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Vote to ban straws and other plastic products a victory for the environment

Plastics

Today, the Environment Committee of the European Parliament voted on a report that bolsters the European Commission's proposals on reducing plastic pollution and proposes bans on a wide range of environmentally harmful products.

Plastic pollution is devastating our planet, clogging our oceans and releasing toxic chemicals across the plant and animal world, which is why we need an urgent shift in the way that we consume plastics across European and the world. Plastic is derived from oil, and therefore reducing plastic consumption will also be necessary to combat climate change.

This report now lays out bans on plastic straws, plastic cutlery, expanded polystyrene food packaging, and obliges Member States to set out reduction targets for items such as single-use coffee cups and food containers. The text sets out to ban products which are promoted as biodegradable but break down into micro-plastics (oxo-degradable), and a ban on very light plastic bags (except when used for certain foods).

The Directive will now need to be voted on in the next plenary session of the European Parliament at the end of October.

Margrete Auken, spokesperson on plastics for the **Greens/EFA** group in the European Parliament comments:

"This is a victory in the struggle against plastic pollution but we still have a long way to go to stop our planet choking under the weight of our own trash. The harmful effects of plastic are clear: it indiscriminately kills animals large and small, thick patches of our waste plastic have emerged in the middle of the oceans, and toxins from plastics leach into the food chain. Every minute, a truck-full of plastic is dumped into our oceans.

"We cannot let the plastic age become the last era on earth just because we could not find a way to reuse our coffee cups. This proposal builds on the success of the plastic bag directive and shows that the EU can be a leader in protecting our planet against plastic pollution."

The proposal can be found here and a list of the proposed plastics to be banned are in the annex here.

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Responsible MEPs



Margrete Auken

Member

Contact person



Alex Johnson

Press & Media Advisor EN (English language press)

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