Consultation on the Single-Use Plastics Directive

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Implementation of the Single-Use Plastics Directive

Single-use plastics and fishing gear measures – evaluation

Update

After a period of implementation, the European Commission has been collecting feedback from operators on the Single-Use Plastics Directive 2019/904 (SUPD). This public consultation aimed to gather evidence and feedback from a wide range of stakeholders on their experience of the SUPD, including stakeholders outside the European Union (EU), who must comply with the SUPD and/or are involved with its implementation.

The SUPD evaluation

According to the SUPD (Art. 15), the European Commission is required to evaluate the application of the Directive by 3 July 2027 after a period of implementation. The evaluation will provide evidence on whether the Directive is still fit for purpose, and will help determine whether a review is needed. It will also explore potential to simplify the legislation and reduce the administrative burden on those who are applying it.

The evaluation will assess the Directive according to its effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and EU added value, and will include a cost-benefit analysis. In addition to implementation of the SUPD, the evaluation will look at related follow-up legislation and measures taken at national level in EU countries. Some specific issues to be assessed include:

- Scope: should the list of single-use plastic products included in the SUPD (see Background) be revised?
- Could binding quantitative targets be introduced, for example to reduce use of beverage cups and food containers, and to increase collection rates for waste fishing gear?
- What materials can be used in single-use plastic products?
- Is it possible to establish criteria or a standard for biodegradability in the marine environment?
- What measures could be used to reduce filters from tobacco products?

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Why?

Operators placing packaged food or beverages on the EU market must comply with the SUPD from July 2021 (or a later date for some requirements; see Background).

The European Commission is evaluating the first years of implementation of the SUPD, especially regarding whether it contributes to reducing plastic waste and transitioning to a circular economy. It will also assess whether some requirements could be simplified to reduce the administrative burden on operators; and whether the rules are sufficiently aligned with the goals of the EU Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (see New EU packaging rules explained).

Timeline

The Commission is expected to publish the report by July 2027.

Recommended Actions

Operators within and outside the EU were invited to provide feedback via the European Commission's Have Your Say webpage until 17 March 2026.

Background

The Single Use Plastics Directive 2019/904 (SUPD) aims to prevent and reduce the impact of certain plastic products on the marine environment and on human health. It applies to (wholly or partly) plastic products that are typically intended to be used just once or for a short period of time (single-use plastics).

Ban on single-use plastic products

From July 2021, the SUPD (Art. 5) bans the sale in the EU of the following categories of single-use plastic products for which alternatives are available:

- cutlery (forks, knives, spoons, and chopsticks)
- plates
- beverage stirrers
- sticks to be attached to and to support balloons and their mechanisms
- food and beverage containers and cups made of expanded polystyrene, including caps and lids

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- straws and cotton bud sticks (except those used with active implantable or other medical devices)
- products made from oxo-degradable plastic materials that fragment into micro-fragments or chemically decompose due to oxidation.

Requirements for single-use plastic bottles

The SUPD (Art. 6) sets requirements for the content and the design of single-use polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles of less than 3 litres.

PET bottles must contain at least the following minimum recycled plastic in their manufacture:

- 25% by 2025
- 30% by 2030.

From July 2024, plastic caps and lids must remain attached to PET bottles during their intended use.

Marking specification

From July 2021, the SUPD (Art. 7) requires beverage cups or their packaging to carry a visible, clearly legible, and indelible marking informing consumers about:

- appropriate waste disposal options or what type of waste disposal should be avoided
- the presence of plastics in the product
- the negative environmental impact of littering.

The rules on the marking specifications are detailed in Regulation 2020/2151.

Resources

Resources from the European Commission:

- Commission guidelines on single-use plastic products in accordance with Directive (EU) 2019/904 on the reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment
- Single-use plastics
- Single-use plastics – fighting the impact on the environment

Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/162 laying down rules for the application of Directive (EU) 2019/904 as regards the calculation, verification and reporting on the reduction in the consumption of certain single-use plastic products and the measures taken by Member

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States to achieve such reduction

Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2020/2151 laying down rules on harmonised marking specifications on single-use plastic products

Directive (EU) 2019/904 on the reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment

Sources

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Visit the AGRINFO website to view the latest AGRINFO Update newsletters and search the database.

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