

**Priority question for written answer P-001804/2025
to the Commission**

Rule 144

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Subject: Increased plastic pollution following the introduction of EU requirements on tethered bottle caps

The aim of the directive on the reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment¹ is to curb plastic pollution, including by requiring that plastic caps remain attached to drinks containers. The Commission maintains that the aim is to prevent plastic caps ending up in the natural environment.

However, since the EU requirement was introduced in 2024, the number of plastic bottle caps found on the beaches of Sweden's west coast has tripled. According to data from the Keep Sweden Tidy Foundation, the number of plastic caps found per 100 metres of beach rose from 46 in 2023 to 144 in 2024. This is the first such increase in several years.

Local beach litter-pickers think the increase might be down to people expressing their frustration at the ridiculous requirements by pulling off the caps and using nature as a bin. The EU's rules are therefore potentially causing an increase in plastic pollution².

With the above in mind:

1. How does the Commission interpret data that show that stricter regulation correlates with an increase in plastic pollution?
2. What will the Commission learn from what has happened on Sweden's west coast, and will the counterproductive effect of the requirement on plastic bottle caps be taken into account when climate and environmental legislation is being prepared in future?
3. Is the Commission prepared to review, abolish or adjust the requirement on tethered caps now that it has been shown to be a factor in increasing rather than reducing littering?

Supporter³

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¹ Directive (EU) 2019/904 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 June 2019 on the reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment

² <https://www.sverigesradio.se/artikel/trendbrottet-tre-ganger-fler-plastkorkar-vid-vastkusten>

³ This question is supported by a Member other than the authors: Sebastian Tynkkynen (ECR)