

EFBW Statement Microplastic in Bottled Water 21.03.2018

Microplastics are an emerging topic being raised in a number of different contexts.

A recent study released by Orb Media¹, a non-profit news organisation based in Washington DC, has tested 259 bottles of packaged water from Europe, Africa, Asia and the Americas for the presence of microplastics.

The study has not been independently evaluated by scientific peer review and needs further investigation.

There is currently no official methodology for the testing of microplastics, nor is there scientific consensus on any potential impacts. Indeed, data on the topic is still limited and conclusions differ from one study to another. It is also important to note that microplastic particles are found in all aspects of our environment. This could impact the analytical results if laboratories are not following a very rigorous protocol with strict precautions, minimising the occurrence of 'false positives'.

The European Federation of Bottled Waters (EFBW) wishes to reassure consumers about the utmost quality and safety of natural mineral and spring waters in Europe. Consumer health and safety is a top priority for bottled water producers. For decades, the industry has been investing considerable resources in source and environment protection to preserve the quality of natural waters.

All natural mineral and spring waters are safe and high-quality products strictly regulated by EU food and drink legislation. Under EU legislation (Directive 2009/54/EC), natural mineral and spring waters must come from a protected underground source and protected from all risk of human pollution. Both types of waters must be safe to drink at source in their natural state and may not be disinfected nor chemically treated. Alongside regular testing and monitoring at the source and throughout the entire bottling process this guarantees the product reaches the consumer in the utmost quality. In the EU, more than one million quality analyses are conducted annually by producers' quality assurance units and by accredited external laboratories².

The industry is following the subject of microplastics in the environment closely. European natural mineral and spring water producers are determined to collaborate further with the scientific community to advance understanding on the topic. Indeed, it is vital to develop robust and standardised testing methods in this area before drawing any conclusions.

About EFBW

The European Federation of Bottled Waters (EFBW) is the voice of the European bottled water industry, dedicated to promoting the unique qualities of natural mineral and spring water. EFBW is a registered international not for profit trade association with a membership base of national trade associations and direct member companies. In total, EFBW represents almost 600 natural mineral and spring water producers in Europe.

For more information, please visit www.efbw.org

¹ The research was carried out at the State University of New York in Fredonia, under the supervision of Dr. Sherri Mason, Chair of the Department of Geology and Environmental Science.

² EFBW membership survey (2017)