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EUROPEAN WEEK FOR WASTE REDUCTION

BANNED SINGLE-USE PLASTICS STILL ON THE MARKET: SURFRIDER EUROPE CALLS ON BRANDS AND ALERTS THE EU

For 2 months, Surfrider Foundation Europe has been able to check the implementation of the Single Use Directive through the engagement of European citizens in its Single Use Rebellion campaign. The result: too many banned single-use plastics are still on the market. Surfrider is calling on companies and alerting the European Union to put an end to these marketing practices.

Adopted in 2019, the European directive on single-use plastics¹ provides for a ban on the marketing of certain products in Europe from July 2021. In order to verify its implementation, Surfrider Foundation Europe launched, on September 13th, with the help of partner associations², a major European mobilisation campaign called Single Use Rebellion (S.U.Re): the campaign invited European citizens to go to both physical shops and online stores to spot and photograph plastics that looked like it was illegal and to report them to the campaign website www.nosingleuse.org.

A major finding: many non-compliances with the EU's Directive

On the European Week for Waste Reduction which just started, Surfrider Europe reveals the results: **the main lesson is that manufacturers are still putting single-use products on the market without the consumer's knowledge, in contravention of the directive now in force.**

While no cotton buds with plastic sticks were found, the same cannot be said for straws, plastic cutlery and plates, and expanded polystyrene boxes, which are prohibited by the directive and for which 3 circumvention strategies were observed:

- The sale of biodegradable and/or biobased single-use plastics, passing them off as greener alternatives when EU restriction rules unequivocally apply to bioplastics too.
- Use the transitional period to clear existing stocks, while making it impossible to verify compliance with the conditions under which the transitional period was granted.

- Marketing arguments to make consumers believe that they are being offered alternatives to single-use plastics that do not contribute to plastic pollution, that comply with current environmental legislation, that do not contain plastic and/or are not single-use. Examples include the words "reusable" xx times .





These products have been found in large European retailers such as Carrefour, Action, Gifi and Casino, among others.

A video campaign to raise awareness and challenge the manufacturers and distributors of these irregular plastics

In order to denounce these irregular practices and to raise awareness of the fact that these plastics remain major dangers for the ocean, Surfrider Europe is launching a series of 3 thematic videos illustrating the dubious practices perpetuating the marketing of single-use plastics, with a final appeal: "This is a message to business and industry: we're watching. Plastic is plastic, no matter how you phrase it. Be part of the solution rather than creating new scourges. **STOP SELLING SINGLE USE PLASTIC NOW.**"

The campaign will be promoted with the hashtag **#Breaktheplasticwave**

Surfrider Europe alerts Frans Timmermans

It is in this context that Surfrider Europe, with the support of the Rethink Plastic alliance and the international Break Free From Plastic movement, has written to Frans Timmermans, Vice-President of the European Commission in charge of the Green Deal, and Virginijus Sinkevičius, European Commissioner for the Environment, Oceans and Fisheries, indicating that

" Not only does this breach undermine the very impacts of the SUP Directive, but it also endangers the Zero Pollution ambition and upcoming initiative of the Commission on empowering consumers in the green transition. It represents an offending lack of consideration for the millions of Europeans who have praised these measures and are taking daily action against plastic pollution. Up to 12 million tonnes of plastic are estimated to end up in our seas and the ocean every year. Half is single-use plastics. Their impacts are dramatic for marine life, habitats and coastal communities. Plastic pollution also bears incalculable risks for human health all along the plastic value chain. It puts in danger our economies and exacerbates the climate and biodiversity crisis. In this context, continuing to put on the market single-use plastic items in disguise is not acceptable" [Link to the whole letter here](#)

[Link to the first video](#)

[Video on wetransfer](#)

[Link to our article on surfrider.eu](#)

[Surfrider Foundation Europe](#)

Surfrider Foundation Europe, an NGO created in 1990, works to protect the oceans, the coastline, the waves and their users. For 30 years, with a team of experts and 49 volunteer branches in 12 European countries, the association has been working with stakeholders (citizens, private and public sectors) on several major issues: aquatic waste, coastal development, climate change, water quality and user health. Thanks to its citizen mobilisation campaigns such as [Osparito](#) or the [Ocean Initiatives](#), large-scale waste collection operations at the end of which waste is sorted and counted (see [the 2020 environmental report](#) here), the NGO has concrete data to advance legislation and convince manufacturers to change their practices. Discover the association on <https://surfrider.eu/>

¹[The SUP Directive](#)

he European Union (EU) adopted on 5 June 2019 the Directive on the reduction of the impact of certain single-use plastic products, commonly known as the Single-Use Plastics (SUP) Directive. This directive aims to reduce the pollution caused by single-use plastic items that are most commonly found on European beaches. It entered into force on 3 July 2019. Member States had until 3 July 2021 to transpose the directive into national law and adopt the measures necessary for its proper implementation. The SUP Directive provides for the phasing out of single-use plastics and their replacement by reusable products and systems and introduces a series of measures to achieve this, including

- An EU-wide ban on a range of single-use plastic products (e.g. plates, cutlery, straws, Styrofoam cups, Styrofoam food and drink containers) from 3 July 2021,

- A reduction in the consumption of food containers and beverage cups by 2026 compared to 2022,
- An extended producer responsibility (EPR) system modulated by fees for a number of items (packets and packaging, wipes, tobacco products, etc.), including cleaning costs.
- Specific design requirements for beverage containers and bottles, including the incorporation of recycled content and the attachment of the cap to the container,
- Separate collection of bottles - 77% of bottles placed on the market by 2025 and 90% by 2030,
- A labelling requirement, including plastic and environmental impact, for cups, menstrual products, wet wipes and tobacco products.
- Awareness-raising measures on the environmental effects of single-use plastics and the promotion of eco-design and reusable alternatives.

²The partner associations in alphabetical order:

Alianza Residuo Cero, Break free from Plastic, Changing Markets Foundation, European Environmental Bureau, Mare Vivu, No Plastic in my Sea, Plastic Change, Rethink Plastic alliance, Retorna, Seas at Risk, Zero Waste Europe, Zero Waste France.

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