



CONSULTATION BY THE EU COMMISSION ON OPTIONS FOR REDUCING RELEASES IN THE ENVIRONMENT OF MICROPLASTICS

There is an obvious gap in this consultation.

A large proportion of the microplastics are released in the environment from the embrittlement and erosion of ordinary plastic items, and these fragments of plastic can lie or float around in the environment for decades. Efforts are being made by the public and private sectors to reduce the use of plastics, to re-use them, and to recycle them, but thousands of tons of conventional plastic items are still getting into the open environment and will continue to do so for some years into the future.

The EU should therefore decide as a matter of urgency to require all everyday plastic items (made with PE or PP) to be made with oxo-biodegradable technology, so that they will cease to be plastics and convert rapidly into biodegradable materials, in the open environment. There is no longer any doubt that they will do this much more quickly than a conventional plastic item would. Countries outside Europe have already made this mandatory after carefully auditing the technology.

This innovative type of plastic costs little or no more than conventional plastics, and can be made by existing factories with their existing machinery and workforce. It would take no more than a few months to convert the whole of Europe's production of everyday plastic items (and imports of such items) to oxo-biodegradability.

The Oxo-biodegradable Plastics Association (OPA) has worked with Eunomia Consultants and the European Commission, and has provided a 459-page dossier proving that Oxo-biodegradable Plastics (OBP) do rapidly convert into biodegradable materials in the open environment; that the material is then consumed by micro-organisms on land and sea; that the material contains no metals in excess of permitted levels, and that there is no eco-toxicity.

The dossier also contains proof that, if collected during its useful life, OBP can be safely recycled with ordinary plastics without the need for separation.

For more detail on why OBP is the right technology for dealing with microplastics (and why "bioplastics" are not) see www.biodeg.org