

**Question for written answer E-000286/2023
to the Commission**
Rule 138
Jan Huitema (Renew)

Subject: Introducing a 'functional period' criterion for assessing the degradability of biodegradable polymeric infill

The Commission proposal to restrict intentionally added synthetic polymer microparticles is a welcome step towards the elimination of (micro-) plastic pollution. The Commission has rightly excluded biodegradable polymers from this proposal.

Nevertheless, the degradation criteria seem to be the same for long-term and short-term applications. This will hamper the development of innovative, biodegradable solutions for long-term applications, including biodegradable polymeric infill for artificial grasslands, which needs to have a longer lifespan. If the proposed degradability criteria were met, the infill would be unlikely to perform well over its full lifespan. In practical terms, it would rot on the sports field.

For agricultural and horticultural applications, however, a criterion based on the functional period was used to determine the requirements for demonstrating the degradability of polymers.

1. Why has the Commission not placed artificial grass applications in the same category as products for agricultural and horticultural applications as regards the requirements for demonstrating polymer degradability?
2. Would the Commission consider placing artificial grass applications in the same category as products for agricultural and horticultural applications as regards the requirements for demonstrating polymer degradability, given that innovative and more sustainable solutions like biodegradable infill will otherwise be withheld from the market?

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