

Reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment

2018/0172(COD) - 24/10/2018 - Text adopted by Parliament, partial vote at 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 571 votes to 53, with 34 abstentions, amendments to 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 matter was referred to the committee responsible for interinstitutional negotiations.

The main amendments to the Commission proposal adopted in plenary concern the following points:

Marketing restrictions: the aim of the proposed Directive is to introduce an EU-wide ban on single-use plastic products whenever alternatives exist. Products such as plates, cutlery, cotton buds, straws or sticks to be attached to balloons shall be prohibited. Members added to the list of products banned in the EU products containing oxo-degradable plastics, such as bags and packaging, and single-use food and beverage containers made of expanded polystyrene.

Consumption reduction: the consumption of several other items, for which no alternative exists, will have to be reduced by Member States in an ambitious and sustained manner by 2025. This includes single-use burger boxes, sandwich boxes or food containers for fruits, vegetables, desserts or ice creams.

Member states shall draft national plans to encourage the use of products suitable for multiple use, as well as re-using and recycling. The Commission may issue recommendations on those plans. National quantitative reduction targets shall also be established.

Cigarette butts: Member States shall take the necessary measures to achieve a sustained reduction of the environmental impact of waste from tobacco products, and in particular tobacco product filters containing plastic, by reducing post-consumption waste from tobacco product filters containing plastic as follows: 50 % by 2025 and 80 % by 2030.

Lost fishing gear: Member States shall ensure on that basis that a minimum collection rate of fishing gear containing plastic is achieved annually. From 2025 the minimum collection rate shall be 50 %. They shall also ensure that those extended producer responsibility schemes achieve a recycling target of at least 15 % for fishing gear containing plastic by 2025.

Bottles: Member States shall ensure that by 2025 beverage bottles listed in Part C of the Annex may be placed on the market only if they are made from at least 35 % recycled content and are recyclable. By 1 January 2022, the Commission shall adopt implementing acts laying down the methodology for the calculation of recycled content.

Marking requirements: Member States shall ensure that each sales packaging of the single-use plastic products, except tobacco products with filters and filters marketed for use in combination with tobacco products, placed on the market bears a conspicuous, clearly legible and indelible marking, both on packaging containing several units and on each separate unit, when packaged individually, informing consumers of the recyclability of the product.

Consumers shall be informed of the presence in the product of chemicals of concern, such as hazardous metals, phthalates, PFAS, bisphenols, as well as endocrine disruptors.

Costs: with regard to the costs to clean up litter, Member States shall ensure that the financial contributions paid by the producers are established in a proportionate way and take into account the costs of clean-up of individual products or product groups. The costs shall be limited to activities undertaken on a regular basis by public authorities or on their behalf, which shall include litter clean-up activities aiming to meet relevant obligations concerning waste prevention and environmental protection under legislative acts of the Union.

The Commission shall develop guidelines, in consultation with Member States, on the distribution of the costs to clean up litter covered by the extended producer responsibility schemes.

Extended producer responsibility schemes for filters for plastic tobacco products shall provide that producers cover the costs of collecting, transporting and processing tobacco product waste, including the costs of cleaning up waste and the costs of awareness measures.

Member States may also require extended producers responsibility schemes to establish deposit systems to encourage the return of old, derelict or unusable fishing gear.