Question for written answer E-003388/2021

to the Commission

Rule 138

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Subject: Microplastics restriction proposal

In February 2021, the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) published a proposal to restrict the intentional use of microplastics under REACH, following a request from the Commission. The ECHA Risk-Assessment Committee explicitly concluded that microplastics pose an unacceptable risk to the environment with potential grave impacts on human health, and that EU action to minimise releases is hence required.

According to REACH (Article 133(4)), the Commission should have presented a restriction proposal at the end of May 2021. Parliament has been closely following the development of the microplastics restriction and has urged the Commission – including in its report on the Circular Economy Action Plan – to adopt a swift and ambitious measure. Repeated delays are highly problematic as they enable continued pollution from dangerous chemicals.

1. Given the urgency of the microplastics problem, can the Commission detail the reasons for such delays and provide a clear timeline for the next steps?

2. Should the delays be similar to those in other cases (more than a year until adoption, and sometimes more than two), will the extra time given de facto to companies then replace and reduce the transition periods proposed by ECHA (to ensure the proportionality of the measure)?