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SEAS AT RISK

GAIA, EEB & Seas at Risk joint release

NGOs CALL ON EUROPEAN COMMISSION TO BAN SINGLE-USE PLASTIC BAGS DURING 2012 INTERNATIONAL BAG FREE DAY

2 July 2012

European Green groups GAIA, EEB and Seas at Risk call on the European Commission to ban single-use plastic bags as soon as possible.

On the third edition of the international plastic bag-free day -3 July- groups from all over the world are organizing activities to raise awareness on the impact of single-use plastic bags on the environment and demanding governments to act to stop marine littering.

Joan Marc Simon from GAIA 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 act now".

Stéphane Arditi from the EEB said "The EC should define criteria for reusable bag rather than trying to define what is a single-use bag. If nothing else, the EC should at least require mandatory taxation which could raise funds to work on waste prevention programs".

Chris Carroll from Seas at Risk said: "It's been a year since the Commission's public consultation showed that 70% of EU citizens overwhelmingly support a ban on single-use plastic bags. The Commission must now act on this clear signal and propose a Europe wide approach to ending our obsession with single-use bags."

Data taken from the International Bottom Trawl Survey and the Clean Seas Environmental Monitoring Programme by CEFAS indicates that plastic bags makes up around 40% of all the marine litter evaluated at stations across UK waters and the North Sea. In the Bay of Biscay most of the waste items found on the seabed were plastic (92%) and of those 94% were plastic bags (OSPAR, 2009). 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.

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More info on the actions of international bag-free day in Europe:

<http://www.zerowasteurope.eu/2012/06/join-the-3rd-of-july-international-bag-free-day-2/>



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NOTES:

- 1- GAIA –Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives- is a worldwide alliance of more than 650 grassroots groups, non-governmental organizations, and individuals in over 90 countries working for a world without waste.
- 2- European Environmental Bureau is Europe's largest federation of environmental organisations with 140+ member organisations who gain their membership from the general public. EEB stands for environmental justice, sustainable development and participatory democracy.
- 3- Seas At Risk is a European association of non-governmental environmental organisations working to protect and restore to health the marine environment of the European seas and the wider North East Atlantic.