



Press Release

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European Parliament adopts EU legislation on lightweight plastic carrier bags

Yesterday in Strasbourg, MEPs voted in favour of legislation agreed with the Council, to reduce lightweight plastic carrier bags in Europe. This agreed legislation followed a proposal from the European Commission on November 4th 2013 to reduce consumption of lightweight plastic carrier bags in the EU. Whilst EuPC welcomed the general aim of the Commission's proposal to bring consumption of lightweight plastic carrier bags to more responsible levels, EuPC is disappointed with the agreed final text that the European Parliament has passed today. Speaking on the vote, EuPC Managing Director Alexandre Dangis stated *"This piece of legislation is not 'better regulation' as pursued by the new Juncker Commission. The Directive is overly prescriptive on Member States and imposes obligations that will be difficult to monitor. Better regulation can be achieved through market instruments such as pricing measures, the Irish experience being a perfect example. Such measures would be more proportionate and would not create legal uncertainty on the internal market. We hope the legislation voted today will not result in discriminatory practices in EU Member States."*

The Directive will now be signed by the institutions before being published in the Official Journal and entering into force. The agreed text will require EU28 Member States to choose between the introduction of a charge on single-use lightweight plastic bags by the end of 2018 or alternatively to adopt measures that ensure the annual consumption level does not exceed 90 lightweight plastic carrier bags per capita by Dec. 31st 2019 and 40 lightweight plastic carrier bags per capita by Dec. 31st 2025. Furthermore, the agreement will introduce the following obligations: i) Member States will be required to report annual consumption figures for lightweight plastic carrier bags; ii) the Commission will be required to examine the impact of 'oxo-degradable' plastic carrier bags and draft a Report; iii) the Commission will be required to assess the life cycle impacts of options to reduce consumption of lightweight plastic carrier bags.

About EuPC

EuPC is the leading EU-level trade association, based in Brussels, representing European plastics converters. EuPC now totals 51 European plastics converting national and European industry associations; it represents close to 50,000 companies, producing over 45 million tonnes of plastic products every year. The European plastics industry makes a significant contribution to welfare in Europe by enabling innovation, creating quality of life for citizens and facilitating resource efficiency and climate protection. More than 1.6 million people are working in EU converting companies (mainly SMEs) to create a turnover in excess of €300 billion per year.

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