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Cosmetics Europe Recommendation on Solid Plastic Particles (Plastic Micro Particles)

Introduction

The occurrence and persistence of plastic debris in the marine environment and waterways is an issue of increasing public debate and concern.

Different sources of such debris have been identified and estimated. The vast majority of small plastic particles in the seas come from the breakdown of bigger materials and the abrasion of car tyres. Other sources, such as pellet loss from plastic manufacturing, abrasion of paint, textile fibres, or particles used in personal care products are much smaller contributors.

The use of plastic micro particles in personal care products, although often highlighted in the context of marine litter, actually accounts for a very small fraction of the plastic debris found in the marine environment.

Recommendation

In view of the public concerns expressed over plastic debris in the marine environment, and given the availability of alternative materials, Cosmetics Europe recommends its membership to discontinue, in wash-off cosmetic products placed on the market as of 2020 : The use of synthetic, solid plastic particles used for exfoliating and cleansing that are non-biodegradable in the marine environment.

