

**Question for written answer E-000050/2020
to the Commission**
Rule 138
Guido Reil (ID)

Subject: Ban on certain single-use plastic products

The EU is trying to reduce marine litter by banning certain single-use plastic products ¹ .

The EU's measures to ban single-use plastic products are, however, not fit for purpose and reduce consumers' freedom of choice disproportionately. Banning straws or disposable tableware is of little use if the aim is to have less plastic waste. According to National Geographic, plastic straws make up just 0.025% of the 8 billion tonnes of plastic entering the world's oceans each year ² .

And bans increase the use of alternative products which are less sustainable and more harmful to the environment. The EU's ban on single-use plastic products has led, for example, to a further increase in demand for wood products ³ . Yet a paper bag has to be used 43 times before it causes less environmental damage than one made of plastic ⁴ . In addition, changing from plastic to paper results in higher CO2 emissions.

The poorly-developed recycling and disposal systems in low- and middle-income countries mean that they in particular are responsible for marine pollution.

1. What impact assessments has the Commission carried out regarding the ban on single-use plastic products?
2. What development-policy measures and other initiatives will the Commission propose to improve waste-management systems in developing countries?
3. How is the issue of marine litter being addressed in the context of EU-China cooperation?

¹ Directive 2019/904 of 5 June 2019 on the reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment.

² Madeleine Kearns, 'Why ban plastic straws?', Nationalreview.com, 23 September 2019.

³ IndexBox, Wood kitchenware and tableware in the EU – A ban on single-use plastics drives demand for wooden products, September 2019.

⁴ Ministry of Environment and Food of Denmark, Life cycle assessment of Grocery carrier bags, February 2018.