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Single use plastics have no place in the EU economy

EU plastic strategy

The European Commission has today published its Plastics Strategy which includes plans to table legislative proposals by May 2018 to restrict the use of certain single-use plastic items. The European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) will also come forward with proposals to ban micro-plastics and oxo-plastics (1).

Greens/EFA climate spokesperson **Bas Eickhout** comments:

"There can be no room for unnecessary single use plastics in the European economy. They create a wide range of environmental problems and we welcome any proposals that will see their use reduced. We also welcome the proposal for a new directive on port reception facilities to cut down on marine litter. It is good to see that the Commission is finally moving to ban environmentally damaging oxo-plastics, as well as the use of intentional micro-plastics that cause real harm in our oceans. We are pleased that they will also look at the unintentional release of micro-particles from tyres, textiles and paint. We would remind the Commission that they still have unfinished business to do on the directive on cutting single-use plastic bags (2). Citizens will only feel the full benefits of these proposals if they are implemented in full."

Davor Škrlec, who was Greens/EFA shadow for the report on the circular economy, adds:

"To fully unlock the potential of the circular economy, we need to make sure that our products are free from toxic substances. It is regrettable that the Commission has not included plans for taking strong action on restricting hazardous substances used in plastics. Rather than perpetuating the use of legacy substances via recycling, the EU's approach should be 'toxics out, then reduce, reuse and recycle'."

Background

0. Oxo-plastics are a form of plastics where additives split the plastics in smaller pieces instead of really degrading the plastics. These should not be confused with genuinely biodegradable material.
0. The European Commission has not yet delivered on important obligations in the context of the directive on single-use plastic bags (method to count single-use plastic bags - 20 months overdue; labelling of biodegradable and compostable bags – 8 months overdue).

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