

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001871/18  
to the Commission  
Karol Karski (ECR)  
(28 March 2018)**

*Subject:* Plastics

25 million tonnes of plastic waste are produced every year by Europeans and less than 30% of it is recycled. Worldwide, plastics account for 85% of beach waste. Plastics can have a negative impact on human and animal health and life as micro plastics are present in food, air and water. In accordance with the new strategy, by 2030 all plastic packaging will be recycled, thus contributing to a reduction in the use of disposable plastics.

Therefore, can the Commission say:

1. What specific changes will be made to the EU strategy for plastics as regards the design, manufacture and use of plastic products and recycling thereof?
2. Does it plan to introduce restrictions on the deliberate use of micro plastics?
3. Will the planned transformation process lay the foundations for new opportunities in the areas of innovation, competitiveness, job creation and, above all, environmental protection?

**Answer given by Mr Vella on behalf of the Commission  
(20 June 2018)**

1. The Plastics Strategy <sup>(1)</sup> sets the objective that by 2030 all plastic packaging will be reusable or recyclable in a cost-effective manner. This will be achieved by stimulating design for circularity, including through a revision of the essential requirements for placing packaging on the market, stimulating better separate waste collection and boosting the market of recycled plastics. The latter includes a pledging campaign <sup>(2)</sup> addressed to the industry to increase the uptake of recycled plastic content.
2. The Commission has already started work to restrict microplastics intentionally added to products <sup>(3)</sup> by requesting the European Chemicals Agency to review the scientific basis for considering a restriction under the REACH Regulation (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals) <sup>(4)</sup>. For microplastics resulting from the use of products <sup>(5)</sup> or from plastic production <sup>(6)</sup>, focused actions are envisaged on standardisation, labelling, possible regulatory measures as well as increased capture through waste water treatment.
3. The strategy opens opportunities for the development of smarter and more recyclable plastic materials and products, more efficient recycling processes, removal of hazardous substances and contaminants. The Horizon 2020 Programme will invest an additional EUR 100 million in plastics innovation up to 2020. This strategy will help protect our environment, reduce marine litter, greenhouse gas emissions and dependence on imported fossil fuels. The objective is to curb plastic pollution and its adverse impact on our lives and the environment. The first initiative will address single use plastics and fishing gear. The proposal to revise the Port Reception Facilities Directive will also contribute to reduce marine litter.

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<sup>(1)</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/circular-economy/pdf/plastics-strategy.pdf>

<sup>(2)</sup> See Annex III of Strategy.

<sup>(3)</sup> e.g. in cosmetics paints or detergents.

<sup>(4)</sup> Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 concerning the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH), establishing a European Chemicals Agency, amending Directive 1999/45/EC and repealing Council Regulation (EEC) No 793/93 and Commission Regulation (EC) No 1488/94 as well as Council Directive 76/769/EEC and Commission Directives 91/155/EEC, 93/67/EEC, 93/105/EC and 2000/21/EC, OJ L 396, 30.12.2006, p. 1.

<sup>(5)</sup> e.g. tyres or textiles.

<sup>(6)</sup> e.g. plastic pellets.