



PRESS RELEASE

Milestone reached: EU regulates microplastics in cosmetics and detergents

Ocean. Now! welcomes EU restriction on intentionally added microplastics and hopes for effective implementation by the industry

Berlin, October 4 2023 - The ocean conservation organisation welcomes new EU regulation on intentionally added microplastics in cosmetics and detergents, which was finally adopted on the 25th of September. It follows years of discussions at ECHA and negotiations between the European Commission and EU member states, and will formally come into force on October 17.

Ocean. Now!, together with seven alliance partners, continues to criticise the transitional period of 12 years granted to makeup manufacturers to reformulate their products. Nevertheless, the NGO sees the EU regulation as a stage victory overall. Transition periods of four and six years have been set for "rinse-off" and "leave-on" cosmetic products, respectively.

However, according to Ocean Now!, the regulation could be expanded even further: "It was especially important to us that dissolved synthetic polymers be included, as they are potentially particularly toxic to living organisms," says Meike Schützek, founder of Ocean. Now! "The regulation states that these could be more strictly regulated from now on, which gives us hope."

Currently, the restriction says that whether gel-wax or cream-like synthetic polymers are regulated depends on the analytical techniques available; a lower limit is noted. However, it also states that regulation will be possible in the future once the technology is available. According to Ocean. Now! it really depends on the political will of the industry. "That consumers want to use microplastic-free, biodegradable products is obvious. The Codecheck app has over 10 million downloads and currently 1 million monthly active users in German-speaking countries. Now it's up to the industry to act," says Dr. Ruta Almedom, Head of Science at Codecheck.

Every year, more than 42,000 metric tons of microparticles are released into the environment in the European economic area, causing a wide range of negative effects on living organisms and ecosystems. An increasing number of studies also now point to a significant risk to human health. Since late 2018, Ocean. Now!, together with 20 partners including NGOs, cosmetics brands and

foundations, has been advocating for a comprehensive restriction that includes not only solid microplastics but also dissolved synthetic polymers.

Comprehensive regulation could contribute significantly to banning unnecessary plastics from our biosphere. But it requires the active engagement of all stakeholders: national governments and local communities, civil society and, above all, industry to help ensure that it is properly enforced.

Ocean. Now! calls on all companies that add microplastics to their products, especially those that are exempt from the restriction or have been granted longer transition periods, to immediately use safe, microplastic-free, biodegradable, alternatives.

Press contact:

Ocean. Now! - Meike Schützek (founder of the initiative)

press@ocean-now.org and [press page](#)

+49 17682797897

Further media material:

- [Petition Ocean. Now!](#) "End the plastic shower: ban toxic microplastics in cosmetics and cleaning products" (in German - live since end of 2018 - signatures as of October 2023: 130.405)
- [Codecheck study](#) "The Invisible Danger Hidden Polymers in Cosmetic Products" (January 2020)