

## Plastic Waste Shipments

In May 2019, at the fourteenth meeting of the Basel Convention Conference of Parties (COP), a decision<sup>1</sup> was reached to amend Annexes II, VIII and IX of the Convention to enhance the control of transboundary movements of plastic waste. The decision followed a proposal by Norway to amend the Convention due to concerns primarily regarding the global impact of plastic waste on marine pollution litter. Overall, the following changes require all plastic waste shipments be subject to the amber notification procedure unless they can be easily recycled and

- pre-sorted into clean, single polymers or
- shipped as mixtures, with only certain mixtures permitted.

### Shipments to third countries

- Annex IX – insertion of a new entry, B3011, which replaces B3010. Entry B3011 is intended primarily for single polymers with only mixtures comprising of either polyethylene (PE), polypropylene (PP) or polyethylene terephthalate (PET) also classifiable as B3011.
- Annex II – insertion of a new entry, Y48, which covers mixtures of plastic waste not covered by entries A3210 or B3011. Y48 is subject to the notification procedure.
- Annex VIII – insertion of a new entry, A3210, which covers hazardous plastic waste and is thus subject to the notification procedure.

These new codes have applied to shipments of plastic waste from the EU to **all third countries, including Great Britain<sup>2</sup>**, since **1 January 2021**. However, it should be noted that the shipment of plastic wastes under the code Y48 to non-OECD countries is prohibited.

### Shipments within the EU and Northern Ireland

*Commission Delegated Regulation EU 2020/2174* entered into force on **1 January 2021** and amended Annexes III, IIIA, IV and V of the WSR to incorporate the Basel 2019 COP plastic waste amendments. The following variations now apply for shipments **within the EU and Northern Ireland**:

- B3011 does not apply and EU3011 applies instead.

---

<sup>1</sup><http://www.basel.int/Implementation/Plasticwaste/PlasticWasteAmendments/Overview/tabid/8426/Default.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> The Protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland provides that Regulation (EC) No 1013/2006 applies to and in the United Kingdom in respect of Northern Ireland. Therefore, in this context, Northern Ireland is treated as if it were a Member State. Please see dedicated note on the impact on waste shipments following the UKs departure from the EU on the NTFSO website

- EU3011 applies to mixtures classified under separate indents or sub-indents of either non-halogenated polymers, cured resins/condensation products or fluorinated polymers.
- Y48 does not apply and EU48 applies instead. EU48 refers to plastic waste not covered by EU3011 or AC300. EU48 is subject to the notification procedure.
- AC300 applies instead of A3210. AC300 is a new OECD Decision code for hazardous plastic waste. AC300 is subject to the notification procedure.
- Polymers of vinyl chloride (PVC) – OECD entry GH013 removed and EU3011 applies instead.
- Polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE) – not included under B3011 but EU3011 does apply.

## Correspondents' Guidelines No 12

The Basel COP decision introduced a number of new provisions regarding plastic waste shipments:

- Almost free from contamination and other types of wastes
- Almost exclusively consisting of
- Destined for recycling/separate recycling in an environmentally sound manner (ESM)

The EC published Correspondents' Guidelines No 12<sup>3</sup> to represent the common understanding of all Member States on how plastic waste shipments are classified and regulated. **It is advised that all stakeholders in Ireland involved in the shipments of plastic waste are familiar with these Guidelines.** They have introduced threshold levels as a way to interpret the additional provisions introduced by the Basel 2019 COP decision as detailed below.

### Almost Free From Contamination and Other Types of Waste and Almost Exclusively Consisting Of One Polymer (when considered together)

- When considered together, these terms apply to shipments of either one non-halogenated polymer, cured resin/condensation product and fluorinated polymer as described by B3011 and EU3011.
- For shipments of one single polymer under B3011, the content of contamination, other types of waste and other polymers should not exceed a total maximum of **2%** of the gross weight.
- For shipments of one single polymer under EU3011, the content of contamination, other types of waste and other polymers should not exceed a total maximum of **6%** of the gross weight.

### Almost Free From Contamination and Other Types of Waste (when considered alone)

- When considered alone, this term applies to the PE, PP and/or PET mixture permitted under B3011, to PVC permitted under EU3011 and to Annex IIIA mixtures only.

---

<sup>3</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/environment/system/files/2021-11/Correspondents\\_guidelines\\_No12\\_final\\_Nov\\_2021.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/environment/system/files/2021-11/Correspondents_guidelines_No12_final_Nov_2021.pdf)

- The content of contamination and other types of waste in the B3011 mixture should not exceed **2%** of the gross weight.
- The content of contamination and other types of waste in PVC under EU3011 should not exceed **6%** of the gross weight.
- The content of contamination and other types of waste in Annex IIIA mixtures classified under EU3011 should not exceed **6%** of the gross weight.

**When a plastic shipment exceeds the relevant 2%/6% threshold, it can no longer be shipped as B3011/EU3011 and must be shipped as Y48/EU48 respectively using the notification procedure.**

[Destined for recycling/separate recycling in an ESM](#)

To comply with this provision, B3011 plastic waste must be recycled/reclaimed under an R3 process with only one instance of temporary storage (R13) permitted. In addition, an R12 process will be required to separate plastic waste shipped as a PE, PP and/or PET mixture. Shippers will have to provide documentation to verify each stage of the shipment. **B3011 waste that does not comply with this provision must be shipped as Y48 using the notification procedure.** This provision does not apply to shipments of EU3011 within the EU.