



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



- International Centre
for Water Resources and Global Change
- under the auspices of UNESCO

bfg Bundesanstalt für
Gewässerkunde

Information on Summer School “Plastics in Marine and Freshwater Environments”, 16–21.07.2017

In cooperation with the International Centre for Water Resources and Global Change (ICWRGC), the Danube International Centre for Advanced Studies for River-Delta-Sea Systems Research Infrastructure (DANUBIUS-RI), the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB), the UNESCO-IHP International Initiative on Water Quality (IIWQ), and in close collaboration with the UNESCO offices in Abuja, Jakarta and Venice, the Federal Institute of Hydrology (BfG) organizes a Summer School dealing with „Plastics in Marine and Freshwater Environments“. The one-week Summer School will be held from 16 to 21 July 2017 at the Federal Institute of Hydrology in Koblenz.

The Summer School was preceded by a European Conference on Plastics in Freshwater Environments (www.umweltbundesamt.de/en/plastics-conference-2016), jointly held by the BfG, the German Environment Agency and the BMUB in June 2016. 220 international representatives from politics and administration, NGOs, industry, water resources and waste management, from a total of 22 countries, discussed various topics such as occurrence and environmental relevance as well as risk perception and options for action concerning plastics in freshwater environments.

The Summer School's main objective is to impart knowledge on the current state of plastics research as well as on measures and management options concerning plastics in salt and freshwater systems. Moreover, a worldwide network of plastics scientists and experts is planned to be established, serving as a forum for discussions on (country-specific) conditions, challenges, preventive actions and potential solutions. At the same time, this lays the foundations for possible future cooperation. Moreover, the UNESCO Centre considers the Summer School a substantial German contribution to the International Initiative on Water Quality of the IHP of UNESCO.

Overall 21 participants from the fields of administration (experts from ministries and administration as well as technicians from the water and environmental sectors) as well as young scientists from various countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and (South) East Europe were invited to attend the Summer School. The participants come from Liberia, Nigeria, South Africa, Egypt, Brazil, Mexico, India, Indonesia, Philippines, Russia, Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Slovenia, Romania and Italy.

13 high-calibre lecturers, i.a. leading scientists, staff from environment agencies and ministries, representatives from the World Bank, UNESCO, European Commission, the German



Society for International Cooperation (GIZ), the plastics industry and one NGO will give an introduction on the current state of science and on the topic's societal dimension. In a practical session, suspended sediment samples are taken in the Rhine. Then, further processing of the samples in the laboratory and analytical options are demonstrated. Within the scope of a World Café in the second part of the Summer School, the attendants will discuss the current situation in their home countries and the best possible measures to reduce plastic waste in the environment. Four possible thematic blocks, i.e. 1) Plastics and Society, 2) Plastics and Science, 3) Plastics and the legal framework as well as 4) Plastics in 2050, will be discussed during this World Café. A field trip to the Rhine Quality Station Worms and to the World Heritage Site Upper Middle Rhine Valley rounds off the programme.



Federal Ministry
of Transport and
Digital Infrastructure



Federal Ministry for the
Environment, Nature Conservation,
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