

February 24th 2021 - PRESS RELEASE

MICROPLASTICS KILL THE OCEAN: SURFRIDER FOUNDATION EUROPE'S NEW HARD-HITTING CAMPAIGN TO CALL FOR A BAN ON MICROPLASTICS



Coinciding with the submission of the European Chemicals Agency's ([ECHA](#)) proposal for a restriction on intentionally-added microplastics, Surfrider Foundation Europe presents a new, hard-hitting campaign that invites European citizens to pressure the European Commission into action by supporting an ambitious ban on added microplastic ingredients. Created with the creative agency, [ici Barbès](#), this campaign conveys a strong message by recalling the deadly effects of the added microplastics in our everyday products, a fight that the association has been leading for several years.

Denouncing the devastating effects of cosmetic and detergent products on the environment

For this third collaboration, Surfrider Europe and ici Barbès adopt a hardened tone and unveil a shocking campaign intended to raise awareness on the harmful effects of microplastic pollution on marine life, a pollution that is invisible, yet deadly. More

than 42,000 tonnes of microplastics are dumped into the environment every year in the European Union. Most of them come from daily products such as self-care and cleansing products, but also paints and pesticides. So small they are invisible to the naked eye, these plastic particles are too tiny to be filtered out during water treatments, but are also discharged into waterways by other routes to end up in the Ocean. As a result, microplastics are suffocating the Ocean, killing marine life and potentially harming human health in the long term.

Important issues for the European Union

The launch of this new campaign was not chosen randomly. The ECHA is about to submit its proposal for the restriction of intentionally added microplastic ingredients in products, as well as the opinions of its two committees, to the European Commission. After two years of examination, ECHA is presenting its proposal for amendments to the European [REACH](#)

regulation aimed at protecting human health and the environment from the risks associated with chemical substances. This proposed restriction concerns a large number of industrial sectors due to the quantity of products to which microplastic ingredients are currently added.

"There would be up to 51 trillion microplastic particles in the ocean. Those microplastics are ingested by marine life, accumulate across the food chain, absorb and release contaminants, bringing high risks to our health. It is urgent the European Commission acts, and does it with ambition: microplastics are putting our Ocean and health at risk at a dangerous and unprecedented rate."

Gaëlle Haut - EU affairs Project Manager at Surfrider Foundation Europe

Putting pressure on industrial lobbies

In addition to arousing the indignation of citizens, the strong tone used aims to pressure the industrial lobbies which defend the addition of these ingredients. Indeed, despite the widely proven harmful effects of microplastics, they have tried to influence the committees of the European agency to postpone for several years the ban on the addition of microplastics in certain types of cosmetics, to continue the use of nanoplastics less than 100 nanometers, and to authorize in some cases the replacement of microplastics by so-called "biodegradable" microplastics.

As the campaign shows, these sad attempts by industrial lobbies are only worsening the disastrous conditions in which the marine environment is victim to. It is now urgent that institutions legislate on this subject in order to stop their devastating effects on marine biodiversity and potentially human health.

With the new visual campaign "Microplastics kill the Ocean", Surfrider Foundation Europe reminds that the European ban on intentionally added microplastics must be ambitious. It is urgent that society as a whole mobilizes for a bold and immediate ban of these microplastic ingredients in our everyday products in order to stop this preventable pollution of the Ocean and limit the damage to marine life and human health.

CONTACT :

Anouk Dréan

presse@surfrider.eu

Press relations

SURFRIDER FOUNDATION EUROPE

33 Allée du Moura - 64200 Biarritz

www.surfrider.eu