



**HEAL**  
HEALTH AND  
ENVIRONMENT  
ALLIANCE

## SPOTLIGHT ON UNREGULATED POLYMERS

**Plastics are largely made up of polymers, large chemical molecules consisting of strings of repeating smaller units, known as monomers. These polymers are made in great volumes and their purity can vary greatly.**

Small amounts of residual monomers and related molecules—in addition to many additives—are often found in the finished products. During and after use, polymers may break down into smaller components or into their constituent monomers, for example, when exposed to water and sunlight.

Yet despite these concerns inherent to their use, polymers are exempted from registration under Europe's flagship chemical regulation REACH. This means that companies are neither obliged to provide information on health and environmental hazards linked to their exposure, nor to monitor their fate in the environment and the food chain—a loophole that NGOs have repeatedly asked European authorities to close.



**VISIT HEAL'S REPORT 'TURNING THE PLASTIC TIDE: THE CHEMICALS IN PLASTIC THAT PUT OUR HEALTH AT RISK' FOR MORE INFORMATION**



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