

To:

Mr Frans Timmermans, Executive Vice-President,  
European Commission  
Rue de la Loi / Wetstraat 200  
1049 Brussels

CC: Ms Kerstin Jorna, Director General of DG GROW  
Ms Florika Fink-Hooijer, Director General of DG ENV

Brussels, 24 February 2021

**Regarding: Civil society calls on the European Commission to secure an ambitious EU-wide restriction of intentionally added microplastics without further delay**

Dear Executive Vice-President,

We, the undersigned organisations from across Europe representing millions of citizens, are urging the Commission to present an ambitious proposal to restrict intentionally added microplastics under REACH, following the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA)'s Annex XV report published today.

As part of the EU Plastics Strategy, the European Green Deal and its related New Circular Economy Action Plan, you have pledged to address microplastic pollution through a wide restriction that would have the potential to reduce the amount of microplastics released to the environment in the EU by about 500 000 tonnes over 20 years.

ECHA and its scientific committees have recognised that microplastics and nanoplastics pose an unacceptable risk to the environment, with possible consequences for humans, and that it justifies an EU-wide restriction.

Now that the ball is in the Commission's court, we call you to champion an ambitious restriction proposal that:<sup>1</sup>

- Covers all intentionally added microplastics across sectors and uses, as proposed by ECHA, and that includes nanoplastics;
- Addresses the weaknesses of ECHA's initial proposal, including by:

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<sup>1</sup> You can find more detailed argumentations and recommendations in our [position paper](#), and [short briefing](#)

- Refusing any derogations that would undermine the restriction’s objective or lack sound justification, e.g. for granular infill in sport pitches, alleged “biodegradables” or microplastics present in sanitary products;
- Strengthening the proposed instructions for use and disposal, and reporting requirements, in particular for pellets;
- Rejecting unjustified delays, including those granted for microplastics in cosmetics, detergents and agricultural uses, which would allow a major source of pollution to continue, potentially up to 8 years, while alternatives are readily available and their uses don’t respond to a crucial societal need.

Civil society organisations have closely followed the restriction process and called for rigour and ambition<sup>2</sup> throughout the making of the scientific opinion, while continuing to raise awareness and promote solutions. Citizens across Europe have been calling for change and already turned towards more sustainable products, notably microplastic-free cosmetics. This restriction is an opportunity to create significant change across sectors.

The Rethink Plastic alliance in Brussels and members of the Break Free From Plastic Europe movement sincerely hope that you will ensure the EU delivers on its worthy target and rid us of this “intentional” pollution.

Yours sincerely,



Jeremy Wates  
Secretary General  
EEB



Anaïs Berthier  
Head of EU Affairs  
ClientEarth



Delphine Lévi-Alvares  
Coordinator of the Rethink  
Plastic alliance  
European Coordinator of  
Break-Free From Plastic

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<sup>2</sup> 2019 [open letter](#), First 2020 [position paper](#), second 2020 [position paper](#)



#break  
free  
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plastic

**Rethink Plastic**, part of the Break Free From Plastic movement, is an alliance of leading European NGOs working towards ambitious EU policies on plastics. It brings together the Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL), ClientEarth, Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA), European Environmental Bureau (EEB), European Environmental Citizen's Organisation for Standardisation (ECOS), Greenpeace, Seas At Risk, Surfrider Foundation Europe, and Zero Waste Europe. Together they represent thousands of active groups, supporters and citizens in every EU Member State working towards a future free from plastic pollution.

**Break Free From Plastic** is a global movement envisioning a future free from plastic pollution made up of 1,400 organisations from across the world demanding massive reductions in single-use plastic and pushing for lasting solutions to the plastic pollution crisis.

**EEB (European Environmental Bureau)** is the largest network of environmental citizens' organisations in Europe. It currently consists of over 160 member organisations in more than 35 countries (all EU Member States plus some accession and neighbouring countries), including a growing number of European networks, and representing some 30 million individual members and supporters. The EEB stands for sustainable development, environmental justice, global equity, transparency and participatory democracy. It promotes the principles of prevention, precaution and the polluter pays.

**ClientEarth** is a charity that uses the power of the law to protect people and the planet. We are international lawyers finding practical solutions for the world's biggest environmental challenges. We are fighting climate change and pollution, protecting oceans and wildlife, making forest governance stronger, greening energy, making business more responsible and pushing for government transparency. We believe the law is a tool for positive change. From our offices in London, Brussels, Warsaw, Berlin and Beijing, we work on laws throughout their lifetime, from the earliest stages to implementation. And when those laws are broken, we go to court to enforce them.

The EEB and ClientEarth are closely following the REACH Restriction of intentionally added microplastics on behalf of the Rethink Plastic alliance and the Break Free From Plastic Europe movement.