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Press release | 07.03.2013

Environment and waste

Plastic waste strategy overshadowed by unfortunate delay of plastic bag law

The European Commission today presented a green paper on plastic waste but legislation aimed at clamping down on one-use plastic bags, which was meant to accompany it, has unfortunately been delayed. Commenting in the context of the presentation of the green paper and a Greens/EFA group conference on waste (1), Green environment spokesperson **Satu Hassi** (MEP, Finland) said:

"Today's green paper on plastic waste is unfortunately overshadowed by the delay in anticipated EU legislation on one-use plastic bags. Despite extensive consultation and a comprehensive impact assessment, this legislative proposal, which was scheduled for the first semester of 2013, is being delayed. A delay at this moment is not trivial, as it seriously undermines the chances of adopting the in this legislative term, and hence before 2015.

"The major environmental crisis being caused by plastic waste, notably in our seas and oceans, is now finally being acknowledged. With 10 million tons of waste, mostly plastic, ending up in marine environments each year, urgent action is needed. The Commission's green paper recognises this but this recognition counts for little without concrete measures. It is not enough to just preach resource efficiency without delivering concrete action. To this end, the delay of legislative proposals aimed at reducing one-use plastic bags - a major source of plastic waste - is a clear regret.

"Building on the successful measures already taken by some EU member states and regions around the world, the EU should create a legal framework for reducing one-use plastic bags and the resulting plastic waste. This should include clear and ambitious reduction targets, as well as providing legal certainty for those EU member states that want to introduce an outright ban but lack the legal certainty to proceed. We call on the Commission to prioritise this and present draft legislation before the summer, so that there is still a chance that it can be concluded this legislative term.

"Finally, we regret very much that the green paper no longer assesses the problems of concern stemming from specific plastic waste streams, such as PVC. This is contrary to the announcement in the Commission's Work Programme of 2012. Dodging the manifold and well-documented problems linked to PVC-waste is irresponsible."

(1) See more details on the conference, which will include a screening of the film Trashed in the presence of producer Jeremy Irons: http://www.greens-efa.eu/towards-zero-waste-9163.html

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Opinion

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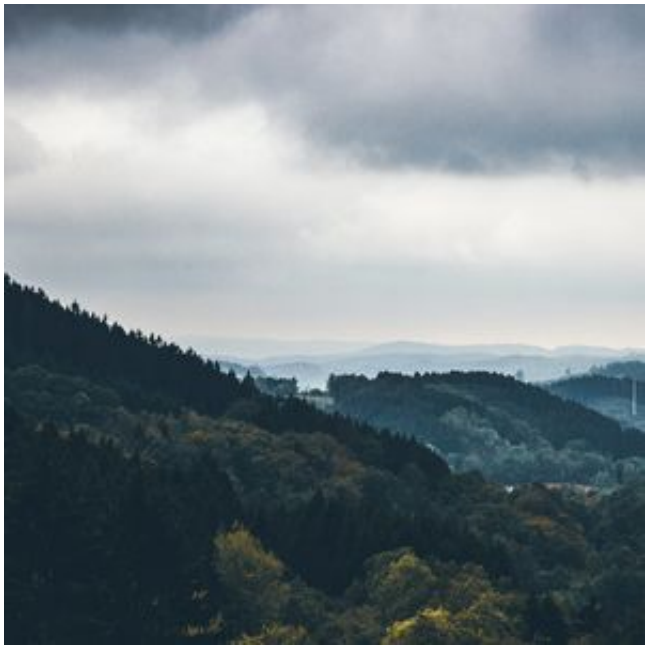


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