

Gordana Pehnac Pavlović, independent advisor of the sector for industry and sustainable development of the Croatian Chamber of Commerce, explained the directive of the Croatian Chamber of Commerce, emphasizing that the EP does not ask for a ban on plastic bags.

- The Disposable Plastics Directive requires the extension of producers' responsibilities, which means that they have to pay for waste collection, transport, disposal, consumer awareness and the cost of data collection and reporting as far as we have come. The second directive calls for further reductions in consumption and sets two goals, one of which is that by 2025 we can consume a maximum of 50 bags per capita. After 2025, there should be 40 bags per capita. The commission is looking for innovative, new, sustainable models, she said.

Asked if it is better to ban plastic bags, she said it would be best to ban everything, but that every product must have its place. A prohibition measure is the last to be applied when other measures have not achieved the target. He points out that the collection has reduced consumption, but that it is not enough. Plastic bags pollute the environment, there is a problem of disposal.

- Polyethylene is a good material that does not harm health and is not dangerous for the environment, it does not poison but pollutes the environment, emphasizes Pehnac Pavlović and states that it is also used to make medical material.

She said that the ban on plastic bags would lead to the termination of the work of about 30 producers who employ about 800 employees, and that it is extremely important to preserve every job.

- It is one of the few activities where we have more exports than imports, which is not unimportant for our economy, more than 60% of production is exported, he emphasizes. In addition, in 2018, some of the companies received EU subsidies from the Coherence and Cohesion Operational Program.

### **Which bags are 50 microns and which are 15 microns?**

- Very light, thin bags under 15 microns thick on the bottom are free and are used for primary packaging, such as fruits, vegetables, are absolutely hygienic and healthy, and bags of 30-50 microns are bought. Bags that are bought would be abolished. The Croatian Chamber of Commerce proposes not to abolish production, but to ban only those that contain recycled materials, the material we get by recycling waste. The proposal is for the installation of recyclables to be 50% or 80%, and in order to have controlled supervision on the market, we have proposed a new HGK sign, said Pehnac Pavlović.

## **Proposal of the Croatian Chamber of Commerce in accordance with the EU directive**

- Croatia has an obligation to adequately dispose of waste. The industry alone cannot solve the problem, and penalizing it is not fair. Since 2005, a fee has been paid for the disposal of this waste. In 2019, the Croatian Chamber of Commerce established the Croatian Platform for Plastic Waste in order to initiate cooperation by product groups in order to get the opportunity to recycle as much useful waste as possible. No more point take, buy, throw. Our task is to return waste to production. The problem of waste can only be solved jointly, in the value chain, with the representatives of Green Action and Greenpeace. The purpose of the EU directive and the main goal is to force Member States to recycle and dispose of waste, relieve the environment, increase recycling, use recycling, design new products that can be reused. Croatia is in only a few countries that have met the provisions of the sub-directive, which is a refund for bottles, said Gordana Pehcec Pavlović in Studio 4.

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