

Reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment

2018/0172(COD) - 27/03/2019 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 560 votes to 35, with 28 abstentions, a legislative resolution on the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment.

The position of the European Parliament adopted at first reading under the ordinary legislative procedure has modified the Commission proposal as follows

Restrictions on placing on the market

In order to prevent and reduce the impact of certain plastic products on the environment and human health, the Directive introduces a ban on single use plastic products at EU level whenever alternatives are available.

Plastic products banned in the EU from 2021 include: i) cutlery (forks, knives, spoons, chopsticks); ii) plates; iii) straws; iv) cotton bud sticks; (v) beverage stirrers; vi) sticks to be attached to and to support balloon, vii) food containers made of expanded polystyrene; vii) products made from oxo-degradable plastic, as that type of plastic does not properly biodegrade.

Reduction of consumption

Consumption of products for which there is no alternative should be reduced by the Member States in an ambitious and sustained manner in line with the overall objectives of the Union's waste policy, in particular waste prevention, leading to a substantial reversal of increasing consumption trends.

Those measures shall achieve a measurable quantitative reduction in the consumption of the single-use plastic products on the territory of Member State by 2026 compared to 2022. Member States shall prepare a description of the measures that they have adopted, notify the description to the Commission and make it publicly available.

This relates to cups for beverages, including their covers and lids and containers used to contain food which is intended for immediate consumption, either on-the-spot or take-away, and ready to be consumed without any further preparation, such as cooking, boiling or heating.

Bottles

The amended text sets a separate collection target of 90% recycling for plastic bottles by 2029. These bottles should contain at least 25% recycled plastic in their manufacture by 2025, and 30% by 2030. By 1 January 2022 at the latest, the Commission should adopt implementing acts laying down the rules for calculating and verifying these objectives.

Mandatory labelling

The following disposable plastic products placed on the market should bear a visible, clearly legible and indelible marking affixed to its packaging or the product itself: sanitary napkins, wet wipes, cigarette filters and drinking cups. The marking should inform consumers about: (i) appropriate waste management

options for the product or which waste disposal means are to be avoided for the product, and (ii) about the presence of plastics in the product as well as the resulting negative environmental impact of littering.

Extended responsibility for producers

The amended text reinforces the application of the "polluter pays" principle, especially for the tobacco industry. Extended producer responsibility regimes established for plastic tobacco filters provide for producers to cover:

- the costs of awareness raising measures for these products;
- the costs of cleaning the litter resulting from these products, as well as the subsequent transport and treatment of this waste;
- the costs of waste collection for those products that are discarded in public collection systems, including the infrastructure and its operation, and the subsequent transport and treatment of that waste;
- the setting up of specific infrastructure for the waste collection for those products.

Member States should monitor and assess, in line with the reporting obligations laid down in the Directive, fishing gear containing plastic placed on the market as well as waste fishing gear containing plastic collected and shall report to the Commission with a view to the establishment of binding quantitative Union collection targets.

Awareness raising measures

Member States shall take measures to inform consumers and to incentivise responsible consumer behaviour, in order to reduce litter from products covered by the Directive.

Consumers should be made aware of the availability of reusable alternative products and the impact of inappropriate disposal of single-use plastic waste on the sewerage system.