

MICROPLASTICS TIMELINE



1972

[E. J. Carpenter and K. L. Smith](#) became the first researchers to sound the alarm on the presence of plastic pellets on the surface of the North Atlantic Ocean, leading **scientific research** to show that microplastics travelled through indoor and outdoor air, fresh waters, oceans, soils, plants, weather systems, animals, and human bodies.

2015

The UN recognised marine plastics and microplastics under 13 out of its 17 **sustainable development goals** (SDGs) due to the pollution of the water body and the resulting adverse effects on ecosystems and livelihoods.

2017

The Commission called upon the **European Chemicals Agency (ECHA)** to assess the scientific evidence for taking regulatory action at the EU level on microplastics that were **intentionally added** to products (e.g. in cosmetics, personal care products, detergents).

2018

17 January: [ECHA Intention](#) to prepare restriction dossier on **intentionally added** microplastics

2019

16 January: ECHA published the Annex XV dossier which concluded “that the intentional use of synthetic polymer microparticles, resulting in releases to the environment, posed a risk to the environment that was not adequately controlled and needed to be addressed on a Union-wide basis”. As such, ECHA proposed a **wide-ranging restriction on microplastics** in products placed on the EU/EEA market, which was followed by a six-month consultation, organized between March and September 2019.

15 March: UNEP Resolutions "Addressing single-use plastic products pollution" and "Marine plastic litter and microplastics" were adopted

11 December: Publication of the European Green Deal, including a new initiative to address the **unintentional presence of microplastics** in the environment.

2020

5 June - The **Regulation on tyre labelling** was published in the Official Journal. The Regulation addresses the abrasion of tyres and recognises this as a significant source of microplastics.

11 March - The Commission published the **Circular Economy Action Plan**, announcing its plans to tackle microplastics.

December - Microplastics are found for the first time in [placentas](#) of unborn babies.

2021

30 November - [Call for Evidence](#) feedback period launched on the **Proposal for a Regulation on Microplastics pollution** – measures to reduce its impact on the environment with a deadline of 18 January 2022.

2022

22 February: [Public Consultation](#) launched on the **Proposal for a Regulation on Microplastics pollution** – measures to reduce its impact on the environment with a deadline of 17 May 2022.

2 March: The UNEP Resolution "End plastic pollution: towards an international legally binding instrument" is adopted.

30 March: Publication of the Commission **Communication: EU strategy for sustainable textiles**.

30 August: The Commission published a [draft implementing act](#) amending Annex XVII to Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) as regards **synthetic polymer microparticles**.

26 October: Commission Adoption - **Proposal for a Directive: Water pollution – EU rules on urban wastewater treatment**.

30 November: The "**Plastics Package**" was originally scheduled to be published, but it was postponed to 2023.

2023

27 April: The [REACH committee voted](#) to **restrict intentional microplastics**; the 3-month scrutiny period began.

17 May: The **proposal to reduce the impact of microplastics on the environment** is scheduled to be published (TBC).

23 May: EP AGRI vote on [Urban wastewater treatment](#).

1 June: Indicative Plenary Sitting Date on the **INI on EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles**. There is a link between fast fashion and the use of fossil fuel-based synthetic fibres, which has implications for microplastic pollution.

July: End of the 3-month scrutiny period on the proposed **restriction of intentionally added microplastics**.

21 September: EP ENVI vote on [Urban wastewater treatment](#).

16 October: Indicative Plenary Sitting Date on [Urban wastewater treatment](#).

