

Reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment

2018/0172(COD) - 12/06/2019 - Final act

PURPOSE: to prevent and reduce the environmental and human health impact of certain single-use plastic products, products made of oxo-degradable plastic and fishing gear containing plastic, and to promote the transition to a circular economy.

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Directive (EU) 2019/904 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment.

CONTENT: the Directive aims to combat marine litter from the ten single-use plastic products most commonly found on European beaches, as well as abandoned fishing gear and oxo-degradable plastic products. Marine litter is of a transboundary nature and is recognised as an increasingly serious global problem. In the EU, 80-85% of litter in the marine environment is made of plastic, with single-use plastic items accounting for 50% and fisheries-related items 27% of the total.

Restrictions on placing on the market

The Directive prohibits the use of certain single-use plastic products for which there are alternatives. Disposable plastic products are manufactured entirely or partially from plastic and are generally intended to be used only once or for a short period of time before disposal.

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

Consumption reduction

Consumption of products for which there is no alternative shall 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. By 3 July 2021, Member States shall prepare a description of the measures that they have adopted, notify the description to the Commission and make it publicly available.

Plastic bottles

The Directive introduces design requirements requiring that caps and lids remain attached to the bottles during the intended use of the products.

The Directive also sets a separate collection target for plastic bottles to be 90% recycled by 2029 (77% by 2025). These bottles must contain at least 25% recycled plastic in their manufacture by 2025, and 30% by 2030. By 1 January 2022 at the latest, the Commission shall adopt implementing acts establishing the rules for the calculation and verification of these objectives.

Mandatory labelling

From 3 July 2021, the following single-use plastic products placed on the market must bear visible, clearly legible and indelible markings on their packaging or on the product itself: sanitary towels, wet wipes, cigarette filters and cups for beverages.

This marking shall inform consumers of (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 Producer Responsibility

The Directive establishes extended producer responsibility schemes that cover the cost of waste collection, applied to products such as filters for tobacco products and fishing gear.

Member States shall monitor the plastic-containing fishing gear placed on their markets 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 shall 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.

Data communication and sanctions

Member States shall provide the Commission with data on single-use plastic products that have been placed on the market in the Member State each year in order to establish the reduction in consumption. They must also inform the Commission, by 3 July 2021 at the latest, of the rules on penalties applicable to infringements of the national provisions adopted pursuant to the Directive.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: 2.7.2019

TRANSPOSITION: no later than 3.7.2021.

The obligations relating to the requirements applicable to the products must be implemented as from 3 July 2024.

Producer responsibility obligations shall be implemented between 5 January 2023 and 31 December 2024 depending on the product.