

EN

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Answer given by Mr Sinkevičius  
on behalf of the European Commission  
(28.2.2020)

The Commission is aware of the concerns raised regarding microplastics. Its Scientific Advice Mechanism issued an opinion<sup>1</sup> on the possible environmental and health risks of microplastics pollution. It concluded that more research is needed, but that precautionary action should be taken to reduce pollution.

The Plastics Strategy has adopted a comprehensive approach to reduce the emissions of microplastics from all sources and their consequent polluting effects, including of European freshwaters. The Directive on the impact of certain plastic products on the environment<sup>2</sup> will provide an incentive for reducing the consumption of plastics and the development of alternative materials because it includes bans on certain plastic products, consumption reduction obligations and ambitious collection and recycled-content targets.

The European Green Deal announces that the Commission will follow up on the 2018 plastics strategy focusing on measures to tackle intentionally added micro plastics and unintentional releases of plastics, for example from textiles and tyre abrasion.

At the request of the Commission, the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) is working since 2018 on a restriction on the intentional use of microplastics<sup>3</sup> under the Regulation on Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH)<sup>4</sup> that would cover the uses mentioned by the Honourable Member. The Commission will decide to propose a restriction based on the opinion of ECHA's scientific committees.

The Commission, in the framework of the Horizon 2020 and the EU programme for the environment and climate action (LIFE)<sup>5</sup>, is financing research into more sustainable materials that can substitute plastics.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/f235d1e3-7c4d-11e9-9f05-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-108645429>

<sup>2</sup> Directive (EU) 2019/904 of 5 June 2019.

<sup>3</sup> <https://echa.europa.eu/-/echa-proposes-to-restrict-intentionally-added-microplastics>

<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.

<sup>5</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/life>