

# Identification of plastic additives: Py/TD-GC-HRMS method development and application on food containers

Fleurine Akoueson, Chaza Chbib, Armance Brémard, Sébastien Monchy, Ika Paul-Pont, Périne Doyen, Alexandre Dehaut, Guillaume Duflos

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# 1 Identification of plastic additives: Py/TD-GC-HRMS method

# 2 development and application on food containers.

- 3 Fleurine Akoueson<sup>1,2</sup>, Chaza Chbib<sup>3</sup>, Armance Brémard<sup>1,5</sup>, Sébastien Monchy<sup>3</sup>, Ika
- 4 Paul-Pont<sup>4</sup>, Périne Doyen<sup>2</sup>, Alexandre Dehaut<sup>1</sup>, Guillaume Duflos<sup>1</sup>.
- <sup>1</sup> ANSES LSAI, Boulevard du Bassin Napoléon, 62200 Boulogne-sur-Mer, France.
- <sup>6</sup> <sup>2</sup> Univ. Littoral Côte d'Opale, UMR 1158 BioEcoAgro, EA 7394, Institut Charles Viollette, USC
- 7 ANSES, INRAe, Univ. Lille, Univ. Artois, Univ. Picardie Jules Verne, Uni. Liège, F-62200,
- 8 Boulogne-sur-Mer, France
- <sup>9</sup> <sup>3</sup>Univ. Littoral Côte d'Opale, CNRS, Univ. Lille, UMR 8187, LOG, F 62930 Wimereux, France
- <sup>4</sup> Univ Brest, CNRS, IRD, Ifremer, LEMAR, F-29280 Plouzané, France
- <sup>5</sup> Université Paris Saclay, Bât. 349, 91405 Orsay Cedex, France
- 12 Corresponding author: <u>Guillaume.duflos@anses.fr</u>

# Highlights

- A single method for the analysis of OPAs using Py/TD-GC-HRMS has been implemented
- The developed method allowed to create a plastic additive database
- 49 additives molecules out of the selected 57 have been successfully identified
- 10 plastic additives were found in PP and PLA food packaging

### 13 Abstract

The interest of studying organic plastic additives (OPAs) is growing since many of them 14 are considered as toxic for human beings, marine organisms and have been found in 15 the ecosystem. The impact and the extent of this pollution is not fully understood 16 because of the lack of methods able to comprehensively analyze the wide diversity of 17 OPAs. This study aims at offering a guick and efficient way to identify specific harmful 18 plastic additives in polymer materials. For this purpose, a general method, for 19 identifying 49 OPAs, has been successfully developed using pyrolyzer/thermal 20 desorption-gas chromatography coupled to a high-resolution mass spectrometer 21 (Py/TD-GC-HRMS). The retention indices were calculated for each compound and a 22 high-resolution mass spectra database for plastic additives was implemented. This 23 method was then applied to characterize the OPAs included in food containers that are 24 frequently found in the environment. Four samples made of polypropylene (PP) and 25 polylactic acid (PLA) coming from two distinct suppliers were then selected. A total of 26 27 10 additives, which were plasticizers (phthalates and adipates), antioxidants (bisphenol B) and phosphorous flames retardants, were found in these food packaging. 28 29 Generally, higher peak signals were detected in the PP samples in comparison to PLA samples, except for tributyl phosphate and bisphenol B that were exclusively found in 30 31 PLA samples. Moreover, the experimentations pointed out additives differences between suppliers, for products intended for the same use and made of the same 32 polymer, for both PP and PLA samples highlighting the complexity of identifying and 33 generalizing the additive content of plastic materials. 34

Keywords: Phosphorous flame-retardants, Plasticizers, antioxidants, UV stabilizers,
 Py/TD-GC-HRMS, analytical method development.

#### **1. Introduction**

Plastic pollution is a threat for the environment and marine organisms [1]. The presence of plastics is ubiquitous in the environment. In 2020, plastic production reached 307 million metric tons worldwide [2], of which 24% were used for food and beverages packaging [3]. These items are in the top ten of the most common plastic waste found in the environment [4].

42 A key concern of plastic pollution is linked to the risks to both ecosystem and human health. 43 These adverse effects classified in several categories including the "physical" effects related 44 to the inhalation and ingestion of plastic debris and the "chemical" effects related to the harmful chemicals associated with plastics such as the organic plastic additives (OPAs) included in the 45 polymer [5,6]. While the "physical" impacts of plastics are well described in the literature, the 46 "chemical" impacts, partly related to the presence of OPAs, is less documented and limited 47 information is available for the majority of them. Several categories and families of OPAs exist, 48 49 sorted by decreasing total amounts in polymers: plasticizers, flame retardants, colorants, antioxidants, heat stabilizers, UV stabilizers or bio-stabilizers (biocides), lubricants, foaming 50 agents, and antistatic agents. These chemicals are added to polymers during their formulation, 51 without being chemically bound to polymers [7], in order to confer them specific properties and 52 53 advantages. However, there are increasing concerns about their impacts on marine organisms 54 or human health since some of them were found to be toxic [7]. Indeed some phthalates, nonylphenols (NPs), Bisphenols, as well as some brominated flames retardants (BFRs) have 55 been identified as carcinogens, mutagens and may have detrimental impacts on the 56 57 reproduction being endocrine disrupting chemicals [1,8-11]. As most of the OPAs are not 58 chemically bound to the polymeric matrix, they can leach into the surrounding environment or 59 can be transferred to marine organisms or humans upon plastic debris uptake [5,12-14]. Additionally, OPAs may migrate from the packaging leading to contamination of the food 60 packed [15-18]. As a result, the use of OPAs in plastics has become controversial and the 61 assessment of their nature and toxicity is of utmost importance. 62

A considerable number (more than 5300) of polymer formulations are available on the market, 63 and more than 4000 known chemicals are used in the formulation of plastic packaging, i.e. 64 65 intentionally added substances (IAS). Additionally, plastic packaging may contain nonintentionally added substances (NIAS) [19,20]. That demonstrates the chemical complexity of 66 plastic polymers. The identity of most IAS and NIAS are unknown making difficult to assess 67 the safety of plastic materials, especially in regards with food contact materials (FCM). In order 68 to broaden understanding of the chemical impact of these additives, it is necessary to have a 69 more-detailed assessment of plastic packaging associated chemicals. This involves the 70 71 development of robust analytical method to identify and quantify them. The analysis of OPAs 72 in polymers is an analytical challenge because of the wide array of their chemical compositions

and the diversity of the molecules mixed within a polymer. Also, the most frequently used 73 74 processes, e.g. solvent extraction (SE), present constraints. These methods are time 75 consuming for the sample preparation, generate wastes and involve the use of toxic solvents. Besides, there is no universal solvent able to dissolve all types of polymers [21-24]. Under 76 such circumstances, the need of avoiding the complexity of analytical processes is of concern. 77 Pyrolysis coupled to a gas chromatography and a mass spectrometry (Py-GC-MS) is an 78 79 analytical tool that enables relatively quick and easy analyses [25]. Moreover, this technique minimizes the sample preparation steps, limiting the potential contamination prior to the 80 analysis and does not require the use of toxic solvents [21,26-28]. Analytical pyrolysis also 81 82 offers a major advantage. It permit to successively analyze both the OPAs and the polymer 83 with a multi-step approach including an initial thermal desorption (TD) step at sub pyrolytic temperatures (i.e. approximately <500 °C) to characterize the additives regardless of the 84 polymer, and a second pyrolysis step at higher temperatures (i.e. >500 °C) to analyze the 85 polymeric matrix [29-31]. Py-GC-MS has already been reported as beneficial to thermally 86 desorb and screen plastic additives in several studies using pyrolyzer/thermal desorption 87 (Py/TD) GC-MS methods [32-34] and is a recognized method for the fast identification of 88 OPAs. Akoueson et al., (2021) review, listed a wide array of OPAs studied using Py and Py/TD-89 GC-MS [25]. However all the developed methods focused on few analytes from a type of 90 additives. No general method exists to analyze a wider diversity of additives. Thus, we aimed 91 to develop a TD method able to identify diverse harmful, emergent, or widely used OPAs. 92

The objectives of the present study are: (i) set up a high-resolution Mass spectral library which includes a selection of OPAs used as plasticizers, flame retardants, antioxidants and stabilizers, (ii) implement a general analytical method using Py/TD-GC-HRMS to identify and detect the selected plastic additives, and (iii) apply the method to several items of food packaging materials in order to characterize their OPAs content.

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### **2.** Materials and methods

# 99 2.1. Implementation of a general GC-HRMS method for OPAs 100 detection

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#### 2.1.1. Targeted additives, reagents and preparation of the samples

According to different criteria, detailed in part 3.1, 56 additives were selected. The additives and their corresponding suppliers are listed in Table 1. A standard mixed solution of  $C_3-C_{33}$  nalkanes (Cat. No. 40147-U) was purchased from RESTEK (Lisses, France). Analytical GC grade solvents were used such as methanol, acetone, toluene or acetonitrile and were all purchased from Sigma-Aldrich Co. (Saint-Quentin-Fallavier, France). Diluted solutions of each additives stock solutions were prepared in suitable solvents at concentrations ranging from 0.05 to 100 mg.L<sup>-1</sup>. The diluted solutions were then transferred and conserved in 2 mL GC autosampler vials with a PTFE coated seal. An aliquot of 1  $\mu$ L of each additive solution was injected in the GC-HRMS using a microliter syringe at increasing concentrations (0.12, 0.25, 0.5, 1, 2.5 and 5 mg.L<sup>-1</sup>) until visualization of the limit of detection additives when the signal to noise (s/n) was > 3. For the mixed n-alkanes, 1  $\mu$ L of the 10 mg.L<sup>-1</sup> solution was also injected.

## 114 **2.1.2. GC-HRMS** method and parameter settings

Samples were analysed using a GC Trace 1310-MS Orbitrap Q-exactive from ThermoFisher Scientific (Les Ulis, France) equipped with a TriPlus RSH auto-sampler. The compounds in standard solutions were separated on a 30 m × 0.25 mm × 0.25  $\mu$ m RXi-5ms capillary column acquired from Restek (Lisses, France). The injection volume was 1  $\mu$ L.

Based on the literature, several methods (Supplementary data S1) were compiled in order to propose a compromise, i.e. a general method suitable for the 56 selected additives, being aware of its limitations regarding the analysis sensitivity for each additive.

122 Analytical conditions are detailed in Table 2.

123 Chromatograms were analyzed using Thermo Scientific Xcalibur software (4.3.73.11) and with 124 the help of an automated search for the markers by deconvolution using TraceFinder<sup>™</sup> 125 software (5.0.889.0). The identity of the additives was confirmed using target and confirming 126 ions obtained from the literature [35-40] and the National Institute of Standards and Technology 127 (NIST) Database.

128 **2.1.3. Construction of the database** 

Following the acquisition, and after obtaining robust chromatograms signals for all the analytes, a database containing mass spectra for all the detected additives was implemented using TraceFinder software including quantitative and qualitative ions for each molecule, as specific as possible. The HRMS files are available on Zenodo [41].

Following the analysis of the standard additives solutions and the mixed *n*-alkane solution, the retention time (RT) of the additive analytes and the n-alkanes were used to calculate the Kováts retention indices (RI) following equation (1). Respective RI were calculated [42] and registered in the database. The RI were validated when the calculated values were in the range of RI values found in the literature.

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$$RI = 100 \times (C_{n+1} - C_n) \times \left[\frac{(t_x - t_n)}{(t_{n+1} - t_n)}\right] + 100 \times C_n$$
 (1)

- With the carbon numbers of *n*-alkanes eluted before ( $C_n$ ) and after ( $C_{n+1}$ ) the corresponding target molecule, retention time of the target molecule expressed in min ( $t_x$ ) and retention times for  $C_n$  ( $t_n$ ) and  $C_{n+1}$  ( $t_{n+1}$ ) for the flanking n-alkanes expressed in min.
- 142

The RI and the specific qualitative and quantitative ions are gathered for each additive inTable 3.

# 145 2.2. Thermodesorption method development for the detection of 146 OPAs using Py/TD-GC-HRMS

A TD step using a Pyrolyser, CDS Analytical Pyroprobe 6150 from Quad Service (Oxford, PA
US), was added to the GC-HRMS developped method.

### 149 **2.2.1. Sample preparation optimization**

Four protocols of sample preparation (Supplementary data S2) were previously tested in order 150 to ease the analytical process and to reduce the high volatility of several low molecular weight 151 additives. Briefly, the analysis of the selected plastic additives have been done by introducing 152 153 1 µL of the additives stock solutions at concentrations ranging from 5 to 100 mg.L<sup>-1</sup>. The solutions were either added in an empty pyrolysis quartz tube or in a pyrolysis quartz tube 154 155 containing three types of different materials used as "solution trapping matrix" such as a piece of quartz filter, a piece of quartz wool or a small amount of diatomaceous earth (silicium 156 dioxide). These media were selected for their documented chemically inert features and their 157 thermal resistance [43,44]. In brief, considering the results (S2), the quartz filter was chosen 158 as a suitable « trapping matrix » since it permit to stabilize the compounds despite the waiting 159 160 time between the sample preparation and the analysis

### 161 **2.2.2. Implementation of a general method using Py/TD-GC-HRMS device**

The analyses were carried out using a Pyrolyser CDS Analytical Pyroprobe 6150 from Quad
Service (Oxford, PA US) coupled to a GC-HRMS device (Trace 1310-MS Orbitrap Q-exactive,
ThermoFisher Scientific) thanks to a heated transfer line with the method presented in part
2.1.2.

According to the preliminary results obtained following the sample preparation optimization tests presented part 2.2.1., 1 μL of the additives standard solutions was introduced in a pyrolysis quartz tube containing a piece of quartz filter. The pyrolysis quartz tube and the quartz filter were both heated beforehand at 1000 °C during 15 seconds to get rid of any residual compounds. Sample tubes were then placed in the pyrolyzer auto-sampler and analysis was performed. Selection of the thermal desorption temperature was carried out on the additives standard solutions by testing three desorption temperatures: 250 °C, 350 °C and 450 °C, with three replicates. The TD time was fixed at 60 seconds based on the litterature, beeing the mostfrequently used TD time (Table S1).

To ensure the reliability of the results and the absence of contamination in the analytical device two precautions were taken for each batch: (i) a 1000 °C auto-clean of the pyrolysis chamber during 15 seconds between each analysis; (ii) and five empty pyrolysis quartz tube without sample, hereafter referred as "blank", were pyrolyzed at the beginning of each run.

Application: OPAs identification in food contact materials

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2.3.

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#### 2.3.1. Sample selection and preparation

181 Two types of food packaging items made of polypropylene (PP) and polylactic acid (PLA), 182 coming from two different suppliers, tagged with either A or B, have been selected. The 183 selection of PP was based on its high production and high presence in the marine environment 184 [3,19]. The PLA was selected for being the most used bio-based alternative in order to compare 185 its additive content to a petro-based polymer [45].

Punches, i.e. cylinders of 1 mm diameter, were cut in the food packaging items using biopsy punches from Farla-Medical (Antwerpen, Belgium), in order to have a homogeneous sample taking process. Thickness of the cylinders was measured using a binocular microscope (Olympus SZX16) and OLYMPYS cellSens Dimention 3.2 software (n=3). The volumes and the masses ( $\mu$ g) of each particle were calculated using the diameters and the thickness measurements. The cylinders were then introduced in pyrolysis sample cups. Sample tubes were placed in the pyrolyzer auto-sampler and analysis was performed (n=3).

#### 193 **2.3.2. Py/TD-GC-HRMS analyses**

In order to thermally desorb the additives contained in the samples, each cylinder was successively analyzed three times at a thermal desorption temperature of 350 °C to maximize the extraction of the chemicals present in the samples. An approximation of the extraction efficiency percentage (%) was calculated dividing the area recorded at the first step by the total area over the three steps.

All analyses were carried out using the method previously developed and presented part 2.1.2.

The selected OPAs (Table 1) were identified on the basis of the RT, RI, quantitative and qualitative ions and ions ratios with the help of the previously implemented database. The obtained signals were corrected taking in account the procedural blanks, i.e., pyrolysis tubes without sample, the calculated mass of the samples and the extraction efficiency of the method.

#### 204 **2.4.** Statistical analysis

All statistical analyses were performed using R-Studio software (1.4.1106) [46]. For all the analysis, the normality and the homoscedasticity of the distribution were verified before carrying out ANOVA follow by Tuckey post Hoc test (adding the car package (3.0-12) [47]). Assuming that one of the hypothesis was not verified, a non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test was performed. Kruskal Wallis tests were followed by a Nemeyni's post hoc test. Post hoc tests were achieved using agricolae (1.3-5) [48] and PMCMR (4.4) [49] packages. Mean differences were considered as significant when p-value < 0.05.

#### **3. Results and discussion**

# 3.1. Preliminary work and implementation of a HR mass spectra database

A total of 56 additives were selected as relevant compounds. This selection was based on a 215 bibliographic work including previous publications, the European Food Safety Authority's 216 (EFSA) list containing their evaluation on substances for FCM and the European chemical 217 agency's (ECHA) additives list containing 400 substances imported in the European Union that 218 are used in plastic products with a trade volume higher than 100 ton/year (Table 1) 219 220 [1,7,23,25,26,34,45,50-55]. This bibliographic work was performed based on different priority 221 criteria such as: the use of additives in plastic and plastic packaging, a balance between their toxicity and their concentration in polymers, the environment and marine organisms, and 222 223 finally, the feasibility of GC-MS analysis on these additives.

A standard solution containing all targeted compounds was prepared to set up a suitable GC– HRMS method for their simultaneous analysis. This preliminary work was carried out using GC-HRMS with the method presented part 2.1.2 and allowed the detection of all the selected additives (Figure 1). The spectra of each additives peaks in figure 1 permitted the implementation of our own plastic additives database [41].

The identification of the additives not already included in NIST database was confirmed by the presence of their respective quantitative and qualitative characteristic ions presented in table 3. An additional confirmation for this set of additives has been made using Kováts RI (Table 3).

In this work, as the analytes were partly selected on their amenability to GC-MS analysis, some additives known to be toxic and widely used in plastic materials (e.g. Tetrabromobisphenol A and the hexabromocyclododecane isomers ( $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$  and  $\gamma$ -HBCD)) were not targeted. Indeed, depending on their chemical nature, certain OPAs may be complex to analyze and are hard to mobilize [34]. These analytical limitations can be overcome with a derivatization step that will modify the sample and product more volatile derivative [56]. It was not employed in the present
study, which consisted to implement a fast and easy method. However, using a derivatization
approach or leading analysis using liquid extraction could be complementary to have a more
complete analysis.

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# 3.2. Optimization and characterization of a Py/TD-GC-HRMS method for the detection of OPAs

Three temperatures were tested at this step: 250 °C, 350 °C and 450 °C. The pyrolyzer thermal desorption temperature had a significant impact on the peaks area of several additives. Figure 246 2 illustrates the relevant temperature patterns for each additive families. The detailed results 247 for each additive are presented in supplementary data S3.

The areas of most flame-retardants (9 out of 14) showed no significant difference between the 248 three tested temperatures. Areas were significantly higher at 350 °C for three additives (TCEP, 249 250 TCPP and TDCPP), whereas the area of the 2,4,6-TBP and BTBPE were significantly higher 251 respectively at 250 °C and 450 °C. The analysis of the plasticizers additives indicates significantly higher areas at 350 °C for 13 additives (BBP, DBP, DCHP, DEHP, DEP, DHP, 252 253 DIBP, DIDP, DIHP, DINCH, DNOP, DNP, DOA) out of 16, and at 450 °C for the ATBC. No significant difference has been detected for three additives between the three tested 254 temperatures (DAP, DIHP and DMP). Concerning the antioxidants, areas were significantly 255 higher at 450 °C for six additives (NPs, 4-NP, NP1OE, 4NP1OE and Irganox 1081®), at 350°C 256 for the Lowinox TBM 8<sup>®</sup> and at 250 °C for the 4-t-OP. Five additives showed no significant 257 difference between the tested temperatures. Finally, no significant difference was observed for 258 259 the three UV stabilizers.

260 Overall, based on these results, 350 °C seems to be the more relevant thermal desorption 261 temperature for the analysis of the selected additives, either being significantly optimal or because no significant differences has been observed between the three temperatures. In line 262 263 with our results, other studies generally used a thermal desorption temperature of 350 °C [25,27,52]. Moreover, the temperature is one of the key factors for a successful extraction and 264 265 subsequent detection [27]. Indeed, it affects the degree of fragmentation and the generated pyrolysis products, its selection must allow a suitable desorption of the additive without altering 266 it. At too high temperatures, usually above 500 °C, the polymeric matrix begins to degrade and 267 the excess of polymer fragments interfere with the identification of characteristic additive 268 fragments, which make the analysis of the results complicated [21] and may lead to 269 misinterpretation of the results. 270

The Py/TD-GC-HRMS method was used to analyze 56 additives at various concentration levels (1, 5, 10, 25, 50 and 100 mg.L<sup>-1</sup>). Eight additives, marked with "\*" in the Table 1, were not detected even when the highest concentration was injected in the pyrolyzer. Among them,
three phosphorous flame-retardants (TCP, TCrP and TToP), two plasticizers (bisphenol S and
TEHPA), two UV stabilizers (Uvinul 3049<sup>®</sup> and 3008<sup>®</sup>) and one antioxidant (NP2OE). The 49
additives identified have been detected at 5 ng except for the BDEs, the alkylphenols and the
Irganox 1081<sup>®</sup> at 10 ng; for DIDP, DINP, DIHP and the BTBPE at 25 ng; for Lowinox TBM 6<sup>®</sup>
at 50 ng; and for the Irganox 1076<sup>®</sup> with a detection threshold at 100 ng (Table 1).

A previous study [53] mentioned the complicated analysis of phosphorous flame-retardants. Indeed, some analytes are more difficult to analyze than others using Py/TD-GC-HRMS according to their physico-chemical properties [25]. For instance, TEHPA and Uvinul 3008<sup>®</sup> start to decompose at a temperature of 250°C and 350°C respectively, unlike BPS that has a low volatility and is more thermally stable than its bisphenol's analogs [57].

Increasing the thermal desorption temperature might help to volatilize the most stable 284 additives, such as the BPS. Nonetheless, the temperatures selected in the study did not permit 285 the desorption of the BPS. Other studies managed to analyze this molecule, for instance 286 Becerra and Odermatt (2012) conducted their analysis with a temperature of 500 °C and added 287 derivatizing agents using trimethyl ammonium hydroxide (TMAH), to increase the volatility of 288 the additive [58]. However, in the present study, it was a thoughtful choice not to derivatize the 289 290 samples, since the aim was to implement a quick method with minimal sample preparation 291 steps. Some polymers, such as polystyrene (PS) or polyvinyl chloride (PVC), start to 292 decompose at relatively low temperatures [21]. These limitations explain the selection of a 293 method that does not permit the analysis of all additives.

Application of the method on plastic food packaging

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3.3.

#### 3.3.1. Integration of samples mass variability

The masses (µg) of each sample cylinders were calculated using their diameter and thickness 296 as well as the density of each polymer type. The average calculated mass of PP-B, i.e. 203 297  $\mu$ g, is significantly different (p-value < 0.05) from the three other samples, i.e. 338  $\mu$ g, 317  $\mu$ g 298 299 and 276 µg respectively for PP-A, PLA-B and PLA-A. Moreover, a high standard deviation (sd) is noticed especially for PLA-B sample and can be explain by thickness variations according 300 to the location where the sample was cut out on the plastic container (supplementary data S4). 301 302 In that respect, the respective masses of each analyzed food packaging cylinders were taken 303 into account in order to normalize the additives signal measured in each sample.

304 3.3.2. Efficiency characterization

The method was developed on additives standard solutions. However, once additives are included in a polymeric matrix, some interactions can occur between the additives and the matrix [21]. Hence, the extraction efficiency of the method was directly calculated on the matrices of interest, i.e. following the analysis of PP and PLA food packaging samples, in orderto take into account the potential interactions.

Each sample were submitted to three successive heating at a thermal desorption temperature of 350 °C. No additive was detected during the third analysis, indicating that the entirety of the additive included in the samples has been desorbed and analyzed during the first or second pyrolysis step (supplementary data S5). Consequently, the sum of the areas obtained during the two first analysis steps is considered as representing 100% of the additives amount included in each sample. The extraction efficiency percentage of each step was therefore calculated based on this assumption.

The results of the extraction efficiency after a first step of desorption were more than 80% for 317 most compounds (Table 4, bold printed characters), with a few exceptions. Five additives 318 required a total of two desorption steps to be fully extracted from the samples, e.g. DMP, DEP 319 (for PP samples), DEHA (PP-A), TBP (PLA-A and PP-A) and TCPP, with average extraction 320 efficiency percentages ranging from 50 to 80% or <50% upon the first desorption step (Table 321 4). Carrying out two desorption steps doubles the time of the analysis. For this reason, the 322 developed method only includes one thermal desorption step at 350 °C. The average 323 extraction efficiency percentages of each additive for each sample were taken into account in 324 325 order to correct the additives signal recorded. However, care must be taken about the 326 completeness of the extraction with this TD method. Although the punch is thin and the cross-327 section expose the core of the material. It can also be assumed that only the additives on the 328 first layers of the punch could have been desorbed.

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3.3.3. Identification of the selected OPAs in PP and PLA food packaging samples

The additives amounts detected in the food packaging samples are expresses in Area
 (Arbitrary unit (A.U)) per µg of plastic. The values were corrected with the extraction efficiency
 percentage and the calculated mass of each particle analyzed.

333 Ten OPAs of interest have been detected in the selected food packaging samples (Figure 3), 334 mostly plasticizers (eight molecules) and flames retardants (two molecules). Two plasticizers, DEP and DIBP and a phosphorous flame retardant, TCPP, have been detected in all samples 335 regardless of the supplier or polymer type. DMP and DBP plasticizers have been identified in 336 337 all the samples except PLA-A, and DCHP was identified in all the samples except PP-B. Finally, the plasticizer DINP has only been detected in the two PP samples and Bisphenol B 338 339 exclusively in the two PLA samples. TBP, a phosphorous flame retardant, has been identified 340 both in PP-A and PLA-B only.

The area of DCHP is equivalent among all samples regardless of the supplier or polymer type.
Overall, peaks areas for a majority of the OPAs are higher for the PP samples than for the PLA

(six out of ten; Figure 3). DBP and DEP peak areas are significantly higher in PP-A samples
than in PLA-A and B samples. The areas of DEHA, DIBP, DINP and TCPP in both PP samples
are significantly higher than in PLA samples. On the other hand, the peak area of the
phosphorous flame retardant TBP is significantly higher in the PLA-A than in both PP samples.

Looking at the differences between PLA-A and B (Figure 3), the PLA-B contains more additives 347 than the PLA-A. Nine OPAs were identified in the PLA-B, including seven plasticizers (BPB, 348 DBP, DCHP, DEHA, DEP, DIBP and DMP) and two flames retardants (TBP and TCPP), while 349 only seven OPAs were identified in the PLA-A in which the DEHA and DMP have not been 350 detected. In addition, a trend appears that the areas of the OPAs peaks found in PLA-B are 351 mostly higher than those found in the PLA-A, except for the DCHP where the areas are 352 identical. This trend is significant for the Bisphenol B (15 times higher in PLA-B) and the DEHA 353 (absent in the PLA-A while detected in the PLA-B). The same pattern is observed when looking 354 355 at the PP-A and B samples results (Figure 3). The PP-A contains two additives more than the 356 PP-B. Nine OPAs have been detected in the PP-A, including seven plasticizers (DBP, DCHP, 357 DEHA, DEP, DIBP, DINP and DMP) and two flames retardants (TBP and TCPP), while the PP-B sample only contains seven OPAs (DCHP and TBP missing). The peaks areas of the 358 359 OPAs identified in the PP-A samples tends to be higher than in the PP-B. It is significant for the DBP (three times higher in PP-A), the DEHA (8x), the DIBP (x1.5), DMP (x2) and TCPP 360 361 (x4).

However, regarding DEP and DIBP (respectively for PLA and PP, and for PLA only), it is difficult to draw conclusions. Indeed, a large spread in the data can be observed as these additives show a wide 95% confidence interval (IC 95%). This dispersion can be explained by a lack of homogeneity in the distribution of additives within the same sample. This would then require the multiplication of replicates to be able to take these disparities into account.

367 These results lead to a few remarks:

First, a petro-based vs bio-based difference. For all analyzed sample, the majority of the OPAs 368 369 identified were plasticizers. Indeed, during the formulation of plastic materials, OPAs are added 370 at different proportions depending on the polymer and its usage. Most of the time, plasticizers 371 are used extensively, reaching up 60% weight/weight (w/w) [59]. Here, the same number of 372 additives detected in both PLA and PP materials (10 OPAs each) confirms that "bio-based" do 373 not pledge "additives free". Overall, lower amounts (Area (A.U)/mass (µg)) of additives were 374 noticed in PLA samples (except BPB, DCHP and TBP), while, surprisingly, bisphenol B, a toxic 375 endocrine disruptor analogue of the bisphenol A [10], has only been detected in PLA samples. 376 Zimmerman et al., [19,60] tested the in-vitro toxicity and the chemical content of many biobased materials (PLA items used as FCM). Their study detected priority concern compounds 377

(such as additives, oligomers, along with non-intentional added substances (NIAS)) and
 highlighted that bio-based materials are not safer than conventional plastics regarding their
 chemicals content.

Secondly, an inter-suppliers difference. This study underlined non-negligible differences on the 381 382 identification of OPAs in two food-packaging products manufactured with the same polymer and that are intended to have the same use. That reflects the complexity to generalize and 383 estimate the potentially dangerous additives in the studied material and thus the exposition of 384 385 marine organisms and consumer, since the chemical composition of a material don't seem to 386 be related to the polymer type but to each individual product. This match the conclusion of Zimmermann, et al. [61] that investigated the toxicity and the chemical composition of several 387 plastic leachates made of conventional in PLA sample including FCM. They ended up with that 388 389 same conclusion being that the contaminant content and the toxicity cannot be generalized 390 based on the polymer type and are product specific. Plastic products formulation is different 391 depending on the manufacturers, and may explain this difference in additives types and 392 additives abundances between products made with the same polymer. It underlines the need 393 of identifying the chemical content and the chemical safety of each material rather than 394 polymers types, which is not a straightforward task but is inevitable considering the disparity 395 in plastic formulation of the commercially available products. Moreover, the formulation's recipes remain unknown from the scientific community and hinder the evaluation of potential 396 397 impacts and toxicity of plastic materials.

### **4.** Conclusion

399 This study was conducted with the aim to set up a suitable Py/TD-GC-HRMS method for simultaneous identification of various selected organic additives and to set up a high-resolution 400 spectral database. The developed method showed its ability to detect the majority of the 401 targeted additives. Nevertheless, this method may be limiting for certain OPAs harder to 402 mobilize using GC. In complement, a liquid extraction analysis would provide more 403 comprehensive results. Ten additives were detected in PP and PLA food contact materials. 404 405 The results indicate the presence of multiples additives, some of them being toxic, in both 406 petro-based and bio-based food packaging samples (e.g. plasticizers, phosphorous flames 407 retardants). Moreover, significant differences were pointed out depending on either the 408 polymer type or the suppliers. The present study highlights the complexity to assess and 409 generalize the additive content and their amount in plastic packaging items due the variety and 410 differences in plastic formulation.

# **5. Declaration of competing interest**

412 Authors do not declare any competing interest.

## 413 **6. Funding**

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# 421 **7. CRediT Roles**

F.Akoueson: Conceptualization, Investigation, Methodology, Formal analysis, Software, 422 Validation, Visualization, Writing - original draft, Writing - review & editing. C. Chbib: 423 Methodology Investigation, Writing - review & editing. A. Brémard: Investigation, Formal 424 analysis. S. Monchy: Writing - review & editing. I. Paul-Pont: Writing - review & editing. P. 425 Doyen: Writing - review & editing. A. Dehaut: Conceptualization, Funding acquisition, 426 Supervision, Project administration, Writing - review & editing. G. Duflos: Resources, 427 Conceptualization, Funding acquisition, Supervision, Project administration, Writing - review & 428 429 editing.

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## 631 **Figure captions**

- **Figure 1:** Chromatograms of the targeted plastic additives analyzed using GC-HRMS. (A)
- plasticizers additives; (B) flames retardants additives; and (C) antioxidants, UV stabilizers and
  plasticizers additives. The numbers refer to the name of the molecules mentioned in Table 1.

**Figure 2:** Peak areas of some selected OPAs depending on the thermal desorption temperature (250 °C, 350 °C and 450 °C, respectively in blue, yellow and grey). (A) plasticizers and flame-retardants; (B) antioxidants; and (C) antioxidants and UV-stabilizers. Values are expresses as mean± 95% confidence interval. Homogeneous groups are indicated by the same letter.(n=3).

- **Figure 3:** Corrected peak areas of the OPAs found in the 4 food plastic packaging samples in
- 641 polypropylene (PP) and polylactic acid (PLA). The letters A and B referred to the suppliers.
- 642 Homogeneous groups are indicated by the same letter. (n=3).







643 <u>Table 1</u>: selected organic plastic additives (OPAs) with their corresponding suppliers and the quantity that allowed peaks detection using Py-GC-

644 HRMS analysis. The molecules tagged with "\*" represent the OPAs not detected (n.d) at the highest concentration available.

Function	N°	Additive	Abbreviation	CAS	Suppliers	Limit of detection (ng) (split 5)	
	1	Dimethyl phthalate	DMP	131-11-3			
	2	Diethyl phthalate	DEP	84-66-2			
	3	Di-allyl phthalate	DAIP	131-17-9	Restek	5	
	4	Diisobutyl phthalate	DIBP	84-69-5			
	5	Di-n-butyl phthalate	DBP	84-74-2			
	6	Tributyl Acetyl Citrate	ATBC	77-90-7	Accustandard		
	7	Di-n-hexyl phthalate	DHP	84-75-3	Destak		
	8	Benzyl butyl phthalate	BBP	85-68-7			
Placticizore	9	Bis-2-Ethylhexyl Adipate	DEHA	103-23-1	Accustandard	1	
Flasticizers	10	Diisoheptyl phthalate	DIHP	71888-89-6	Accustandard	25	
	11	Tri(2-ethylhexyl) phosphate	TEHPA *	78-42-2	Accustandard	n.d (at 100)	
	12	Dicylcohexyl phthalate	DCHP	84-61-7	Postok	5	
	13	Bis(2-Ethylhexyl) phthalate	DEHP	117-81-7	Resiek		
	14	Diisononyl hexahydrophthalate	DINCH	166412-78-8	Accustandard		
	15	Di-n-octyl phthalate	DIOP	117-84-0	Restek		
	16	Diisononyl phthalate	DINP	68515-48-0	Accustandard	25	
	17	Di-nonyl phthalate	DNP	84-76-4	Restek	5	
	18	Diisodecyl phthalate	DIDP	68515-49-1	Accustandard	25	
	19	Triethyl Phosphate	TEP	78-40-0	LGC standard	5	
	20	Tripropyl Phosphate	TPP	115-86-6			
	21	Tributyl Phosphate	TBP	126-73-8			
	22	2,4,6-Tribromophenol	2,4,6,TBP	118-79-6	LGC standard	5	
	23	Tris(2-Chloroethyl)Phosphate	TCEP	115-96-8	LGC standard	rd	
Flamos	24	Tris(2-Chloroisopropyl)Phosphate	TCPP	13674-84-5	LGC standard		
retardante	25	2,4,4'-Tribromodiphenyl ether	BDE-28	41318-75-6	Accustandard	10	
Tetaruants	26	Tris(1,3-Dichloro-2-Propyl)Phosphate	TDCPP	13674-87-8	LCC standard	5	
	27	Triphenyl Phosphate	TPhP	513-08-6	LGC stanuaru		
	28	2,2',4,4'-Tetrabromodiphenyl ether	BDE-47	5436-43-1	Accustandard	10	
	29	Tricresyl Phosphate	TCP *	1330-78-5	Accustandard	n.d (at 100)	
	30	Tricresyl Phosphate - isomer	TCrP *	78-30-8		n.d (at 100)	
	31	2,2',4,4',6-Pentabromodiphenyl ether	BDE-100	60348-60-9	Accustandard	5	

Function	N°	Additive	Abbreviation	CAS	Suppliers	Limit of detection (ng) (split 5)
	32	Tri-o-tolyl phosphate	TToP *	78-30-8	Accustandard	n.d (at 100)
	33	2,2',4,4',5-Pentabromodiphenyl ether	BDE-99	189084-64-8		
	34	2,2',4,4',5,5'-Hexabromodiphenyl ether	BDE-153	68631-49-2	Accustandard	10
	35	2,2',4,4',5,6'-Hexabromodiphenyl ether	BDE-154	207122-15-4	Accustanuaru	10
	36	2,2',3,4,4',5',6-Heptabromodiphenyl ether	BDE-183	207122-16-5		
	37	1,2-Bis (2,4,6 Tribromophenoxy) ethane	BTBPE	37853-59-1	LGC Standard	25
	38	6,6'-di-tert-butyl-2,2'-thiodi-p-cresol	Irganox <sup>®</sup> 1081	90-66-4	Accustandard	10
Antiovidants	39	Butylated hydroxytoluene	BHT	128-37-0	Accustandard	5
Antioxidants	40	3,5-di-tert-butyl-4-hydroxyhydrocinnamic acid, octadecyl ester	Irganox <sup>®</sup> 1076	2082-79-3	Accustandard	100
	41	6,6'-ditert-butyl-4,4'-thiodin-m-cresol	Lowinox <sup>®</sup> TBM-6	96-69-5	Accustantiant	50
	42	2,2-dihydroxy-4,4-dimethoxybenzophenone	Uvinul <sup>®</sup> 3049 *	131-54-4		n.d. (at 100)
LIV.	43 2-t-Butyl-6(5-chloro-2H-benzotriazol-2-yl)-4-methylphenol		UV-326	3896-11-5-		5
etabilizore	44	44 2-(2H-Benzotriazol-2-yl)-4,6-di-tert-pentylphenol UV-328		25973-55-1	Accustandard	
Stabilizers	45	2,4-Di-tert-butyl-6-(5-chloro-2H-benzotriazol-2-yl)phenol	UV-327	3864-99-1		
	46	62-hydroxy-4-octyloxybenzophenoneUvinul 3008 *1843-05-6			n.d. (at 100)	
	47	4-Tert-Octylphenol	4-t-OP	140-66-9	Accustandard	5
	48	Nonylphenol	NPs	84852-15-3	Accustandard	
	49	4-nonylphenol	4-NP	104-40-5	Accustandard	10
Antioxidants	50	Nonylphenol Monoethoxylate	NP1EO	27986-36-3	Accustandard	
-	51	Bisphenol F	BPF	620-92-8	Accustandard	5
plasticizers -	52	4-Nonylphenol Monoethoxylate	4-NP1EO	104-35-8	Accustandard	10
stabilizers	53	Bisphenol A	BPA	80-05-7	Accustandard	5
	54	Bisphenol B	BPB	77-40-7	Accustanualu	5
	55	Nonylphenol diethoxylate	NP2EO *	N/A	Accustandard	n.d. (at 10)
	56	Bisphenol S	BPS *	80-09-1	Accustandard	n.d (at 100)

# 646 <u>Table 2:</u> GC-HRMS analytical conditions

Parameters	Settings		
GC			
Injection port temperature	300°C		
Column temperature (°C)	80°C (0.5 min) → 10°C/min → 330°C (3 min)		
Injection mode	Split (split ratio 1:5)		
Carrier gas	Helium		
Carrier Gas flow	1 mL.min <sup>-1</sup>		
Transfer line temperature	300°C		
MS			
Ion source temperature	300°C		
Ionization method	Electron Ionization (EI), 70 eV.		
Analytical mode	Full Scan mode (FS)		
Scan Range	30.00000 – 750.00000 m/z		
Solvent Delay	5 min		

<u>Table 3</u>: Kováts retention indices (RI) values and quantitative and qualitative ions for the
selected plastic additives molecules. n.d. = not detected.

Function	Molecules	RI	Quantitative ions	Qualitative ions	
	DMP	1469	163.03888	133.02846	
	DEP	1608	149.02333	177.05455	
	DAIP	1756	149.0231	189.05432	
	DIBP	1872	149.02333	161.05917	
	DBP	1972	149.02333	160.08830	
	ATBC	2160	129.01845	259.15451 ; 137.99502	
	DHP	2374	149.02333	234.12006	
	BBP	2401	149.02333	206.09376	
<b>BI</b> (1.1	DEHA	2404	111.04393	101.05960 ; 129.05444	
Plasticizers	DIHP	2380 - 2509	149.02333	265.14313 ; 99.11672	
	TEHPA	2477	98.98428	113.13261	
	DCHP	2558	149.02333	249.11210	
	DEHP	2570	149.02333	279.15909	
	DINCH	2630 - 2870	155.07002	109.06474 : 127.07529	
	DIOP	2756	149.02333	261,14876	
	DINP	2731 - 2867	149.02323	71.08553	
	DNP	2936	149.02333	293.17474	
	DIDP	2876 - 3010	149.02332	n.d.	
	TEP	1124	98.98432	127.01567 : 109 00512	
	TPP	1383	98 98432	141 03133	
	TBP	1650	98 98432	211 10963	
	2.4.6.TBP	1656	331 76931	222 85798	
	TCEP	1769	142,96611	222 96906 248 98479	
	TCPP	1808	125 00023	201 00710 : 156 98178	
	BDE-28	2283	245,96733	139 05414	
	TDCPP	2354	98 98432	190 94284 · 154 96611	
	TPhP	2421	325.06296	233 03670 : 215 02596	
Flames	BDE-47	2550	325 87582	323 87792	
retardants	TCP	2676	020101002	020101102	
	TCrP	2707	165.07015	243.05746 ; 368.11771	
	BDE-100	2763	403 78613	563 62171	
	TToP	2738	165 07015	243 05746 368 11771	
	BDE-99	2823	405.78452	563.62171	
	BDE-153	3000			
	BDE-154	3092	483.69452	242.84599 ; 643.53162	
	BDE-183	3375	563,60352	281,80109	
	BTBPE	3453	356.79514	277.87637	
	Irganox <sup>®</sup> 1081	1366	149.09674	164,12027	
	BHT	1520	205.158752	206.16206	
Antioxidants	Irganox <sup>®</sup> 1076	3611	147.08102	263.16534 : 217.15947	
	Lowinox <sup>®</sup> TBM-6	2795	358,19647	259.07922	
	Uvinul <sup>®</sup> 3049	2503	151.03903	257.08099 ; 124.05204	
	UV-326	2575	300.08972	272.05853	
UV	UV-328	2681	322.19113	351.23003	
stabilizers	UV-327	2692	342.13678	357.16034 ; 286.07428	
	Uvinul 3008	2790	213.05461	325.17978 ; 137.02342	
	4-t-OP	1611	135.08041	206.16644	
	NPs	1700 – 1770	135.08041	197.13233 ; 212.15582	
	4-NP	1873	107.04916	221.18555	
Antioxidants;	NP1EO	1969 - 2030	179.10652	193.12220	
Plasticizers;	BPF	2104	200.08276	n.d	
Stabilizers	4-NP1EO	2146	107.04916	151.07530 ; 264.20834	
	BPA	2221	213.09113	228.11452	
	BPB	2321	213.09065	227.10631	
L	0	ſ			

Function	Molecules	RI	Quantitative ions	Qualitative ions
	NP2EO	2027 - 2321	107.04916	151.07530 ; 264.20834
	BPS	2765.2777	141.00046	110.03627

<u>Table 4:</u> average extraction efficiency percentages and, in parenthesis, standard deviations of
 the method following the 1st pyrolysis step, after analyzing the additive content of PLA and PP
 samples (n=3). Each sample was successively analyzed 3 times at 350 °C. Bold printed
 characters represent average extraction efficiencies >80%. n.d = not detected.

	PLA-A	PLA-B	PP-A	PP-B
DMP	n.d	33 (56)	79 (10)	48 (9)
DEP	90 (17)	95 (9)	70 (4)	65 (9)
DBP	94 (10)	99 (3)	100 (0)	100 (0)
DIBP	98 (3)	98 (3)	100 (0)	100 (0)
DCHP	100 (0)	100 (0)	100 (0)	n.d
DINP	n.d	n.d	87 (2)	88 (4)
DEHA	n.d	90 (18)	59 (36)	93 (2)
TBP	59 (51)	93 (6)	23 (40)	n.d
TCPP	62 (54)	76 (9)	65 (5)	79 (11)
BPB	100 (0)	93 (2)	n.d	n.d

Supplementary Material

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