

EuRIC’s position on the proposal for a Regulation on preventing plastic pellet losses

Clear definition of scope, proportionality and good industry practices

EuRIC POSITION PAPER

January 2025

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24 January 2025

## The European Recycling Industries’ Confederation (EuRIC) is pleased to share the views of the recycling industry on the proposal of the Commission for a Regulation on Preventing Plastic Pellets losses to reduce microplastic pollution. While we support this initiative to reduce unintentional releases of microplastics to the environment, we also urge the authorities to ensure the consistency in the definitions contained in this regulation, proportionality in the sanctions derived from the application of the law and the observation of the best handling practices currently applied by the industry in Europe.

## As mentioned in the proposal by the Commission, plastic pellet losses constitute the third largest source of all unintentional microplastic releases to the environment and occur due to lack of awareness and poor handling of the pellets. Therefore, a regulation with clear definitions and a clear scope of application is needed to achieve the objectives set out by the Commission to reduce plastic pellet losses to the environment during economic activities. In this context, there are some aspects of the proposal that require clarification and consideration during the trilogues:

### The scope of the regulation must be clear to remove uncertainty in the value chain.

EuRIC support the ‘plastic pellet’ definition in Article 2 (a) proposed by the Parliament and consider that the inclusion of an upper size limit to the definition of plastic pellets similar to the one included in the intentionally added microplastic restriction[[1]](#footnote-1) by the Commission would further clarify the scope of the regulation. Furthermore, EuRIC opposes the inclusion of other materials than plastics, such as rubber granulates, in the scope of the regulation as proposed by the Council. The use and handling of rubber granulates, and powders is already regulated by REACH, and it was not evaluated in the regulation’s impact assessment. Thus, including recycled rubber granulates under the scope would create overlapping regulations and constraints that are not technically or scientifically justified. The use of secondary raw materials needs boosting also through regulatory simplification and this position would hurt the competitiveness of the European recycling industry in the world market.

### The penalties should be proportionate and determined by national authorities

The European plastic recyclers see with great concern the economic penalties that would be imposed on plastic pellet manufacturers in case of spill as described in Article 15. Imposing penalties based on Member State or Union turnover would threaten bankruptcy on the plastic recyclers that produce plastic pellets amidst a crisis derived from the low price of plastic imports. Although we understand the need for penalties as a deterrent from poor handling practices, the imposed penalties should be proportionate to the cleaning costs derived from the spill and should not have the power to threaten the existence of the industries.

### Requirements on the handling of plastic pellets should be aligned and encourage the industries’ good handling practices

The introduction of a risk management approach is supported by EuRIC. However, wherever the obligations of the manufacturers in the handling of the plastic pellets are described, the legislator should steer away from detailed descriptions for equipment and packaging as one-size-fits-all measures. The list of procedures and equipment to be used should remain indicative and allow the individual manufacturers the opportunity to select the best options based on the assessments formulated by professionals in the field while considering their needs, size, and technical capabilities. This is specifically important by the limitations proposed by the Commission regarding packaging size (e.g. 25 kg) and maximum weights per pallet that would entail an increase in packaging waste, massive investment in filling plants at recyclers or in silos at converters, as well as fuel consumption due to reduced transport capacity per individual vehicle.

In conclusion, at EuRIC we support the intention of the Commission to protect the environment from avoidable microplastics emissions and encourage their work in the direction of achieving this goal through well defined and proportional regulatory work.

1. Commission Regulation (EU) 2023/2055 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)