

Directive (EU) 2015/720 of the European Parliament and of the Council
of 29 April 2015 amending Directive 94/62/EC as regards reducing the
consumption of lightweight plastic carrier bags (Text with EEA relevance)

Article 1

Directive 94/62/EC is amended as follows:

- (1) In Article 3, the following points are inserted:
- 1a. “plastic” shall mean a polymer within the meaning of Article 3(5) of Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council⁽¹⁾, to which additives or other substances may have been added, and which is capable of functioning as a main structural component of carrier bags;
 - 1b. “plastic carrier bags” shall mean carrier bags, with or without handle, made of plastic, which are supplied to consumers at the point of sale of goods or products;
 - 1c. “lightweight plastic carrier bags” shall mean plastic carrier bags with a wall thickness below 50 microns;
 - 1d. “very lightweight plastic carrier bags” shall mean plastic carrier bags with a wall thickness below 15 microns which are required for hygiene purposes or provided as primary packaging for loose food when this helps to prevent food wastage;
 - 1e. “oxo-degradable plastic carrier bags” shall mean plastic carrier bags made of plastic materials that include additives which catalyse the fragmentation of the plastic material into micro-fragments;.
- (2) In Article 4, the following paragraphs are inserted:
- 1a. Member States shall take measures to achieve a sustained reduction in the consumption of lightweight plastic carrier bags on their territory.
- Those measures may include the use of national reduction targets, maintaining or introducing economic instruments as well as marketing restrictions in derogation from Article 18, provided that these restrictions are proportionate and non-discriminatory.
- Such measures may vary depending on the environmental impact of lightweight plastic carrier bags when they are recovered or disposed of, their composting properties, durability or specific intended use.
- The measures taken by Member States shall include either or both of the following:
- a the adoption of measures ensuring that the annual consumption level does not exceed 90 lightweight plastic carrier bags per person by 31 December 2019 and 40 lightweight plastic carrier bags per person by 31 December 2025, or equivalent targets set in weight. Very lightweight plastic carrier bags may be excluded from national consumption objectives;
 - b the adoption of instruments ensuring that, by 31 December 2018, lightweight plastic carrier bags are not provided free of charge at the point of sale of goods or products, unless equally effective instruments are implemented. Very lightweight plastic carrier bags may be excluded from those measures.

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From 27 May 2018 Member States shall report on the annual consumption of lightweight plastic carrier bags when providing data on packaging and packaging waste to the Commission in accordance with Article 12.

By 27 May 2016, the Commission shall adopt an implementing act laying down the methodology for the calculation of the annual consumption of lightweight plastic carrier bags per person and adapting the reporting formats adopted under Article 12(3). That implementing act shall be adopted in accordance with the regulatory procedure referred to in Article 21(2).

1b Without prejudice to Article 15, Member States may take measures such as economic instruments and national reduction targets, as regards any kind of plastic carrier bags, regardless of their wall thickness.

1c The Commission and the Member States shall, at least during the first year following the 27 November 2016, actively encourage public information and awareness campaigns concerning the adverse environmental impact of the excessive consumption of lightweight plastic carrier bags..

(3) The following Article is inserted:

Article 8a

Specific measures for biodegradable and compostable plastic carrier bags

By 27 May 2017, the Commission shall adopt an implementing act laying down the specifications of labels or marks to ensure Union-wide recognition of biodegradable and compostable plastic carrier bags and to provide consumers with the correct information about the composting properties of such bags. That implementing act shall be adopted in accordance with the regulatory procedure referred to in Article 21(2).

18 months after the adoption of that implementing act, at the latest, Member States shall ensure that biodegradable and compostable plastic carrier bags are labelled in accordance with the specifications provided for in that implementing act..

(4) The following Article is inserted:

Article 20a

Reporting on plastic carrier bags

1 By 27 November 2021, the Commission shall present a report to the European Parliament and to the Council, assessing the effectiveness of measures in Article 4(1a) at Union level, in combating littering, changing consumer behaviour and promoting waste prevention. If the assessment shows that the measures adopted are not effective, the Commission shall examine other possible ways to achieve a reduction in the consumption of lightweight plastic carrier bags, including the setting of realistic and achievable targets at Union level, and present a legislative proposal, if appropriate.

2 By 27 May 2017, the Commission shall present a report to the European Parliament and to the Council, examining the impact of the use of oxo-degradable plastic carrier bags on the environment and present a legislative proposal, if appropriate.

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- 3 By 27 May 2017, the Commission shall assess the life cycle impacts of different possibilities to reduce the consumption of very lightweight plastic carrier bags, and present a legislative proposal, if appropriate..
- (5) In Article 22(3a), the first subparagraph is replaced by the following:
- 3a. Provided that the objectives set out in Article 4 and Article 6 are achieved, Member States may transpose the provisions set out in Articles 4(1a) and 7 by means of agreements between the competent authorities and the economic sectors concerned..

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- (1) 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, p. 1](#)).⁷