



NGOs CALL ON EUROPEAN COMMISSION TO BAN SINGLE-USE PLASTIC BAGS DURING 2013 INTERNATIONAL BAG-FREE DAY

July 3, 2013

Brussels, July 3, 2013 – Zero Waste Europe, GAIA, and Surfrider Foundation Europe called for a ban on single-use plastic bags today, on international plastic bag-free day. The organisations urged the European Commission to ensure the necessary steps to restrict their use, during the review of the packaging waste legislation in 2014.

The fourth edition of international plastic bag-free day sees groups from all over the world organizing activities to raise awareness on the environmental impact of single-use plastic bags and to demand that governments act to stop marine littering. Single-use plastic bags accounted for 92.5% of the 95.5 billion carrier bags used in the EU in 2010, and for 73% of the waste collected along the Tuscany coast¹.

Joan-Marc Simon from Zero Waste Europe said: *“We regret that the European Commission is taking so long to take a decision on the issue of single-use plastic bags. The negative effects of such lack of action are visible to everyone; the EC should restrict the use of single-use plastic bags in the coming review of waste and packaging waste legislation”.*

Antidia Citores from Surfrider Foundation Europe said: *“Single use plastics bags: 12 minutes in your hands, centuries harming our seas and oceans. In 2011, a European consultation showed overwhelming support for a ban on single use plastic bags and so far in 2013, 10,000 people have signed our call for an EU ban on disposable plastic bags. We hope the 4th edition of the international plastic bag-free day will convince the EC to ban them and end this environmental nonsense.”*

Plastic bags account for around 40% of all the marine litter across UK waters and the North Sea². In the Bay of Biscay most of the waste items found on the seabed were plastic (92%) and of those 94% were plastic bags³. In this respect over 30 NGOs are making a final call to EU Environment ministers ahead of the July 15 deadline for setting marine litter targets, as required under EU law.

The International Plastic Bag-Free Day www.plasticbagfreeday.org is organised by [GAIA](#), [Zero Waste Europe](#) and the [Fundació Catalana per la Prevenció de Residus i Consum](#).

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¹ [Green Paper On a European Strategy on Plastic Waste in the Environment](#)

² Data taken from the International Bottom Trawl Survey and the Clean Seas Environmental Monitoring Programme by CEFAS

³ OSPAR, 2009

YOUR CONTACT

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To find out more about the international plastic bag-free day see: www.plasticbagfreeday.org

NOTES:

Zero Waste Europe - Zero Waste Europe is an umbrella organisation bringing together international organisations (such as the European Environmental Bureau, Friends of the Earth Europe, Reuse or Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives), local Zero Waste groups and European municipalities working to free Europe from waste. Beyond recycling, the Zero Waste network aims at reducing waste generation, close the material loop whilst increasing employment and rethink and redesign waste out of the system. www.zerowasteurope.eu

GAIA –Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives- is a worldwide alliance of more than 800 grassroots groups, non-governmental organizations, and individuals in over 90 countries working for a world without waste. www.no-burn.org

Surfrider Foundation Europe is an environmental association, statute 1901, created in 1990 in France (Biarritz). During its existence, it has achieved real expertise in the areas of research, local action, as well as the creation and diffusion of educational tools. Today, it consists of a network of 1,700 volunteers, 10,000 members and 100,000 supporters in forty local offices that are active in twelve European countries. Find out more: www.surfrider.eu