

Biodegradable and compostable plastics do not prevent plastic pollution and should not be an excuse to keep consuming single-use plastics, the European Parliament recognised in a vote today. The Parliament voted to strengthen the European Commission's plans to slash plastic pollution, under the European Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy launched in January 2018.

Speaking on behalf of the Rethink Plastic alliance, ECOS programme manager Ioana Popescu said: "Biodegradable or not, plastics are clogging our land and oceans, threatening the health of humans and animals. The Parliament today has acknowledged that biodegradable plastics are not a silver bullet to our plastic pollution crisis, but merely a distraction from real solutions. Policies that dramatically cut our plastic footprint need to be urgently implemented."

The European Parliament called for a number of additional measures that go beyond the Commission's original proposals, including:

A ban on microplastics in cosmetics, personal care products, detergents and cleaning products by 2020, and concrete measures to tackle other sources of microplastics;

A complete ban on oxo-degradable plastics - a source of microplastic pollution - by 2020;

The reduction of hazardous substances in plastics, to ensure that what is recycled is free from dangerous chemicals;

That the priority should be to prevent plastic waste from being produced in the first place, followed by reuse and recycling, with landfill or incineration of plastic waste as a last resort.

However, the European Parliament failed to back measures to tackle widespread pollution from plastic pellets, which are melted down to make everyday plastic items. It also failed to support stronger economic incentives to reduce plastic production and consumption.

The European Commission has already begun to implement some measures announced in its Plastics Strategy, notably a proposal on legislation to reduce marine pollution from single-use plastics and fishing gear, currently being discussed both in the European Parliament and by national governments.

Source: foeeurope.org