

More masks than jellyfish in the oceans – the devastating impact of PPE on marine life

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Research has found that the world risks having more masks than jellyfish in the oceans in the near future due to the consequences of producing billions of items of personal protective equipment to fight COVID-19.

In response to this, on 20th January 2021, GEA Sustainability ESCP, a cross-campus student association at ESCP Business School, organised the online event 'More Masks Than Jellyfish'.

The discussion focused on the threats from and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on marine life, especially ocean pollution caused by face masks, gloves and other coronavirus-related waste.

The GEA's conference was moderated by professional windsurfer Federico Morisio, a brand ambassador for MareVivo – an environmental organisation that has been dedicated to protecting the sea and its resources for 30 years.

The guest speakers were Matthew Brkic of BCG, Mariagiovanna Giuliano of MareVivo, and João Fernandes from U-Mask.

As guest speakers shared their knowledge and experience, 75 attendees from all six ESCP Campuses also had the opportunity to exchange with each speaker directly in dedicated breakout rooms.

Matthew Brkic shared:

"The young generations have three things that make you guys exceptional: you have a level of energy that you will never have again in your life, you have an incredible amount of ambition, and you have time."

Mariagiovanna Giuliano and Federico Morisio advised: "There is a strong connection between the health of our seas and ours. If the seas are not healthy, we cannot live a healthy life on this planet. We need to start from small actions that do not revolutionise our lifestyle, but can be done constantly by each one of us and bring a big change."

Guglielmo Marzetti, ESCP student, Project Leader and Head of GEA Sustainability ESCP at the Turin Campus said:

"It was incredible to see so many students taking part in this event with interest and curiosity, highlighting the commitment that the younger generation has towards sustainability issues our world is facing. Having the opportunity to interact with the prestigious guests was an incredible professional experience which emphasises once again the added value of being part of GEA Sustainability ESCP."

The event was organised in collaboration with JET ESCP, which supported GEA with access to their Zoom Premium account for a better conference experience, and with Beyond Business, who will share the recordings of the event on their platforms.

You can read more on marine pollution caused by COVID-19 in an article published by The World Economic Forum.

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