Packaging and packaging waste: reduction of the consumption of lightweight plastic carrier bags

2013/0371(COD) - 04/03/2015 - Council position

The Council's position fully reflects the **compromise reached in the negotiations between the European Parliament and the Council**, with the agreement of the Commission.

The main elements of the compromise reached with the European Parliament are outlined below:

The measures to be adopted with a view to reduce the consumption of lightweight plastic bags: these shall include either one or both of the following approaches:

- the adoption of measures ensuring that the yearly consumption level will not exceed 90 lightweight plastic bags per person by 31 December 2019 and 40 lightweight plastic carrier bags per person by 31 December 2025 (or equivalent in weight);

- the adoption of measures ensuring that by 31 December 2018 these plastic bags will not be provided free of charge for consumers unless equally effective instruments are implemented.

Very lightweight plastic carrier bags: these may be excluded from these measures. These are defined as plastic bags with a wall thickness below 15 microns required for hygiene purposes or provided as primary packaging for loose food when this helps prevent food wastage.

Information to the public: the Commission and the Member States will, at least during the first year of implementation of the Directive, actively encourage public information and awareness campaigns concerning the adverse environmental impact of excessive use of lightweight plastic bags.

Future steps:

- **two years** after the entry into force of the Directive, the Commission will present a report to the European Parliament and Council, examining the impact of the use of oxo-degradable plastic bags on the environment as well as a report on the different possibilities to reduce the use of very lightweight plastic bags;

- **six and a half years** after the entry into force of the Directive, the Commission shall present a report assessing the effectiveness of measures at EU level, in combating littering, changing consumer behaviour and promoting waste prevention. If the assessment shows that the measures adopted are not effective, the Commission shall examine other possible ways to achieve a reduction in the consumption of lightweight plastic bags, including the setting of realistic and achievable targets at EU level.

All those reports will be accompanied, if appropriate, by legislative proposals.