

# EU Action against microplastics: COM proposal to prevent plastic pellet losses



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**A climate-neutral,  
resource-efficient and  
competitive economy**



Maintaining the value of products,  
materials and resources in the economy  
for as long as possible, & minimising the  
generation of waste



*Improving the economics  
and quality of recycling &  
curbing plastic waste &  
littering*

# Deliverables

- **REACH restriction** of microplastics intentionally added to products (adopted)
- **Proposal for a Regulation** on preventing plastic pellet losses (IA part 1 and part 2) (adopted)
- **Brochure** summarising state-of-play for all identified unintentional sources (IA part 3) (adopted)



**30% reduction of  
microplastic releases  
by 2030**

# Main sources of unintentional microplastics release to the EU environment

Lower and higher estimates (2019 - tonnes/year)



Paints

863 000  
231 000



Tyres

540 000  
360 000



Pellets

184 290  
52 140



Textiles

61 078  
1 649



Geotextiles

19 750  
6 000

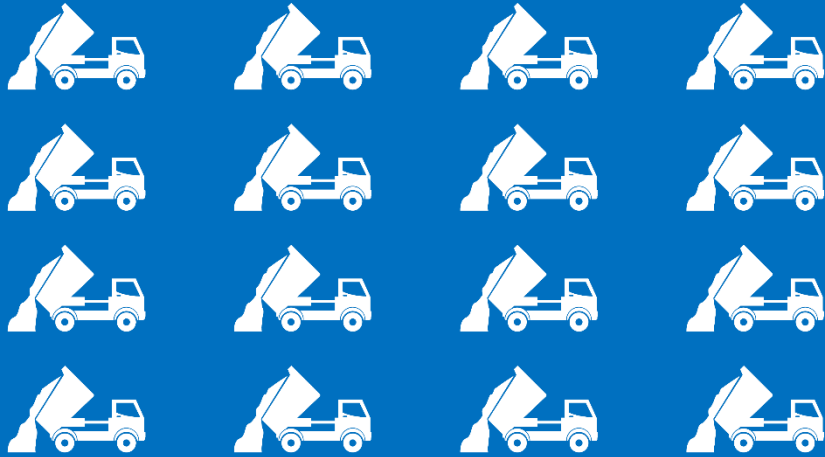


Detergent capsules

5 980  
4 140

# Plastic pellet losses

The equivalent of between **2100** and **7300** truckloads of pellets were lost to the environment in the EU in 2019



# Problem

- Current handling practices lead to losses at each stage of the supply chain causing **adverse environmental and potential human health impacts**
- Pellets, like all microplastics, are **easily transported** from one place to another; **can be found in all environments** eg soils, rivers, seas, oceans
- Pellets, like all microplastics, adversely affect:
  - **biodiversity** (they are ingested)
  - **ecosystems** (they are carrier for absorbed toxicants)
  - **climate** (GHG emissions and interference with oceans' capacity to absorb and sequester CO<sub>2</sub>)

# Objectives

**General objective:** prevent and reduce pellet losses to the environment that are due to current handling practices at all stages of the supply chain

**Specific objectives:**

1. Reduce pellet losses in line with ZPAP 30% reduction target for microplastic releases
2. Improve information on pellet losses throughout the supply chain
3. Ensure appropriate mitigation of impacts on SMEs

# The proposal: scope and definitions (Art.1-2)

## Legal basis: Art. 192(1) TFUE

- ▶ **All economic activities carried out in the EU:**
  - ▶ economic operators handling pellets in quantities above 5 t/y
  - ▶ all carriers (EU and non-EU)
- ▶ **Definitions:**
  - ▶ plastic pellets, spills, losses
  - ▶ economic operators, carriers, non-EU carriers
  - ▶ certifiers (accredited conformity assessment bodies or an EMAS environmental verifier)



# General obligations (Art. 3-4)

**From the entry into force** ALL economic operators and ALL carriers shall avoid losses and take immediate action to clean-up

**Within 18 months**

## **ALL economic operators shall:**

- ▶ keep up-to-date a risk assessment plan as in Annex I
- ▶ send the risk assessment and a self-declaration to competent authorities

## **ALL carriers shall:**

- ▶ implement the actions as in Annex III

## **ALL economic operators and EU carriers shall:**

- ▶ notify competent authorities about pellet handling activities
- ▶ train their staff
- ▶ keep records of implementation actions (incl. estimates of losses)
- ▶ adopt corrective actions (also applicable to non-EU carriers)
- ▶ inform CAs about incidents/accidents (danger) and take measures (also for non-EU carriers)

# Tailored obligations for operators (Art.4-5)

## Micro & small + medium & large < 1000 tons/y shall:

- ▶ send updated risk assessment and self-declaration to CAs **every 5 years**

## Medium & large > 1000 tons/y shall:

- ▶ carry out an annual internal assessment & establish an awareness and training programme
- ▶ get certified:
  - Medium: 1st certification **within 36 months**; then, **every 4 years**
  - Large: 1st certification **within 24 months**; then, **every 3 years**

EMAS registered = deemed to comply – Art. 6

**Certifiers shall:** ▶ notify CAs

**CAs shall:** ▶ establish, maintain and update a public register of risk assessments, self-declarations and certificates

# Risk Assessment Plans for operators – Annex I

## Risk Assessment Plans shall contain elements on :

- Risk mapping, e.g identification of the locations where pellet spills and losses may originate
- Risk minimization (list of equipment and procedures to prevent, contain and clean up)
- ▶ Examples of equipment and procedures, based on industry work ie OCS.
  1. To prevent e.g. tear and impact-resistant packaging & regular inspection and maintenance of packaging
  2. To contain e.g. catchment devices & regular inspection and maintenance of devices
  3. To clean up e.g. industrial vacuum cleaners & collection in designated containers of spilled pellets

# Actions for carriers – Annex III

## **ALL carriers are responsible for taking measures related to:**

- ▶ **Prevention:** e.g. verification during and after loading and unloading operations to ensure pellets are removed before leaving the side
- ▶ **Containment and clean-up:** e.g. repair damaged packaging and contain remaining pellets in loading compartment

## **ALL carriers are responsible for implementing On-Board Equipment**

# Compliance system (Art. 8-11)

## ▶ Central role: competent authorities

- ▶ environmental inspections or other verification measures
- ▶ risk assessments, self-declarations and certificates



- ▶ reporting to COM **every 3 years**
- ▶ if immediate danger to human health/impact on the environment, possibility of suspending operations

## ▶ Supporting role: certifiers

- ▶ assessing conformity and notifying about certificates
- ▶ not a condition to operate

# Other provisions

## ▶ Help SMEs to comply – Art. 12

- ▶ Obligation for COM to develop awareness raising and training material
- ▶ Obligation for MSs to provide access to information and assistance

## ▶ Standardised methodology – Art. 13

- ▶ By a European standardisation organisation
- ▶ To estimate losses
- ▶ Could be used for other reporting (REACH reporting on pellets)

# Benefits

**Significant reduction in plastic pellet losses** (up to 74% decrease compared to baseline = up to 1/4th of 30% reduction target) **benefitting:**

- ▶ **Ecosystems and biodiversity**
- ▶ **The sector (e.g. modernized equipment, less waste & waste management costs, improved reputation)**
- ▶ **The economy at large (fewer pellets lost to soil and water, reduced pollution affecting commercial fishing, agriculture, tourism, recreation)**
- ▶ **Society (e.g. reduced costs linked to remediation activities)**
- ▶ **In a cost-effective manner**

# Thank You



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