Image by Hans

Press release | 19.12.2018

EU bans single use plastics in an early Christmas present for the planet

Plastic

Early Wednesday morning the EU agreed to ban a whole range of single-use plastic products. The European Commission, Parliament and Council have agreed to **ban single-use items such as straws, cutlery and cotton buds**, as well as a complete ban on plastic cups and food containers made out of expanded polystyrene.

The **Single Use Plastics Directive** also includes provisions for the clean-up and disposal of cigarette butts by the tobacco industry (in line with the polluter pays principle), collection targets for drinks bottles, and a requirement to redesign drinks caps to tether them to bottles. It adds national consumption-reduction targets for cups and food containers, and in a Greens/EFA group triumph: a complete ban on oxo-degradable plastic, which is often labelled as biodegradable but in in reality fragments into microplastics.

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

"Today's agreement to ban certain single use plastics is an early Christmas present for the planet and our future on it. With every plastic bottle that washes up on a beach and each bird that chokes to death on our plastic waste, the need to act on plastic pollution is ever more pertinent. Only a few short years ago the European Commission was talking down any prospect of a plastic ban, that's why this agreement is a victory for the environmental movement and the Greens/EFA group in the European Parliament.

"The fact that we can come together and say that we do not want to leave the Earth as a landfill site for future generations is a testament to the potential that the EU has to act on the issues people care about. Plastic is pollution, from how it is made, to how it disposed of and to the toxic chemicals it releases as it ages. It's time to throw away the disposable mentality the we've become accustomed to and today's agreement paves the way to move on from the plastic age and reap the benefits of better designed products, more innovation and a cleaner planet."

Background

Following the Greens/EFA success in driving the 2015 plastic bag directive, this is the second law in EU

history which actively prevents the use of plastic. The directive will enter into force in 2019. It will have to be transposed into national law two years later (2021).

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Responsible MEPs



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