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

2013/0371(COD) - 10/04/2015 - Committee recommendation tabled for plenary, 2nd reading

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety adopted the second reading recommendation contained in the report by Margrete AUKEN (Verts/ALE, DK), on the Council position at first reading with a view to the adoption of a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 94/62/EC as regards reducing the consumption of lightweight plastic carrier bags.

The parliamentary committee recommended **agreeing to the Council position** without any amendments.

As result of the negotiations between the European Parliament and the Council the main elements of the final agreement are the following:

Targets or pricing: the text now requires Member States to choose between two obligations:

- either to adopt measures ensuring that the annual consumption level does not exceed, on average, 90 lightweight plastic carrier bags per person by the end of 2019, and not more than 40 lightweight plastic carrier bags per person by 2025;

- or, alternatively, to ensure that, by the end of 2018, they are no longer provided free of charge at the point of sale of goods or products, unless equally effective instruments are applied.

Annual reporting on consumption: specific provisions on monitoring, requiring the Member States, as from 36 months after the entry into force of the legislation, to report annually on the annual consumption of plastic carrier bags according to a common methodology to be adopted by the Commission within 12 months after the entry into force of the legislation.

Labelling of biodegradable and compostable plastic carrier bags: the obligation for the Commission to set specifications on labelling on biodegradable and compostable plastic carrier bags is an important means to avoid the misleading practices of false labelling of plastic carrier bags, particularly by so called "oxobiodegradable" plastic carrier bags.

Evaluation of impacts of "oxo-degradable" plastic carrier bags on the environment: the agreed text obliges the Commission to examine the impact of "oxo-degradable" plastic carrier bags on the environment and present a report to the European Parliament and the Council, including, if appropriate, a set of measures to limit their consumption or to reduce any harmful impacts within 24 months of the entry into force.

Very lightweight plastic carrier bags: the final agreement introduced an obligation on the Commission to assess the life cycle impacts of possibilities to reduce the consumption of these bags, and present a legislative proposal, if appropriate, within 24 months.

CEN standard for home composting: lastly, the final agreement stipulates that the Commission should ask CEN to develop a standard for home-compostable packaging.

In an **Annex to the draft resolution,** the European Parliament notes the statement made by the Commission on the adoption of the agreement amending Directive 94/62/EC as regards reducing the consumption of lightweight plastic carrier bags. The Parliament considers that the text agreed by the co-legislators is fully in line with the aims of the Commission proposal.

The European Parliament considers that the final text agreed is based on the preferred option identified in the Commission's own impact assessment, and establishes appropriate provisions for Member States to ensure effective reduction of the consumption of plastic bags across the Union.