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### Press release of the Dutch Ministry of Housing, Spatial planning and Environment

During the meeting of the EU Council of environmental ministers in Luxemburg on October 21<sup>st</sup>, the Dutch minister of the environment Jacqueline Cramer called on the EU Commission and her colleagues in the EU to take concerted steps towards getting rid of “plastic islands in our oceans” even though it will “by no means be an easy task”.

“We have to clean up the mountain of waste and prevent it from becoming ever larger, Cramer said.

More important, the EU Commission has announced that it will investigate 'on short notice how it can help solve this problem, both on the spot and in the EU itself'.

The latter statement signifies a remarkable change in the EU policy on this issue. Only last December the EU Commissioner for the Environment Stavros Dimas told the Dutch Newspaper De Volkskrant (The Peoples Newspaper) through his spokesman that "The European Commission does not have sufficient scientific proof of the existence of an island of waste in the Pacific Ocean."

"Were such proof to come", Dimas added, "then it would be an issue for the countries in which territorial waters the island is situated. Or the United Nations should look into it."

At that time Dimas did "in no way" want to comment on the "hypothesis that a comparable island is developing in the Atlantic Ocean". Last July the existence of such a plastic concentration in the Sargasso Sea was indeed confirmed by researchers on board the research vessel Atlantic Explorer, of the Bermuda Institute of Ocean Sciences.

On Line version; [Bekijk dan de online versie.](#)

**Nieuwsbericht 21 oktober 2009: Minister wil af van 'plastic soep'**