

## MEPs clamp down on wasteful use of plastic carrier bags

**EU countries will be required to reduce the use of the commonest and most polluting plastic bags drastically under new rules voted by Parliament on Tuesday.**

“This legislation will create a genuine win-win situation” said [Margrete Auken](#) (Greens/EFA, DK), who is steering the legislation through Parliament. “We’re talking about an immense environmental problem. Billions of plastic bags end up directly in nature as untreated waste. It damages nature, harms fish, birds, and we have to get to grips with this”, she added, after Parliament accepted [her second reading recommendation](#) that it endorse the [deal struck with the Council of Ministers](#) in November last year.

“The European Commission said that countries should deal with the matter themselves, but in fact they are not! 740 million euros per annum, according to the Commission’s own calculations, will be saved”.

### Binding reduction targets

EU member states will be able to choose:

- either to take measures to reduce annual average consumption of plastic bags to 90 lightweight bags per citizen by the end of 2019 and 40 by the end of 2025
- or ensure that by the end of 2018, no more light plastic bags are handed over free of charge to shoppers.

Furthermore, the European Commission is required to assess the impact on the environment of oxo-degradable plastic materials, which fragment into small particles, and propose suitable measures. By 2017, the European Commission will have to propose labelling and marking measures for an EU-wide recognition of biodegradable and compostable plastic bags.

### Background

Lightweight plastic bags thinner than 50 microns – the vast majority of plastic carrier bags used in the EU – are less reusable than thicker models and become waste more quickly. They are also more prone to litter the environment and severely pollute water bodies and aquatic ecosystems.

In 2010 every EU citizen used an estimated 198 plastic carrier bags, some 90% of which were lightweight. In a business-as-usual scenario, consumption of plastic bags is expected to increase further. An estimated eight billion plastic carrier bags became litter in the EU in 2010.

*Procedure: Co-decision, 2nd reading agreement*

.....

*" This legislation will create a genuine win-win situation "*

Rapporteur Margrete AUKEN

.....

.....

198

plastic bags, some 90% of which were lightweight, were used by each EU citizen in 2010.

.....

### **Further information:**

[Adopted text will be available here \(click on 28.04.2015\)](#)

[Video recording of debate \(click on 28.04.2015\)](#)

[Video of the press conference](#)

• [EbS+ \(28.04.2015\)](#)

[Audiovisual material for professionals](#)

### **Political groups**

[Press release by EPP Group](#)

[Press release by S&D Group](#)

## Contacts

---

Baptiste CHATAIN

Press Service

☎ (+32) 2 28 40992 (BXL)

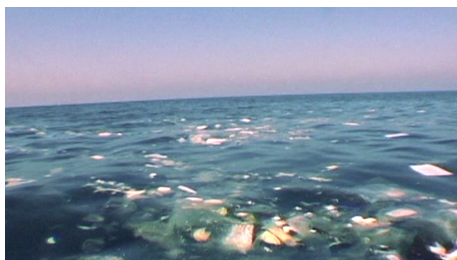
☎ (+33) 3 881 74151 (STR)

☎ (+32) 498 98 13 37

🐦 @EP\_Environment

✉ [presse-fr@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:presse-fr@europarl.europa.eu)

---



<http://www.europartv.europa.eu/en/player.aspx?pid=7355177b-4cd5-4525-b901-a46800f79d7f>

