



**International
Plastic Bag Free Day
2018**

**STILL
FINDING
EXCUSES?**

**Time for Europe
to act against
plastic bag
pollution.**



This programme is co-funded by the European Commission, through the LIFE Operating Grant funds. However, the analyses and opinions presented in this document are those of the authors.

STILL FINDING EXCUSES?

In April 2015, a European directive was adopted to reduce the consumption of lightweight plastic carrier bags in Europe. **The Directive 2015/270 requires Member States of the European Union (EU) to drastically reduce their annual consumption of plastic bags to 90 bags per person per year by 31 December 2019 and 40 bags by 31 December 2025.**

On average, a European uses 175 single-use plastic bags per year. Since they have been first used in the 1970s, single-use plastic bags have become a product of our everyday life. Their exponential growth generated numerous adverse effects on the environment, representing in particular a major source of pollution of the marine environment. Plastic bags also have negative effects at the socio-economic level and potentially on human health, once in the food chain. **Lightweight plastic bags are often only used once, for a few minutes, whereas it takes between one and four centuries for them to degrade in the natural environment.** Particularly harmful to the environment, they are relatively unnecessary items that could easily be replaced by long life alternatives.

The Plastic bags directive called for the responsibility of Member States to transpose the law and put measures into legislation to achieve these modest but vital objectives by the 27th of November 2016.

On this International Plastic Bag Free Day, more than eighteen months after the Directive's transposition deadline, **the results fall short of expectations in many Member States.**



INTERNATIONAL PLASTIC BAG FREE DAY 2018 **STILL FINDING EXCUSES?**

Surfrider Foundation Europe has for six years carried out a powerful campaign against single-use plastic bags. Through our Ban The Bag campaign, part of Surfrider's Rise above plastics programme, we have seen the legitimacy of our actions in favour of a ban on plastic bags in Europe significantly increasing. This report is the result of an assessment from Surfrider Foundation Europe of the actions undertaken by the EU governments at a time when ambitious measures to prevent pollution by plastic bags should already be in place if EU Member States were complying with the obligations set in the Plastic bags directive. More than sending a SOS, this report is intended to be a call for action. On this highly symbolic date of the 3rd of July, the International Plastic Bag Free Day, launched in 2009 by several international NGOs and interpreted globally as a reference in

terms of environmental appraisal on the consumption of single-use plastic bags, Surfrider sadly observes that some Member States have not always played their part. The whole international community is thus mobilised around this major event to call on their governments, local authorities and businesses to stop what is an avoidable pollution. The EU which took pride in adopting a major piece of environmental legislation is now tainted by the lack of action of some of its members. While the EU is aiming at strengthening its profile as a leader against plastic pollution at the regional and international level and has recently taken action in that direction, its members -the 28 EU Member States- are inhibiting it from delivering on this topic of major importance, repeatedly praised by European citizens.

FIGHTING OCEAN PLASTIC POLLUTION: IS THE EU LEADING?

5000 billion plastic debris float in the ocean and are at the origin of "plastic continents" around the globe

The European Commission released its European Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy in January 2018, with the aim notably to answer to the "urgent need to tackle the environmental problems that today cast a long shadow over the production, use and consumption of plastics". In May 2018, as announced in the Plastics Strategy, the European Commission published its proposal for a Directive on the reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment, targeting the top 10 single-use plastic items found on beaches, and fishing gears. Surfrider warmly welcomes this first continent-wide proposal on single-use plastics, major source of harm for the marine environment. **While many countries around the world have put the issue of plastic pollution high on their agenda, and discussions**

and developments are ongoing in international fora, notably the United Nations Environmental Assembly (UNEA), the world is also looking at the EU to show the path towards a fully circular economy and restoring the health of our oceans. The EU, on its side, anticipates that its actions could contribute to a "race to the top" amongst the countries and regions of the world.

In that context, it is essential to ensure a timely and comprehensive implementation of the Plastic bags directive, as the first European legislation targeting a specific single-use item and often used as an example in the fight against plastic pollution.

It is critical to remember the scale and impacts of plastic pollution as a whole: 5000 billion plastic debris float in the ocean and are at the origin of “plastic continents” around the globe, including the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, which is 3.43 million square kilometres wide. Marine pollution is responsible for the ingestion of waste by marine species, the dispersal of invasive species and chemical pollutants that are also extremely harmful for human’s health. It’s our entire way of life, health and survival which is at stake with a polluted ocean under constant pressures. Yet, there is no longer a need to prove its role as a major “lung” of our blue planet and the importance of the services it provides: from food to medicines, from employment to well-being, from recreation to

renewable energy opportunities. Europe, its citizens, companies, etc. are responsible for this unprecedented situation. Plastic was born in EU laboratories. EU companies are amongst the largest plastic producers in the world and have sadly become one of the major plastic polluters in the world. In these difficult times for the European project where the EU faces criticism, it is worth recalling that with the Plastic bags directive the EU has adopted a major regulation which needs now to be enforced and completed with key legal measures addressing every source and cause of plastic pollution. EU citizens have continuously praised the EU for its environmental actions ; more than 70% of respondents to a 2011 consultation supported a ban on plastic bags at EU level.

TIME TO DELIVER

The European Union’s legitimacy to meet the expectations of Europeans and the international community is at stake in the face of rising citizen awareness. **The International Plastic Bag Free Day is an opportunity to measure the EU’s efficiency in bringing Member States together around ambitious and effective environmental regulations against plastic pollution.** The ban on plastic bags, which is strongly advocated by Surfrider Foundation Europe, embodies the adoption of a symbolic legislation aiming at changing symptomatic behaviours of our consumer societies, widely represented in Europe.

Thanks to our detailed monitoring of the Member States’ legislations (see our map included in the report), we note that the European Directive on the reduction of plastic bags has not been transposed throughout the entire European Union and that actions undertaken by some countries remain extremely weak in effectiveness. In June and July 2017, the European Commission sent final warnings to Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Poland and Spain for continued failure to notify the Commission of their measures for the transposition of the Plastic bag directive, threatening those countries to start infringement procedures at the Court of Justice of the

EU if they were not taking and notifying the appropriate measures. However, the European Commission put the focus on the notification of the measures and did not comment on the content of the measures. Those warning may nevertheless have contributed to the adoption of measures by a number of countries where action had not been taken yet, in the second semester 2017 and the first semester 2018.

The adoption of appropriate measures is key, as is ensuring the timely implementation and full enforcement of the measures adopted, be it a ban or a tax. Feedback from the ground reveals lack of control and enforcement in several EU Member States, with bags continuing to be distributed for free in many places, including in open air markets.

Appropriate measures and controls must be in place to meet the objectives of the Plastic bag Directive, and go beyond in the reduction of plastic bags and switch to reusable alternatives.

THE WORLD IS LOOKING AT US!

The European Union is emerging as a world leader in environmental protection and has shown its strong influencing potential in the framework of the Paris Agreement at the COP21.

The EU is also very active in the fight against plastic pollution, notably with the recent publication of its Plastics Strategy and proposed legislation on single-use plastics and fishing gears.

Nevertheless, it is critical that the EU honours its commitments in practice and set the example in terms of effective plastic reduction on the ground. The EU should continue to propagate good practices, such as the introduction of a ban

on plastic bags, already independently applied in several US States and around the globe, and fully contribute to the “race to the top” it called for. At the moment, EU legislation does not require Member States to introduce a ban, but simply to ensure a reduction of light-weight plastic bags, mainly through the establishment of taxes or reduction targets. Surfrider Foundation Europe asks the European Commission to take its responsibilities as the guardian of the European Treaties by encouraging Member states to act more ambitiously. The European institutions have the capacity to promote a harmonized action in the long term and should make every effort to put its levers of action at the service of a ban on plastic bags.

IS TRANSPOSITION “IN THE BAG”?

NOT SURE...

On the occasion of the International Plastic Bag Free Day, Surfrider Foundation has chosen to draw up a report compiling information on the current state of legislations on plastic bags in the Member States of the European Union.

In order to do so, we have studied the evolution of legislations from November 2016 to June 2018. We based our research on press articles, legal literature and benefited from valuable contributions from both our Surfrider volunteers networks, and networks from other NGOs offering us a concrete overview of the legislation in place and its implementation in each EU country.

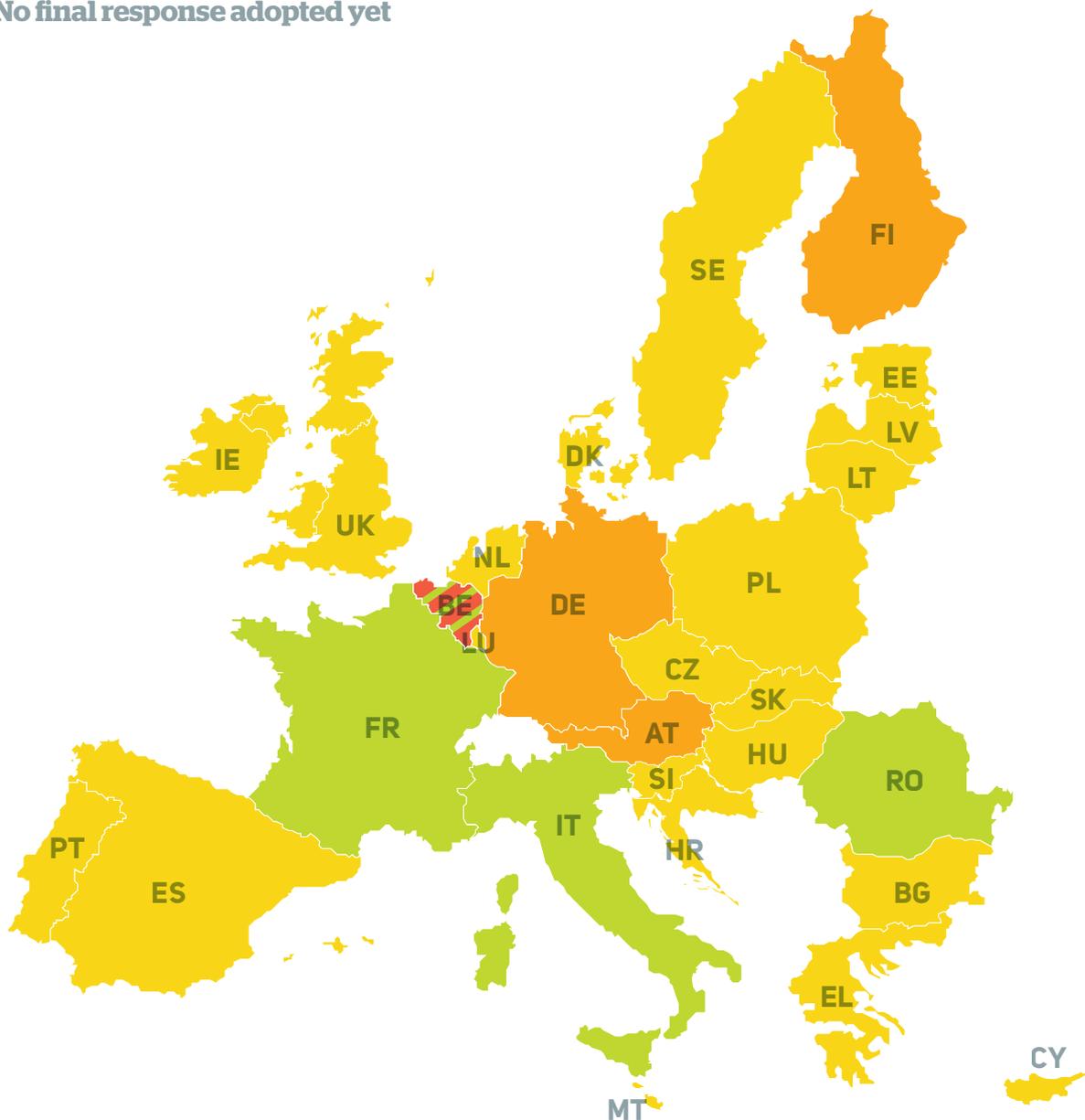
On the basis of this information, we have compiled the map below, following 4 categories, objectively defined according to the prevalent cases in Europe. We used associated objective symbols and classified these different undertaken actions with a colour code according to the impact that this government’s response is likely to have on the marine environment. **We advocate for banning plastic bags as the best option to protect aquatic environments from pollution by plastic bags**

and as the most logical one since the already existing alternatives can make the plastic bag economy obsolete. This option is indisputably the most effective as it prevents any arbitrary decision by various stakeholders to continue to favour devastating actions for the planet. Starting with the green colour indicating the best option to fight the scourge of plastic bags (ban), our colour code then degrades from yellow (tax) to orange (voluntary agreement) and red (no legal response).

In a nutshell, the measures adopted to transpose the European Directive remain limited, showing a lack of ambition and credibility in the commitments made. Many Member States have simply taxed plastic bags, set agreements with the private sector, or even simply relayed the Commission’s message about the risk posed by plastic pollution. The sovereignty of Member States is supposed to allow them to draw inspiration from EU law and policies to formulate more in-depth and constructed responses to major problems. Unfortunately, EU States have shown very limited audacity or effectiveness in transposing this mandatory directive, to the detriment of the environment.

This report is translated below in the form of a map containing up-to-date information on legislations against lightweight plastic bags (between 15 and 50 microns), according to the classification explained below.

- Ban
- Tax
- Voluntary agreement
- No final response adopted yet



THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION LEFT **HOLDING THE BAG**

We recall that as part of its commitment to make a profound democratic change, the Juncker Commission has to answer to the very clear will of European citizens to see a stronger response formulated to the problem of plastic bag pollution. An EU Barometer from October 2017 reveals that 87% of EU citizens are worried about the impact of plastics on the environment.

The Commission should notably ensure that Member States are adopting measures to reduce plastic bags and encourage them to choose the way of the ban. **The Environmental Implementation Review (EIR), a tool launched in 2017 for the monitoring of the implementation of European environmental legislations and policies within the Member States, has**

demonstrated a major lack of authority from the European Commission. While described as a tool “to address gaps in implementation and to try to find solutions before the problems become urgent”, the EIR did not keep its promises, giving rise to a very moderate report, where very often the poor implementation of the Plastic bags Directive was ignored. We call on the Commission to ensure the timely and effective implementation of the legislation on plastic bags’ reduction.

Surfrider Foundation Europe regrets that the Commission has not yet adopted a methodology for the calculation of the annual consumption of lightweight plastic carrier bags per person while it was due to do so by May 2016, more than two years ago.

MEMBER STATES: ALL IN THE SAME BASKET?

18 months after the end of the transposition period of the Plastic bags Directive, we conclude from our research on existing legislations that most countries have adopted measures, but often with limited scope and ambition.

In Belgium, if bans have been adopted in the regions of Wallonia and Brussels, the region of Flanders and the Belgian federal government are yet to adopt any measures on plastic bags. A number of European governments have concluded voluntary agreements to reduce the use of plastic bags on their territory. Indeed, countries like Austria, Finland and Germany, have opted for a voluntary agreement. The government thus encourages retailers to take measures to reduce their consumption of plastic bags, in particular by taxing them, without however obliging them to do so. Surfrider Foundation Europe does not consider this measure as being effective, as voluntary agreements have proven not to put sufficient pressure for all business players to act. Elsewhere, countries such as Denmark, Estonia, the Czech Republic and Portugal impose a compulsory tax to be set up by retailers on plastic bags.

While obviously more dissuasive for the consumer, this measure keeps plastic bags on the market, creating a business at the expense of the environment that continues to suffer from the presence of plastic bags. In several countries, such as Croatia, Latvia and Slovenia, the tax will apply only from January 2019, i.e. the deadline set in the EU legislation, showing a lack of ambition. A few countries have been more ambitious and adopted a ban. That is the case of Italy, France and very recently Romania. Spain is also foreseeing a ban, but only from 2021 and putting in place such a ban would require additional regulatory measures at the regional level. Where ambitious measures have been in place and fully enforced, important reductions in plastic bag use have been achieved on the ground. For example, after a seven years’ ban, the consumption of plastic bags in Italy fell by more than 50%, while previously Italians ranked among the biggest consumers of plastic bags in Europe. In Ireland, first country that introduced a tax on plastic bags back in 2002 (of €0,15 and then €0,22), the use of plastic bags has dropped by 90%.

REMAINING CONCERNS

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Although the adoption of the EU Plastic bags directive was a major step in the action against plastic pollution, setting a precedent, the provisions of the Directive leave the door open for the continued use of certain type of single-use plastic bags. This remains unsatisfactory and a source of concern, as it can significantly lessen the positive impact of this legislation on reducing marine pollution.

Very lightweight plastic bags

It is contradictory with the objective of reducing plastic pollution and its impacts on the environment that the so-called “very lightweight” plastic bags, i.e. those plastic bags less than 15 microns thick, can be exempted from the measures countries have to adopt under the Plastic bags Directive. Below 15 microns, plastic bags are even less resistant to multiple uses and are generally the object of an ephemeral existence due to their single use, ending up in the environment in the worst cases. The disastrous impacts of these lighter bags on the environment being the same as the 15-50 microns thick bags, measures taken to reduce plastic bags should also include these. We therefore call on Member States to act rationally and extend their measures (ban, tax etc.) to these bags.

Bio-based and biodegradable bags

Surfrider Foundation Europe calls for the utmost vigilance of the European institutions and Member States about bio-based bags and biodegradable bags. Those types of bags are often referred to as “bioplastics” indistinctively, while they encompass very different realities. Bio-based bags are plastic bags based partly or fully on biomass resources, but can be designed to behave as conventional plastic bags and therefore have the same impact on the environment. The fact that plastic bags are bio-based does not say anything about their biodegradability, and that is why the labelling of bio-based plastics should clearly indicate end of life management of such bags to consumers. Biodegradable bags are plastics

that can, with the help of micro-organisms, break down into natural elements (e.g. water, carbon dioxide, biomass). They can be based on biomass resources and/or conventional petroleum sources and are typically compostable only under controlled conditions. Under different conditions than the industrial one foreseen in the EU standard (industrial composting of packaging EN 13432), full and rapid biodegradability cannot be guaranteed. The use of all other voluntary standards cannot be adequately monitored nor enforced and can lead to abuses. In response to the need to reduce plastic bags, more and more “biodegradable” and “bio-based” bags are being distributed by retailers, which insist on their green credentials to better sell the lie to consumers. These supposed solutions should not replace the primary objective of prohibiting any disposable plastic bags and promoting the use of reusable alternatives instead. If biodegradable bags are to be used for very specific applications, it must be ensured that such bags are only used if they meet the EU standard and if suitable collection and processing infrastructures are in place. It is also necessary to strengthen the labelling requirements for those bags and to better inform citizens. Indeed, the labelling of biodegradable bags is likely to send out a misleading message to consumers who tend to use and discard them more willingly, believing that they biodegrade readily. Those bags, whilst being perceived as environmentally friendly, may therefore undermine efforts to reduce overall plastic bag consumption and associated resource use and impacts. Surfrider Foundation Europe welcomes the fact that the European Commission committed in its Plastic Strategy to “propose harmonised rules for defining and labelling compostable and biodegradable plastics” and calls the Commission to do so urgently. Indeed, the Commission is still to deliver on the adoption of an implementing act on labelling and marking to ensure Union-wide recognition of biodegradable and compostable plastic carrier bags, while it was required to do so by May 2017.

Oxo-degradable bags

Oxo-degradable bags are plastic bags which include additives designed to promote the oxidation of the material and make the bag break down in small particles invisible to the naked eye. While they have often been marketed as biodegradable bags and a solution to plastic pollution, significant evidence shows that they contribute to harmful microplastic pollution.

A recent report from the European Commission outlines the impacts of oxoplastics. Surfrider welcomes the decision of the Commission, in the context of its Plastic Strategy, to start the process of restricting oxo-plastics under the regulation REACH (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals), and calls for putting in place a European comprehensive ban on oxo-plastics, including oxo-degradable plastic bags.

We therefore urge the Commission and the Member States to promote the only sustainable alternatives to single-use plastic bags:

reusable bags. Canvas bags, wicker baskets, nets, backpacks, Tupperware, wooden crates ...

All these solutions are within everyone's reach. Avoiding using plastic bags is something as simple as taking one reusable bag with us whenever we go out.



RECOMMENDATIONS

#BANTHEBAG

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On this International Plastic Bag Free Day, Surfrider Foundation Europe calls on Member States to adopt more ambitious measures to reduce the consumption of plastic bags on their territory, preferably a ban, and to extend those measures to all bags, notably very lightweight bags. Member States must assume their responsibility in preventing disposable plastic bags from ending in our ocean, and ensure proper control of the measures adopted.

Surfrider Foundation Europe also calls on the European Commission to ensure Member States take more ambitious measures against plastic bag pollution, directing their actions towards full compliance with the Plastic bags directive, ideally opting for the prohibition of single-use plastic bags, and putting in place monitoring, control and enforcement mechanisms. This is consistent with the recent announcements of the European Commission on marine litter and single-use plastics.

Plastic pollution is currently higher than it has ever been on the political agenda, at the International and European level, and in many countries. Measures to tackle pollution from single-use plastics, including plastic bags, are discussed and already in place in a number of countries all over the world. The European Union is at the forefront, notably with the recent publication of its Plastics Strategy and proposed legislation on single-use plastics, and to preserve its full credibility, it must ensure that the existing legislation on plastic bags, often and rightly so referred to as an example, is fully implemented all across the EU. Where the Directive has been fully implemented and enforced, it has proven successful in reducing plastic bag use and pollution. Surfrider Foundation Europe therefore calls on the European Commission to ensure that Member States fully comply with the Plastic bags Directive and enforce the measures adopted, so as to achieve effective reduction in plastic bag consumption on the ground.

KEYS - Colour code and symbols

-  Ban
-  Tax
-  Voluntary agreement
-  No final response adopted yet



International Plastic Bag Free Day 2018

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Member State	Actions undertaken	Description
AUSTRIA		<p>VOLUNTARY AGREEMENT</p> <p>A voluntary agreement is in place since January 2017</p> <p>The Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management (BMLFUW), in collaboration with well-known retailers, Greenpeace and Global 2000 have agreed on a voluntary agreement to reduce plastic bags.</p> <p>According to the objective of BM Rupprecht's policy, the agreement provides for a more ambitious target than the European Directive, namely a maximum of 25 plastic bags per person per year and a reduction of disposable bags made of other materials such as paper.</p> <p>A report on the actions of the companies signing the agreement will be published each year to assess the evolution of the consumption of plastic bags. According to the 2017 report from those companies, 30 heavy and lightweight plastic bags were sold per inhabitant in 2016. The report for the year 2017 is not yet available.</p>
BELGIUM		<p>NO RESPONSE ADOPTED YET AT FEDERAL LEVEL AND IN FLANDERS</p> <p>Federal level The federal government had discussions about a law on plastic bags but nothing has been adopted yet.</p> <p>Wallonia: Single-use plastic bags are prohibited since March 2017 in the region of Wallonia. Exemptions are in place for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - bags used for wrapping food until September 2018; - bags for fruits and vegetables that are 40% bio-based and home compostable, until March 2020; - bags for liquid or moist food sold at retail, as long as bags are closed at counter and partly bio-based (40% in 2018, 60% in 2025) and compostable at home.

Member State	Actions undertaken	Description
BELGIUM	⊗	<p>Brussels Region: Since September 2017, single-use plastic bags are prohibited at counters. From September 2018, all single-use plastic bags will be prohibited in retails. Exemptions are however in place for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - bags for fruits and vegetables that are 40% biobased and home compostable, until March 2020; - bags for liquid or moist food sold at retail, as long as bags are partly bio-based (40% in 2018, 60% in 2025) and compostable at home, until the end of 2029. <p>Flanders: No measure has been adopted yet.</p>
BULGARIA	☑	<p>TAX</p> <p>Bulgaria was one of the first EU member states to introduce a tax on plastic bags.</p> <p>From October 2012, Bulgaria imposed an ecotax on any bags made of polyethylene with a thickness of up to 25 microns and size smaller than 390/490mm, which are defined as single-use bags under Bulgarian legislation. The tax on polyethylene bags increased to 35 stotinki in 2012, 45 stotinki in 2013, and 55 stotinki (about €0,28) in 2014.</p> <p>For bags between 25 and 50 microns, retailers can not give them for free but no fee has been set.</p>
CROATIA	☑	<p>TAX</p> <p>Croatia recently adopted a law that puts in place a charge on plastic bags at retailers from 2019. The amount of the charge has not been set yet.</p> <p>Some retailers have been charging for plastics bags for several years already.</p>

Member State	Actions undertaken	Description
CYPRUS	☑	<p>TAX</p> <p>Lightweight plastic bags are charged €0,05 as of 1 July 2018. The law was adopted in November 2017 and came into effect on 1 January 2018, with a 6 month transition period.</p>
CZECH REPUBLIC	☑	<p>TAX</p> <p>A tax on plastic bags between 15 and 50 microns is in place since the beginning of 2017.</p>
DENMARK	☑	<p>TAX</p> <p>Supermarkets charge 2-3.5DKK (about €0,27-0,47) for a plastic bag.</p>
ESTONIA	☑	<p>TAX</p> <p>A tax on disposable plastics bags is in place since July 2017.</p> <p>Currently, local retailers charge an average of €0.15 per plastic bag, but discussions are ongoing to raise the price as of 2019.</p>
FRANCE	☑	<p>BAN</p> <p>A prohibition of single-use plastic bags at cash points was put in place from 1 July 2016. Since 1 January 2017, a prohibition of plastic bags, including other than cash bags, is effective. Plastic bags that are totally or partially bio-based and home compostable are exempted.</p>

Member State	Actions undertaken	Description
FINLAND	⊕	<p>VOLUNTARY AGREEMENT</p> <p>The purpose of the agreement is to agree on voluntary measures of the retail sector to ensure that the minimum objectives concerning the consumption of lightweight plastic carrier bags in the Packaging Waste Directive are reached in Finland.</p> <p>This agreement enters into force once it has been signed and remains in force until 31 December 2025. If the evaluation shows that the objectives to 2025 are not likely to be met, the Ministry will prepare proposals for changes concerning the period 2021-2025. In this context it is also agreed how the changes are to be implemented together with the parties to the agreement.</p>
GERMANY	⊕	<p>VOLUNTARY AGREEMENT</p> <p>The agreement from April 2016 has been in force since 1 July 2016. Since then, in retail companies, people have to pay a fee of between €0,05 and €0.50 per bag, depending on the size of the bag.</p> <p>In April 2016 there were 260 retail companies that voluntarily joined. By July 2016 there were 350 according to the 'Handelsblatt'.</p> <p>Retailers providing plastic bags must pay a recycling tax.</p>
GREECE	⊕	<p>TAX</p> <p>Since January 2018, there is an ecotax of €0,04 tax in place for lightweight plastic bags. The tax will rise to €0,07 as of 2019. Kiosks and open air markets are exempted.</p>
HUNGARY	⊕	<p>TAX</p> <p>A tax on plastic bags was put in place in 2012. There were discussions in 2017 about drastically increasing the environmental tax on lightweight plastic bags in supermarkets but no change in the law has been made yet.</p>

Member State	Actions undertaken	Description
IRELAND	☑	TAX A tax on plastic bags of €0,15 and then €0,22 euros has been in place since 2002.
ITALY	☑	BAN A ban on lightweight plastic bags is in place since 2011. This led to a reduction of plastic bags consumption of more than 50% since 2011.
LATVIA	☑	TAX Packaging legislation that entered in force in January 2018 phases out plastic bags free of charge as of 2019.
LITHUANIA	☑	TAX Lithuania prohibits the free provision of lightweight plastic bags between 15 and 50 microns. No amount has been set, shops usually charge 1 cent per bag.
LUXEMBOURG	☑	TAX Valorlux which overall goal is to find a solution to the necessary obligation of recycling and valorising packaging waste launched a project to reduce the use of free plastic carrier bags. In cooperation with the Environment ministry and big retailers they introduced a levy of €0.03 on single-use plastic bags. In January 2018, the levy rose up from €0,03 to €0,05.
MALTA	☑	TAX Malta has an eco-tax of €0.15 in place since 2009.

Member State	Actions undertaken	Description
THE NETHERLANDS	☑	<p>TAX</p> <p>Free plastic bags are prohibited since January 2016.</p> <p>The Dutch law states that businesses have the freedom to decide how much they will charge customers for a plastic bag. The official guideline mandated by the state is €0.25 per bag.</p>
POLAND	☑	<p>TAX</p> <p>As of 2018, disposable plastic bags are sold at 0,20PLN (€0,05).</p>
PORTUGAL	☑	<p>TAX</p> <p>A tax of €0.10 on plastic bags is in place since February 2015.</p>
ROMANIA	☑	<p>BAN</p> <p>There is an eco-tax of 0,2 RON (€0.04) imposed on producers and importers of non-biodegradable bags - the idea is that producers and retailers can then make this tax be paid by consumers to encourage them to use less plastic bags.</p> <p>Also, it is forbidden to introduce on the market, from 1 July 2018, and will be to commercialize on the market, from 1 January 2019, carrier lightweight and very lightweight plastic bags (under 50 microns).</p>
SLOVAKIA	☑	<p>TAX</p> <p>A tax on disposable plastic bags is in place since March 2017. The prices range between €0,03 and €0,09 per bag. Retailers have the obligation to keep a record of the bags sold until 2019.</p>

Member State	Actions undertaken	Description
SLOVENIA	<p>☑</p>	<p>TAX</p> <p>It will be prohibited to give lightweight plastic bags for free from January 2019. The minimum price is the purchasing price by retailers.</p> <p>Many supermarkets have already taken the initiative to not hand out free plastic bags anymore.</p>
SPAIN	<p>☑</p>	<p>TAX</p> <p>A decree from May 2018 prohibits the free distribution of lightweight plastic bags from July 2018. It excludes very lightweight and thicker recycled bags. The amount of the tax has not been set yet, and the regions are yet to adopt the appropriate measures to transpose and implement this decree.</p> <p>The same decree foresees a ban on lightweight and very lightweight plastic bags (except for compostable bags) as of 2021.</p>
SWEDEN	<p>☑</p>	<p>TAX</p> <p>Supermarkets charge around 2 SEK (€0,20) for a plastic bag.</p> <p>Since July 2017, there is an obligation to report the number of plastic bags produced or bought to the Swedish environmental agency. Also, every retailer is obligated to inform about the environmental impact of plastic bags.</p> <p>A trial for a plastic bag deposit-return scheme (with a 0,5SEK increase) is also being implemented in Stockholm.</p>
UNITED KINGDOM	<p>☑</p>	<p>TAX</p> <p>Wales : 5p charge since 2011 Northern Ireland : 10p charge since April 2013 Scotland : 5p charge since October 2014 England : 5p charge since October 2015</p>

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