

**Table S3-1** Actual knowledge about plastics

	%
<b>Q 10.</b> <i>How many types of plastics exist?</i>	
More than 5	18.8
More than 10	18.8
More than 15	25.6
I am not sure	36.8
<b>Q 12.</b> <i>Which of the following objects/materials are plastic products?</i>	('yes')
Bottles of soft drinks (e.g., orange soda, fruit juices, cola, etc.)	98.8
Computer keyboards and mouse	94.5
Synthetic tissues	87.7
Some paints	78.5
Plexiglass	87.7
<b>Q 13.</b> <i>How long does it take for a plastic bottle left in the environment to decompose?</i>	
In 50 years	5.4
Between 50 and 100 years	16.2
Between 100 and 250 years	28.3
Between 250 and 400 years	13.8
Between 400 and 500 years	22.5
I am not sure	13.8

<b>Q 11.</b> <i>Which of the following statements about advantages/disadvantages apply to PLASTIC</i>	True (%)	False (%)	I'm not sure (%)
Its production is more cost-effective than other materials (e.g. iron, wood)	54.6%	22.3%	23.1%
It's light	85.0%	6.8%	8.1%
It's recyclable	88.2%	8.4%	3.4%
Can it be of any colour	71.9%	10.2%	17.9%
It is challenging to degrade	87.5%	9.2%	3.4%
It is bioaccumulated in living beings	82.7%	2.5%	14.8%
Resistant to corrosion	50.1%	29.5%	11.4%
Its production and disposal cause large quantities of greenhouse gases to be emitted.	77.5%	4.7%	17.8%

<i>Have you ever heard of ... ?</i>	YES	NO	I'm not sure
<b>Q 14.</b> Microplastics	83.7%	12.5%	3.8%
<b>Q 15.</b> Nanoplastics	65.5%	28.6%	5.9%

<b>Q 16.</b> Quali delle seguenti affermazioni sulle micro/nanoplastiche sono corrette?	True (%)	False (%)	I'm not sure (%)
Microplastics are particles smaller than 5 millimeters in size	62.9%	8.3%	28.8%
Nanoplastics are particles larger than 5 millimeters in size	8.9%	64.0%	27.1%
Microplastics can be released from exfoliating cosmetic products	51.7%	5.9%	42.4%
Microplastics can be released from toothpaste	47.0%	9.0%	44.0%
Microplastics can be released from synthetic fabrics during washing	71.2%	3.4%	25.4%
Microplastics can be released from tires rubbing against the road	61.9%	3.0%	35.2%
Microplastics can be released from road marking paints	46.8%	5.1%	48.1%
Microplastics can be released into the environment from decomposing plastic bottles	75.3%	3.0%	20.8%
Microplastics can be released from paints used on ship hulls	58.3%	3.0%	38.7%
Microplastics can be released from products used in manufacturing (e.g., plastic pellets)	74.9%	1.3%	23.8%

<b>Q 17.</b> Which environmental matrices are MICROPLASTICS / NANOPLASTICS likely to be found through laboratory analysis?	YES (%)	NO (%)	I'm not sure (%)
Sea waters	91.1%	0.4%	7.5%
Freshwaters	83.1%	4.7%	12.3%
Uncultivated land	64.6%	13.5%	21.9%
Cultivated land	79.5%	3.8%	16.7%
Countryside air	45.6%	22.8%	31.7%
Urban air	79.4%	3.8%	16.8%

<b>Q 18.</b> In your opinion, which of the following foods are likely to contain MICROPLASTICS/NANOPLASTICS when analysed in a laboratory?	YES (%)	NO (%)	I'm not sure (%)
Meat	67.9%	8.8%	23.3%
Fish	91.7%	0.4%	7.9%
Fruit	43.9%	26.6%	29.5%
Vegetables	59.4%	15.9%	24.7%
Cereals	47.9%	18.6%	33.5%
Milk and derivatives	61.7%	11.8%	26.5%
Bottled water	77.8%	8.8%	13.4%
Tap water	49.6%	16.1%	34.3%

<i>Are there specific regulations concerning the amount of MICROPLASTICS and/or NANOPLASTICS in the ENVIRONMENT (national or European level)?</i>	YES (%)	NO (%)	I'm not sure (%)
<b>Q 19.</b> In the ENVIRONMENT	38.9%	10.5%	50.6%
<b>Q 20.</b> IN FOODS	30.1%	12.6%	49.4%

<b>Q 21.</b> Which of the following ways can plastic enter the human body?	YES (%)	NO (%)	I'm not sure (%)
Dermal contact	39.7%	28.5%	31.8%
Inhalation	74.4%	7.1%	18.5%
Oral intake	91.1%	1.3%	7.6%

<b>Q 22.</b>	YES (%)	NO (%)
<i>Can microplastics introduced into the human body damage health?</i>	89.2%	10.8%

<b>Q 23.</b> Which organs/systems can MICROPLASTICS have toxic effects on humans and other living species? (more than one answer possible)?	YES (%)	NO (%)	I'm not sure (%)
Endocrine system	68.6%	6.8%	24.6%
Liver	77.4%	5.2%	17.5%
Kidney	82.2%	3.3%	14.6%
Sight	24.2%	24.2%	51.7%
Hypercholesterolemia	26.3%	19.1%	54.6%
Cardiovascular system	37.4%	11.4%	51.2%
Immunitary system	59.2%	6.2%	34.6%

<b>Q 24.</b> Which organs/systems can NANOPLASTICS have toxic effects on humans and other living species? (more than one answer possible)?	YES (%)	NO (%)	I'm not sure (%)
Endocrine system	71.0%	1.9%	27.0%
Liver	76.1%	2.9%	21.1%
Kidney	75.9%	3.4%	20.8%
Sight (*)	31.4%	13.0%	55.6%
Hypercholesterolemia	28.3%	13.2%	58.5%
Cardiovascular system	38.8%	10.2%	51.0%
Immunitary system	61.4%	3.9%	34.8%

<b>Q 27.</b>	YES (%)	NO (%)	I'm not sure (%)
<i>Are all types of plastics carcinogenic?</i>	54.2%	11.7%	34.1%

<b>Q 25 and Q 26.</b>	Microplastiche (%)	Nanoplastiche (%)
<i>A definite carcinogen</i>	18.8%	21.7%
<i>A probable or possible carcinogen</i>	50.7%	44.8%
<i>Not carcinogenic to humans</i>	0.5%	1.5%
<i>The relevant international scientific bodies still have conflicting opinions</i>	15.5%	16.8%
<i>I am not sure</i>	14.6%	15.3%

<b>Q 37 . What does this symbol/pictogram mean? (only one answer)</b>	(%)
Recyclable plastic	73.0%
Recycled plastic	17.2%
Plastic that can be used for various purposes	2.1%
I am not sure	7.7%

<b>Q 38 . What does this symbol/pictogram mean? (only one answer)</b>	(%)
Remember to recycle the product	11.1%
Do not dispose of in the environment	81.7%
Dispose of with paper	3.4%
I am not sure	3.8%

<b>Q 39 . What does this symbol/pictogram mean? (only one answer)</b>	(%)
The material can be recycled, but only up to 75%	23.2%
Material recycled for 75% of its composition	60.1%
Material that falls within the 75% of recyclable plastics	7.7%
I am not sure	9.0%

<b>Q 40 . What does this symbol/pictogram mean? (only one answer)</b>	(%)
Packaging made entirely from recycled material	28.8%
The manufacturer participates in a specific packaging collection system, but this does not necessarily mean that the packaging is recyclable	21.5%
Recyclable packaging	15.9%
I am not sure	33.9%

**Table S3-2 Behaviours and Beliefs**

<b>Q 28.</b> <i>How often do you buy plastic bags (non-biodegradable), such as at the supermarket checkout?</i>	%
Never	30.1%
Rarely	42.8%
Sometimes	14.4%
Frequently	11.0%
Every time I go to the grocery store	1.7%

<b>Q 29.</b> <i>For which of the following reasons do you buy plastic bags (non-biodegradable)?</i>	%
They are comfortable	35.7%
They can be reused	52.8%
I find them available	47.2%
They are cheap	21.5%
They are light	42.9%
I forgot my reusable bags/envelopes	70.6%
There are no alternatives	23.7%

<b>Q 30.</b> <i>What happens to the plastic bags (non-biodegradable) that you buy after using them?</i>	%
I use them again	90.2%
I use them for garbage storage	83.0%
I discard after a single use	7.5%
Other	26.7%

<b>Q 31.</b> <i>How would you change your consumption habits if you found out that fish and seafood contain microplastics?</i>	%
I would consume them as always	21.1%
I would reduce their consumption	61.0%
I would never eat them again	13.1%
Other	4.7%

<b>Q 32.</b> <i>If you found out that toothpaste contains microplastics, how would you react?</i>	%
I would use it as always	40.9%
I would reduce its use	28.9%
I would never use it again	15.1%
Other	15.1%

<b>Q 36. Which public strategies or technological solutions regarding plastic should governments adopt?</b>	<b>YES (%)</b>	<b>NO (%)</b>	<b>I'm not sure (%)</b>
Use alternative materials instead of plastic whenever possible	95.3%	1.3%	3.4%
Make plastic products lighter to reduce their overall quantity	77.5%	8.8%	13.7%
Use biodegradable plastic	86.4%	4.8%	8.7%
Promote the separate collection and recycling of plastic	95.2%	1.7%	3.1%
Encourage initiatives and technological solutions for the remediation of natural environments (e.g., beaches, oceans)	95.6%	1.3%	3.1%
Offer free reusable bags	73.7%	14.5%	11.8%
Ban the sale of plastic bags	78.9%	10.6%	10.6%
Educate the population	97.4%	0.4%	2.2%
Improve water purification technology	89.8	3.5%	6.6%

**Table S3 – 3** Perceived risk of exposure to Microplastics and Nanoplastics

<b>Q 33.</b> . Which of the following images concerns you most regarding the negative impact of plastic waste?	%
(1) Food with plastic	10.8%
(2) City with plastic waste	11.7%
(3) Beach with plastic waste	11.7%
(4) Park with plastic waste	0.4%
(5) Animals entangled in plastic	37.5%
(6) Ocean with plastic waste	32.1%

<b>Q 34.</b>	YES (%)	NO (%)	I'm not sure (%)
<i>Do you think that Microplastics are already in our bodies?</i>	89.6%	1.3%	8.3%