10. Are there any collecting schemes in place for the products?



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Restrictions

11. Does your country have any legislation related to losses on buoys, floats or docks made of EPS/XPS e.g. like mandatory covering layer etc.?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I do not know

12. What year did the ban or restriction come into force? If it is not yet enforced, when will it come into force?

13. Is there a possibility for exemptions?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes, please specify which organisation is handling the application



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Production/import

Please note, that data for floats for angling can be estimated as it is recognized that these data can be very difficult to obtain (please state how the issue is handled). In case an estimation is too difficult please state that.

14. Are there any production of buoys, floats or docks made of EPS/XPS in your country?

☐ No

☐ I do not Know

☐ Yes, please provide the name of the producer

15. Are there any import/export of the products in your country?

☐ No

☐ I do not know

☐ Yes, please give an estimation (order of magnitude) of the import/export volumes



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Prevention

16. What measures or schemes are in place to reduce the risk of losing EPS to the environment?

17. Are there schemes or practices that you consider especially beneficial or unbeneficial with regard to reducing the risk of spreading EPS to the environment?

18. What type of conditions hinder reducing the release of EPS to the environment?

- ☐ Cost-related conditions
- ☐ Practically related conditions
- ☐ Both cost-related and practically related conditions
- ☐ Please reason your reply

19. Do you consider a covering layer of hard PS sufficient to reduce the risk of losses to the environment?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I do not know

20. Are you aware of any other types of covering layers?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes, please specify

21. Are you aware of any take-back/recycling schemes?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes, please specify

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Alternatives

22. Are there alternative products or materials that could replace EPS materials used today?

☐ No

☐ I do not know

☐ Yes, what are they made of?

23. If alternatives exist, are they used?

☐ No

☐ Yes

☐ I do not know

24. If alternatives exist, please provide the names of the producers/importers of these alternatives

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Aquaculture

25. Please provide information on the use of buoys, floats or docks used in aquaculture, if there is additional or specific information on the use within this industry (e.g. pipes used instead of buoys, pontoons using EPS/XPS etc.)



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Fish boxes

Use of EPS in fish boxes is a separate issue not covered by the initiative. However, as fish boxes account for a significant fraction of EPS packaging produced in the countries and as they are used in the marine environment, it could be a potential source of the EPS/XPS found on the beaches. If you have any information on the use etc. it would be much appreciated.

26. Are there any production of fish boxes made of EPS/XPS in your country?

☐ No

☐ Yes, please provide the name of the producer

27. Are there any information on the use in your country?

☐ No

☐ Yes, please specify

28. Are you aware of any take-back/recycling schemes?

☐ No

☐ Yes, please describe the scheme

29. Are there alternative products or materials that could replace EPS used today?

☐ No

☐ Yes

☐ I do not know

30. If there are alternative products or materials that could replace EPS used today, are these alternatives used?

☐ No

☐ I do not know

☐ Yes, please provide names of the producers/importers of these alternatives



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Other

31. Are buoys/floats used in significant amounts outside fishery? Examples could be float barriers for swimming areas.

☐ No

☐ I do not know

☐ Yes, do you have any knowledge on this use, is it the same as for other floats?

32. Any other comments?