

**De :** Magritte Olivier <[Olivier.Magritte@minsoc.fed.be](mailto:Olivier.Magritte@minsoc.fed.be)>

**Envoyé :** jeudi 2 juillet 2020 10:00

**À :** Catherine Naughton <[catherine.naughton@edf-feph.org](mailto:catherine.naughton@edf-feph.org)>

**Cc :** Alejandro Moledo <[alejandro.moledo@edf-feph.org](mailto:alejandro.moledo@edf-feph.org)>; Mher Hakobyan <[mher.hakobyan@edf-feph.org](mailto:mher.hakobyan@edf-feph.org)>; PG; GM; VDE.....

**Objet :** RE: Ban on the sale of plastic straws 2021

Thank you very much for your quick and relevant answer, Catherine

No need to apologize: we are facing the same time constraints as you due to Covid-19 and “straw reality” just sprang out of the box this week!

Sure, a consultation with the EDF board will be useful.

Don't hesitate to make use of my note if it can save you some time: we are all rowing with tiny paddles on a gigantic boat.

On basis of our exchange, I presume the CSNPH will issue a first advice to the Belgian Government. When we will have your feed-back the CSNPH will have the opportunity to issue a second advice pointing on good practices from across Europe. Repetition is a good way to put pressure on the Belgian Government

Kind regards

Olivier

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**De :** Catherine Naughton <[catherine.naughton@edf-feph.org](mailto:catherine.naughton@edf-feph.org)>

**Envoyé :** jeudi 2 juillet 2020 9:33

**À :** Magritte Olivier <[Olivier.Magritte@minsoc.fed.be](mailto:Olivier.Magritte@minsoc.fed.be)>

**Cc :** Alejandro Moledo <[alejandro.moledo@edf-feph.org](mailto:alejandro.moledo@edf-feph.org)>; Mher Hakobyan <[mher.hakobyan@edf-feph.org](mailto:mher.hakobyan@edf-feph.org)>; PG; GM; VDE.....

**Objet :** RE: Ban on the sale of plastic straws 2021

Dear Olivier,

Thank you for consulting us on this. Indeed, it came up in our discussion on sustainability at the Board in February, but since this Board we have been overtaken by COVID 19 and we did not revisit it.

I am not an expert on this, but your analysis looks very accurate to me from what I have read and heard. **I drafted some summary ideas very quickly below in yellow**, but I wonder would you permit me to do a quick consultation with the Board + some members to get wider feedback. Meanwhile I will ask help from EDF secretariat too.

I believe EDF members across the EU may have already been involved in these discussions and may have found solutions- If you agree, I will write now to the Board.

Warm regards,

Catherine

Recommendations:

- Given that COVID 19 is with us for the foreseeable future, it is not going to be possible to transition to fully hygienic and safe alternatives for persons with disabilities without a plan in place to ensure availability of alternatives, and their cleaning facilities, and financial compensation for every persons who needs them

- The costs of transition cannot be born by persons with disabilities. Full costing should be done before any complete ban. Belgium is already among the countries in Europe with highest disability related extra costs (P25 of EDF human rights report on poverty and social exclusion)
  - There are a huge range of disposable plastic items, which are not essential for the health, well-being and independence of persons with disabilities which could be considered for a ban- plastic bottles, bottle tops, drinks bottles, packaging for toys, plastic bags, for example can be far more cheaply and sustainably replaced than straws
  - In every event exceptions must be made for people who use straws every day for their well being; they must be available for purchase and for use in bars and restaurants
  - This does not stop the government from greatly reducing plastic straw use- even immediately, through awareness raising. All awareness raising on the plastic straw reduction should include awareness raising that many people use plastic straws for their health and independence so that persons with disability using straws do not become targets of criticism and harassment
  - Substitution materials:
    - metal and bamboo straws are too rigid and cannot be folded: they can cause injuries in the mouth, especially for persons having involuntary movements... Such injuries can have terrible consequences
    - carton straws are too supple, too easily crushed between the teeth or gums, impossible to use with hot beverages and they change the taste of beverages. Also, they cannot be folded
    - silicon straws appears to be quite difficult to clean efficiently
  - Hygiene:
    - straws in reusable materials are source of fears because virus and bacteria's (respiratory tracts, herpes, mycosis...)
    - They need to be cleaned very carefully and their users have to rely on others to do so... With all the related problems.
    - Also many of the persons having to use straws don't have a dishwasher...
  - Cost:
    - Straw users need a large amount of straws. Plastic straws were practical as they were available at a very low cost, both to the individual and also to businesses
    - Paying someone for the cleaning of reusable straws will have a cost which is very difficult to guess;
    - The cleaning cost will come in addition of the purchasing cost;
  - Dependency / freedom of choice:
    - Reusable straws will increase the dependency to other persons of many of the users, just to drink...
    - They see it as an obstacle to their ability to live independently
    - They want to have the possibility to choose the type of straw which suits them best
    - They want the cost for the use of plastic straws to remain similar to the actual cost, if plastic straws remain the best option
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**From:** Magritte Olivier [<mailto:Olivier.Magritte@minsoc.fed.be>]

**Sent:** mercredi 1 juillet 2020 20:54

**To:** Catherine Naughton <[catherine.naughton@edf-feph.org](mailto:catherine.naughton@edf-feph.org)>

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**Subject:** Ban on the sale of plastic straws 2021

Dear Catherine (sorry to send it so late: I had to stop in the process of writing it as I had to accompany my daughter in her activity)

The BDF received a question from a group of persons having deep concerns about the ban on the sale of plastic straws to come in 2021.

Could you give us the point of view of the EDF?

The BDF will support the Conseil Supérieur National des Personnes Handicapées (CSNPH) in writing its advice to the Belgian government about it. This advice will have to be written very fast: Monday 6/7 will be the last meeting of the CSNPH bureau before September.

Up to now the solutions these persons tried were not particularly convincing. The main problems are related to:

- Substitution materials:
  - metal and bamboo straws are too rigid and cannot be folded: they can cause injuries in the mouth, especially for persons having involuntary movements... Such injuries can have terrible consequences
  - carton straws are too supple, too easily crushed between the teeth or gums, impossible to use with hot beverages and they change the taste of beverages. Also, they cannot be folded
  - silicon straws appears to be quite difficult to clean efficiently
- Hygiene:
  - straws in reusable materials are source of fears because virus and bacteria's (respiratory tracts, herpes, mycosis...)
  - They need to be cleaned very carefully and their users have to rely on others to do so... With all the related problems.
  - Also many of the persons having to use straws don't have a dishwasher...
- Cost:
  - Straw users need a large amount of straws. Plastic straws were practical as they were available at a very low cost
  - Paying someone for the cleaning of reusable straws will have a cost which is very difficult to guess
  - The cleaning cost will come in addition of the purchasing cost
- Dependency / freedom of choice:
  - Reusable straws will increase the dependency to other persons of many of the users, just to drink...
  - They see it as a obstacle to their ability to live independently
  - They want to have the possibility to choose the type of straw which suit them best
  - They want the cost for the use of plastic straws to remain similar to the actual cost, if plastic straws remain the best option

From the BDF point of view, the future of our planet is very important. This is the reason why, the BDF invests in SDG's. Nevertheless, persons with disabilities cannot be victims of the "Green Deal".

If the quality of substitution materials for straws is too low in comparison with the performance of plastic straws, these **cannot be removed from sales**. Also, their **sale cannot be placed under medical decision** which would contravene to the spirit of the UNCRPD ! It is not a question of health, but a question of access to the basic but vital act of drinking.

Kind regards

Olivier Magritte  
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