

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002266/24
to the Commission
Georg Mayer (PfE), Harald Vilimsky (PfE)
(28 October 2024)**

Subject: Tethered bottle caps

For bottles for particular beverages, removable caps have been banned in the EU since 3 July 2024. Following understandable protests on the part of consumers, a German packaging expert has now endorsed the criticism, describing tethered bottle caps as ‘illogical’. According to the packaging expert, this stipulation is not of practical benefit for the environment; it represents, rather, no more than action for action’s sake in an attempt to assuage bad consciences.

1. How does the Commission view implementation of the directive and, in particular, of the stipulation on tethered caps, and what added value has it brought so far?
2. Which experts advised the Commission on this proposal, and in the preliminary discussions, were there already critical views similar to those of German packaging expert Markus Prem?
3. How does the Commission view this criticism of the directive and does it intend to consider an evaluation?

Submitted: 28.10.2024

**Answer given by Ms Roswall on behalf of the European Commission
(16 January 2025)**

The requirement of tethered caps and lids is one of the measures of the Single-Use Plastics (SUP) Directive ⁽¹⁾, which aims to reduce the impact of the unsustainable use of plastic on the environment and human health and was part of the final agreement by the co-legislators.

In compliance with the Better Regulation ⁽²⁾ rules, stakeholders were consulted and the expected impacts of the SUP Directive were assessed in detail before its adoption in an impact assessment accompanying the proposal ⁽³⁾, based on a supporting study ⁽⁴⁾. Caps and lids from SUP beverage containers were found more than twice as often on EU beaches than the containers themselves.

The impact assessment estimated that the measure will lead to almost no littering of caps and lids separately. The design requirement would increase by 2% the unit weight of plastic bottles, but the entire cap or lid would now be recycled.

However, depending on a company's design choices and innovation practices, the design requirement of tethered caps does not have to lead to the use of more plastic.

This is already demonstrated by several existing company practices. In combination with binding targets for the separate collection of SUP beverage bottles ⁽⁵⁾, the tethering requirement will help to significantly reduce their littering.

Tasked by the Commission, the European Committee for Standardisation (CEN) developed a harmonised standard on test methods and requirements to demonstrate that plastic caps and lids remain attached to beverage containers ⁽⁶⁾.

The Commission is set to carry out an evaluation of the SUP Directive by 3 July 2027. Part of this procedure will be an open public consultation to which all stakeholders, including the expert mentioned by the Honourable Members, can submit their feedback.

⁽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, OJ L 155, 12.6.2019, p. 1-19.

⁽²⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/law/law-making-process/planning-and-proposing-law/better-regulation_en

⁽³⁾ Summary of SUPD Impact Assessment: <https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/6e9b7f79-da96-4a53-956f-e8f62c9d7fed/library/466e246b-cfa3-4b3e-a3c7-fe78bb53ee0a/details?download=true>

⁽⁴⁾ Supporting study — Assessment of measures to reduce marine litter from single use plastics: <https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/6e9b7f79-da96-4a53-956f-e8f62c9d7fed/library/10fe4f5e-45cb-4604-8e8a-247d8d76f1f5/details?download=true>

⁽⁵⁾ Article 9(1) of the SUP Directive sets the following targets for the separate collection for recycling for SUP beverage bottles: 77% by 2025 and 90% by 2029.

⁽⁶⁾ Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2023/1060 of 30 May 2023 on a harmonised standard for test methods and requirements to demonstrate that plastic caps and lids remain attached to beverage containers drafted in support of Directive (EU) 2019/904 of the European Parliament and of the Council. This standard takes into account the reliability and safety of beverage container closures, as well as the necessity of not undermining the bottles’ recyclability.