

LAUNCH OF THE 29TH SEASON OF WASTE COLLECTION ACROSS EUROPE!

25 AND 26 MARCH 2023



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[Link to illustrative photos](#)
[Link to the B-roll videos](#)

Spring is here! For the 29th season, Surfrider Foundation is calling on all citizens across Europe to get out of winter by organising or participating in large-scale waste collections on beaches, near lakes and rivers. More than ever, two watchwords: raise awareness about the vulnerability of the ocean and change the laws by sorting and counting waste.

A call for citizen mobilisation

While waste collections can take place all year round, the beginning of spring is the perfect time to remind everyone that they can roll up their sleeves to help protect the ocean. This is why Surfrider invites everyone to organise or participate in an existing waste collection in Europe.

Organising a collection is easy! Citizens can go to www.oceaninitiatives.org to register their collection!

Those who simply wish to participate in an existing collection, they must also go to the site and click on the collection of their choice using the interactive map! (see list of collections at the end of this press release).

Don't say "beach clean-up" but Citizen Science!

Surfrider was one of the pioneers in these collection operations. It has since been joined by many other movements and many citizens spontaneously go out with a bin bag during walks on the beach.

But to what effect? What consequences? Can we really clean up the ocean?

The answer is that there is no question of cleaning up. Because these group operations will not be able to get rid of the tons of waste dumped into the ocean every year. They are, however, a great way of raising awareness of the extent of the pollution. They also make it possible to raise awareness among the younger generations of the need to reduce waste production by adopting responsible consumption patterns.

Even better: at Surfrider, waste collection goes much further than awareness campaigns: they are real participative science operations, as the waste is sorted and counted in order to feed a European database and to help Surfrider to change the laws. In this, committed citizens have much more power than they think when they come to do their part: they participate in the emergence of new laws, such as the European Directive on Single-Use Plastics, which has made it possible to ban harmful products such as straws, plates, cutlery, plastic stirrers or balloon stems.

2022 collection results: the cigarette butt still in the lead

More than 70,000 people took part in one of the 2175 collections in 2022. Which waste items were counted the most?

On the top step of the podium of big polluters, we still find the cigarette butt (648,084 counted in 2022, i.e. an estimated total of 2,409,580 cigarette butts collected over all collections): although the municipalities are generally taking part in the fight against this environmental scourge by putting in place appropriate bins and signs, the reflex of "throwing it on the ground" is still struggling to be abandoned. Although many smokers have changed their habits out of ecological awareness, there has not yet been a significant reduction in this waste.

Behind the cigarette butt are all kinds of fragments: plastic, glass and polystyrene. This fragmentation raises questions about the real effectiveness of waste recovery systems. More than ever, Surfrider's main message is obvious: we must put all our legislative and financial efforts into prevention to reduce pollution at the source rather than in the search for corrective measures. Once in the aquatic environment, it is too late, plastic waste fragments, releasing harmful substances until it becomes microplastics that are impossible to collect and pollute all marine ecosystems.

[Link to the 2022 review](#)

Everyone can organise or participate through oceaninitiatives.org !

Ocean initiatives are waste collections that everyone can join by consulting the various initiatives already planned or that everyone can organise. In both cases, all you have to do is go to www.oceaninitiatives.org . Surfrider then sends all the necessary material: bags, gloves, practical guide to organise your collection.

Collections in Europe

On the weekend of 25 and 26 March, several local Surfrider branches are organising waste collections across Europe, to which the general public is invited:

[Link to the map of all European collections](#)

[Link to illustrative photos](#)
[Link to the B-roll videos](#)

Journalists are invited to join the collections to report on the events. We are at your disposal for any information or interview requests.

About Surfrider Foundation Europe

The Surfrider Foundation is a collective of positive activists who take concrete action on the ground every day to pass on a preserved ocean to future generations. Our mission: To be the voice of the Ocean! Our weapons? Raising awareness and mobilising citizens, children and adults alike (thanks to 48 volunteer branches throughout Europe), using our scientific expertise to lobby and transform companies. Find out more about the association at <https://surfrider.eu/en> or via [this video](#)

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