
EU restricts the use of plastic bags to protect the environment

Up to 200 plastic bags are thrown away every year by the average European, most of them after having been used only once. The tiny particles these bags are made of can enter water or even the food cycle. To reduce these risks, the EU wants to restrict the use of plastic bags. MEPs and the Council have agreed a deal, which the environment committee will put to a vote on 31 March, ahead of the plenary vote in April. Watch the meeting and check out our chart on the use of plastic bags in the EU

The proposal

EU countries would be required to choose between two approaches to reduce the use of lightweight plastic bags:

1. Bring down the number of lightweight plastic bags used by each person to 90 bags per person every year by the end of 2019; and to no more than 40 bags per person by 2025;
2. Put an end to plastic bags being given away for free when buying goods by the end of 2018

Environmental impact

Each year eight billion plastic bags end up as litter, including in seas where plastic particles can get into animals and eventually appear in the food chain.

The problem with so-called biodegradable bags

Oxo-biodegradable bags also break up into micro-particles so while giving the impression of not littering the environment, they do so invisibly.

Under the new rules, it would be up to the European Commission to set specifications on labelling and look into ways to limit the use of oxo-biodegradable bags.

Find out more

[Watch the meeting live on Tuesday 31 March from 15.00 CET](#)

[Legislative file](#)

[Environment committee](#)

[Article: no more plastic bags polluting our environment](#)

[EuroparlTV video: an ocean of plastic to eradicate](#)



This photo was taken by György Gáti, one of the 10 finalist of last year's guest photographer contest © 2009 György Gáti
www.gatifoto.com

