

SURFRIDER AGAINST CIGARETTE BUTTS : THE RESULTS OF THE CIGARETTE BUTTS' COLLECTS IN EUROPE

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Surfrider Foundation Europe looks back on its Surfrider Against Cigarette Butts campaign and reminds us that cigarette butts are a major plastic pollutant. In just three days, over 200,000 butts were collected across seven European countries — a mobilization that highlights the urgent need to take action against cigarette filters.

Surfrider Against Cigarette Butts: a major campaign targeting the world's most widespread plastic pollutant

Last week, on the occasion of World No Tobacco Day (May 31), Surfrider Foundation Europe called on European citizens to join cigarette butt collects. The campaign was launched in response to the alarming scale of pollution caused by cigarette butts — a plastic waste that is often underestimated.

The goal: to raise awareness about their massive presence in the environment, to mobilize thousands of people across Europe, and to encourage citizen participation in community science actions. By counting the collected cigarette butts, Surfrider gathers essential data to engage policymakers.

Last year, 862 volunteers took part in five countries (Spain, Portugal, Greece, Germany, and the Netherlands), **collecting 183,353 cigarette butts**. This year, the campaign expanded to two more countries: France and Denmark.

[Link to illustration images](#)

Alarming figures on cigarette butt pollution

Today, Surfrider Foundation is proud to reveal the results of its *Surfrider Against Cigarette Butts* campaign.

In total, 223,773 cigarette butts were collected during 44 cleanup events organized across 7 countries, bringing together 782 participants united against this pollution.

Highlight on the main figures

In France (including overseas departments):

12 collects were recorded, including one upcoming event in Canet-en-Roussillon on June 14.

A total of **55,806 cigarette butts** were collected by approximately **140 participants**. The combined estimated duration of all cleanups is 14 hours and 30 minutes.

Detailed results:

- Paris: 25,000 cigarette butts collected
- Cherbourg: 7,230 cigarette butts collected
- Nantes: 5,000 cigarette butts collected
- Pau: 6,000 cigarette butts collected

In Spain:

25 collects were recorded, and 52,839 cigarette butts were collected by 480 participants.

Details of the results:

- Basque Country: 23,211 butts collected
- Cantabria and Asturias: 7,996 butts collected
- Galicia: 14,141 butts collected

- Vilagarcía de Arousa: 4,350 butts collected
- Catalonia and Valencian Community: 4,911 butts collected
- Balearic and Canary Islands: 2,580 butts collected

In Germany:

10 collects were recorded. A total of 120,764 cigarette butts were collected by 155 participants over approximately ten hours.

Ludwigshafen leads with 54,500 cigarette butts collected, followed by Berlin with 40,000 cigarette butts and 80 participants. The city of Hamburg hosted two collects, during which 11,084 cigarette butts were collected.

[Link to illustration images](#)

Surfrider calls for the removal of the cigarette filter

These results clearly highlight the severity of cigarette butt pollution. Despite appearing to offer health protection, **the cigarette filter is actually a deceptive illusion with disastrous ecological consequences.** Made of cellulose acetate, a non-biodegradable plastic, it releases thousands of plastic microfibers and toxic substances (heavy metals, pesticides, nicotine, etc.) into the environment. **Every year, 4.5 trillion cigarette butts are discarded into nature**, often carried into the oceans where they become an invisible yet persistent form of pollution.

Contrary to popular belief, **the filter has never been proven to provide any health benefits, according to the WHO.** It merely smooths the smoke, making it easier to start smoking and become addicted. Keeping it in place only serves to perpetuate a dangerous marketing illusion, harmful both to individuals and to the planet.

In the face of this **avoidable plastic pollution**, Surfrider Foundation Europe joins international calls to ban single-use cigarette filters. The solution lies neither in recycling—which is ineffective, costly, and technically limited—nor in inaction. Removing filters reduces plastic pollution and enables the implementation of stricter policies against littering. **Banning filters means reducing toxic waste, protecting the ocean, and holding the tobacco industry accountable.**

We remain at the disposal of journalists for any request for information or interviews.

About Surfrider Foundation Europe

The NGO Surfrider Foundation is a collective of positive activists who take concrete action on the ground on a daily basis to pass on a preserved ocean to future generations. Our

mission: To carry the voice of the Ocean loud and clear! Our weapons? Raising awareness and mobilising citizens, children and adults alike (in particular through 48 volunteer branches throughout Europe), using our scientific expertise to carry out lobbying actions and transform companies. Discover the association on <https://surfrider.eu/> or via [this video](#)

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