

WHEN NGOS SAY NO TO A SURF PARK IN SAN SEBASTIAN (SPAIN)... 5KMS AWAY FROM PERFECT WAVES !



Photo of the Antondegi hill where the artificial wave installation is planned to be built (Author: Haritzalde).

While the ecological emergency is more than ever present and visible, San Sebastian municipality does not seem to realize it. They just accepted the modification of Mount Atondegi's local urban masterplan to build a new surf park. Based on the development of 9 acres of land, only a few kilometers away from the ocean and natural surf spots, this project would have tremendous ecological consequences.

That's why a collective called ANTONDEGI BERDEA-OLATUAK ITSASOAN has decided to fight (Olatuak Itsasoan means "Wave in the ocean"). Aiming to protect the ocean for 30 years, Surfrider Foundation Europe and its Surfrider Spain branch took part of the collective to raise their voice against the construction of this project.

A new surf park project in a natural area

The Wavegarden company, who is promoting this project has attempted to build in this region before : last December, after being challenged by Surfrider Foundation Europe and local activist groups, the company had to give its plan up to build a surf park in the French Basque country, just 1.5km away from some of the best surf spots in Europe. Now, just 30kms away on the other side of the border, the company has found a new location to propose their artificial wave pool. **The local urban masterplan's modification has been voted to create a recreational building plot on Mount Antondegi, one of the last natural sites in the Spanish city.** The project would lead to the development of 9 acres of land which is currently used for agriculture and supposes a heavy consumption of energy. These changes would result in ecosystem disturbance, loss of biodiversity, destruction of the existing green space which is home to endangered bird species, and increased risk of flooding due to urbanization. All phenomena accelerate the effects of global warming and expose human's vulnerability to a changing environment, only to benefit a project aimed at leisure and economic gain.

With Antondegi Berdea Olatuak Itsasoan, Surfrider Europe commits to fight

Surfrider Foundation Europe maintains its position that surf parks proposed near the coastline, in close proximity to natural surf spots, create a negative environmental impact that far exceeds their commercial benefits. The NGO has fought publicly against these unnecessary developments before and will now be joining the San Sebastian campaign initiated by ANTONDEGI BERDEA-OLATUAK ITSASOAN, a collective that encompasses the Eguzki, Haritzalde, Itsas Enara, Parkea Bizirik, Bizi Lagunekin and Fridays for Future organizations. The collective will campaign to cancel this absurd project which does not answer in any way to the general interest, even that of some surfers, whom have never been in favor of the building of such infrastructure. **By putting pressure on San Sebastian's public authorities who own the land, the collective's first goal is to requalify the site of Antondegi as a non-convertible area.** This effort would establish the site as a protected natural space and prevent development projects that do not answer to European and International commitments regarding climate change and biodiversity protection, particularly specified in the 2030 Agenda.

As long as inappropriate developments surface, the fight will go on

This fight, in which Surfrider Foundation Europe is actively involved, reaffirms our NGO's position on surfparks. Our organisation was born out of a community of surfers concerned about protecting the ocean as a playground. However, the development of these new wave pools, urbanizing the land and resource use, contributes to increase the vulnerability of marine ecosystems and of this very playground. By engaging against these projects in nature, let us prioritize environmental issues over economic ones and make a real commitment to a new societal model.

Surfrider Foundation Europe is a non-governmental organization created in 1990, whose objectives are the protection, safeguarding and enhancement of the ocean, coastline, waves and the people who enjoy them.

For 30 years and with a team of experts and 49 volunteer chapters in 12 european countries, the organisation has worked with all stakeholders in society (citizens, private sector, public sector) on 3 main themes: marine litters, coastal development and climate change, water quality and health.

<https://surfrider.eu/>

Created by Surfrider Foundation Europe in 1995, the Surfrider Coastal Defenders program aims to fight locally on Marine litter dumps, chemical, and bacterial pollution and inappropriate developments. Thanks to members, experts and volunteers taking direct action, Surfrider Coastal Defenders manage to [win a lot of campaigns](#). When small organizations, communities, and individuals are ready to take action against coastline and ocean degradation, our team offers their support to form a united network fighting for the same cause.

<https://www.surfriderdefenders.org/>

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