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Answer given by Ms Roswall
on behalf of the European Commission
(10.4.2026)

The tethering requirement for caps of single-use plastic beverage containers under the Single-Use Plastic (SUP) Directive¹ was introduced because caps were found on EU beaches more than twice as often as the containers themselves². In combination with the separate collection targets for SUP beverage bottles it aims to reduce littering and increase recycling of the caps.

In line with the Better Regulation guidelines³, the Commission conducted an impact assessment before the adoption of the proposal for the SUP Directive, including stakeholder consultations⁴.

Beverage containers holding liquid food for special medical purposes⁵ are exempted from the tethering requirement. The harmonised standard for test methods to demonstrate that plastic caps and lids remain attached to beverage containers that was developed by the European Committee for Standardisation⁶ takes into account the safety of the containers' closures during their intended use.

In view of the upcoming evaluation of the SUP Directive (due by 3 July 2027), the Commission has launched a call for evidence and an open public consultation⁷, inviting all interested stakeholders to share their experience with the different measures of the Directive, including the tethered caps design requirement. The evaluation will assess the effectiveness of the Directive and provide evidence on whether the expected environmental benefits have been achieved, as well as on any safety and usability issues that may have arisen.

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 (Text with EEA relevance), OJ L 155, 12.6.2019, p. 1–19.

² Commission Staff Working Document Impact Assessment 'Reducing Marine Litter: action on single use plastics and fishing gear Accompanying the document Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment', Annex 3 (Current situation: Facts and Figures).

³ https://commission.europa.eu/law/law-making-process/better-regulation_en.

⁴ Commission Staff Working Document Impact Assessment 'Reducing Marine Litter: action on single use plastics and fishing gear Accompanying the document Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment', part 1-3.

⁵ As defined in point (g) of Article 2 of Regulation (EU) No 609/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 June 2013 on food intended for infants and young children, food for special medical purposes, and total diet replacement for weight control and repealing Council Directive 92/52/EEC, Commission Directives 96/8/EC, 1999/21/EC, 2006/125/EC and 2006/141/EC, Directive 2009/39/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and Commission Regulations (EC) No 41/2009 and (EC) No 953/2009.

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.

⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/14422-Rules-on-single-use-plastics-and-fishing-gear-evaluation_en.