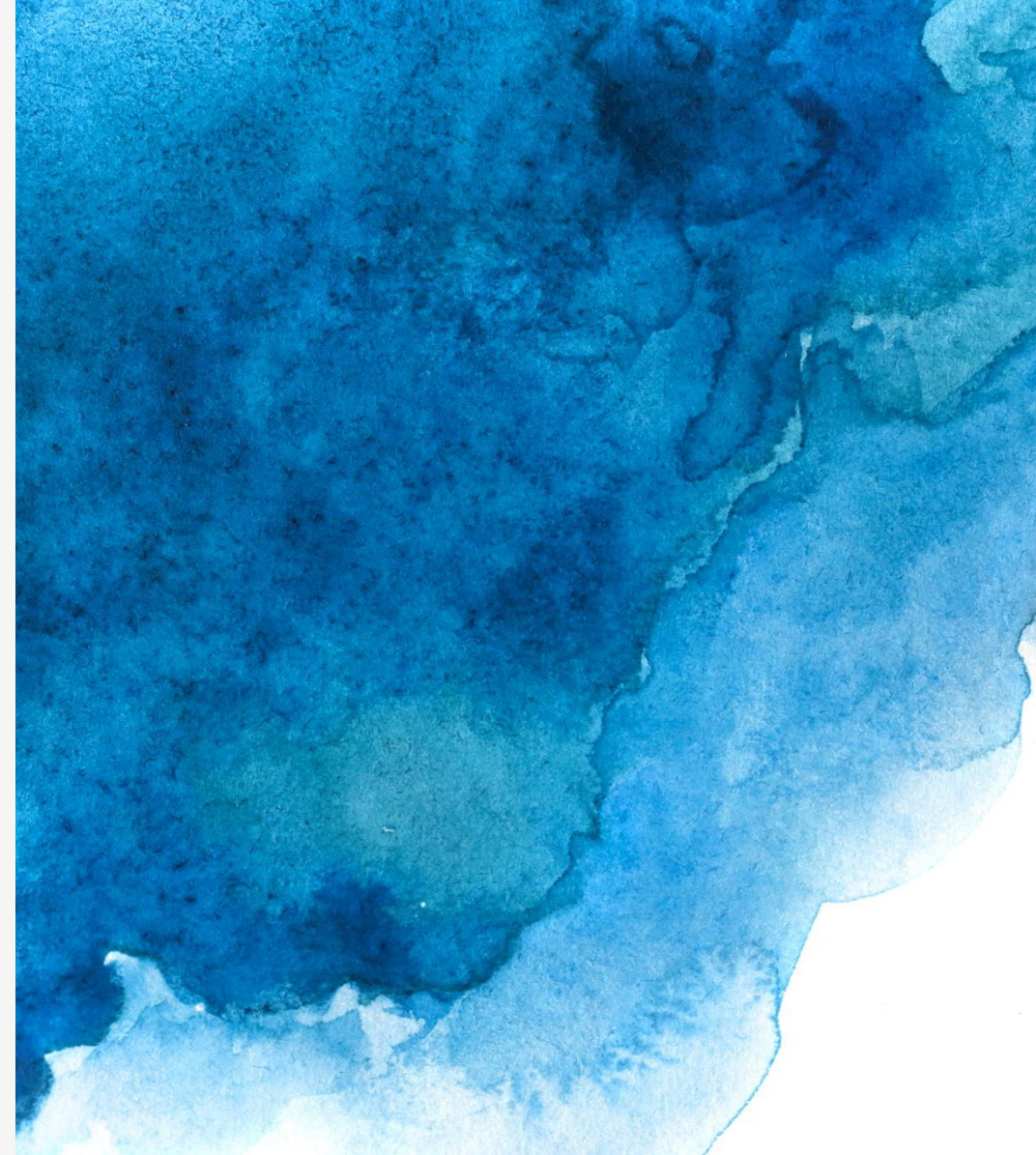


# **MICROPLASTIC AND NANOPLASTIC POLLUTION**

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## INTRODUCTION

- Since I was first elected, I have been working on issues relating to the environment and climate change in Canada. Sadly, over the years, I have been reminded countless times that the Arctic and the communities living in the region are disproportionately affected by the impacts of pollution and climate change.
- I will first provide a brief overview of the work of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly on environmental issues, including on pollution. I will then focus on my resolution on “Microplastic and Nanoplastic Pollution,” which was adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly in July 2023.

## **ENVIRONMENT AND THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY**

- With all eight Arctic countries being OSCE participating States, the Parliamentary Assembly takes a keen interest in the region.
- For example, the position of Special Representative for the Arctic and High North was created in 2015 to better inform the Parliamentary Assembly of the latest developments and trends concerning the Arctic and to enhance our cooperation with other international organizations.

# RESOLUTION ON MICROPLASTIC AND NANOPLASTIC POLLUTION

- I had the opportunity to propose a resolution on “Microplastic and Nanoplastic Pollution” during the OSCE PA’s 30th annual session, which was held in Vancouver, Canada. I am very grateful that it was adopted and thereby included in the Vancouver Declaration.
- The Vancouver Declaration is the first OSCE PA declaration to contain a resolution on micro and nano plastic pollution specifically, and the first to express concern about the presence of micro and nano plastics in the Arctic.

# RESOLUTION ON MICROPLASTIC AND NANOPLASTIC POLLUTION

- I have had the privilege of working on this issue throughout my parliamentary career. For example, in June 2019, I was chair of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development when it tabled a report in the House of Commons entitled *The Last Straw: Turning the Tide on Plastic Pollution in Canada*. That report and its 21 recommendations informed – at least in part – my resolution.
- Other studies that informed my resolution include such reports as the United Nations' *Second World Ocean Assessment* and the 2019 special report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) on the ocean and cryosphere.

# ACTIONS TO ADDRESS MICROPLASTIC AND NANOPLASTIC POLLUTION

- At the government level, it emphasizes that because micro and nano pollution is transboundary in nature, our efforts to combat it must also be transnational.
- But the very first step towards tackling micro and nano plastic pollution is acquiring the knowledge to do so. The declaration therefore urges OSCE participating States to fund research to advance knowledge and address current gaps in our understanding.
- The resolution also underscores the importance of international scientific cooperation and highlights the need to develop standardized methodologies.

## TIRE ABRASION

- I would like to draw attention to some of the important research that is being carried out on the issue of tire abrasion, specifically on the possible impacts of 6PPD-quinone, a chemical used to protect car tires. We now know that when urban runoff gets polluted with this chemical and then enters our waterways it may be deadly for certain fish species.
- Researchers at the IISD, in collaboration with the Marine Science Institute at the University of Texas in Austin, have developed a new approach to test the toxicity of 6PPD-quinone on lake ecosystems, using in-lake enclosures. Preliminary results are expected in the coming months.

## THE ARCTIC

- Relating to the Arctic region, my resolution highlights concern with the reported presence of micro and nano plastics in the Arctic, even in areas with no apparent human activity, such as the deep sea.
- By adopting the declaration, the OSCE PA recognized the disproportionate current and potential negative impacts of plastic pollution on marginalized communities and coastal communities, as well as the particular consequences for Indigenous peoples, who may rely on traditional practices of hunting and fishing in areas where the land, water and wildlife are polluted.



## CONCLUSION

- I would suggest that the support for the resolution at the OSCE PA Annual Session was a clear demonstration of the importance that parliamentarians attach to addressing microplastic and nanoplastic pollution and its myriad consequences.
- The Vancouver Declaration provides us with certain ideas to support the protection of the marine environment, one of which is to ensure collaboration and coordinated action among relevant stakeholders – including lawmakers, international organizations, and the scientific community – with the aim of fighting plastic pollution.