



**GOOD KARMA
PROJECTS**
ACTION FOR THE PLANET



Press Release | 8.07.2024

Legal victory: Polluting impact of the plastic value chain in Tarragona recognised

Good Karma Projects and Surfrider Spain celebrate **an important legal victory following [the recent resolution pronounced by the Generalitat of Catalonia](#) of the environmental liability process** promoted by our organisations with the support of INSTA, which **recognises the negative impact of the plastic value chain on the environment.**

This resolution marks a milestone in the recognition that the voluntary measures adopted to date have not been sufficient to mitigate plastic pollution, as the Generalitat itself has defined mandatory preventive measures to avoid the continued dumping of pellets on the coast of Tarragona.

The conclusions of the process underline the urgent need to implement stricter and more effective regulations to address this problem. **Several of the measures are similar to those proposed in a future EU regulation**, setting a positive precedent towards long-term environmental protection. It is worth noting that there has been no similar near-similar action at regional, state or European level. **At a key moment when the regulation of the plastic value chain is being debated, the situation in Tarragona shows the need to implement mandatory measures.**

A precedent by proposing mandatory measures

The resolution represents a significant step forward in the fight against plastic pollution, highlighting the importance of regulating the plastic value chain more rigorously. However, our organisations also highlight one aspect to consider: **the burden of resources and efforts to promote these changes has fallen mainly on civil society.**

The work of our organisations, Good Karma Projects and Surfrider Spain, has been fundamental in driving this process over the past year, demonstrating once again the power of the role of civil society.

However, Surfrider España and Good Karma Projects highlight **the lack of reparation measures taken by the companies that the Generalitat has recognised as responsible for the environmental damage caused.** Without such compensation, the costs of environmental restoration fall on the public administration and, therefore, on the citizens. Even so, it is important to recognise the work of the Generalitat for having agreed to initiate the proceedings following the report presented last year and for having carried out the appropriate investigation work and imposed obligatory prevention measures.

The resolution is welcomed.

Our organisations consider the resolution to be positive. But we believe that the role of the administration is key now, to ensure that the measures are complied with and that they prove to be effective.

For Xavier Curto, coordinator of Surfrider Spain, "Associations and the social sector have promoted what we consider to be a precedent against plastic pollution, as for the first time mandatory measures are established for companies in the plastic value chain in relation to pellet dumping. These measures are even ahead of European regulations. Surfrider has been lobbying for years for mandatory measures for companies. This victory would not have been possible without the joint work with Good Karma Projects and the excellent legal work of the INSTA team".

For Jordi Oliva, co-founder of Good Karma Projects, "These measures are just the beginning to address the problem of plastic pellet pollution in the future. It is a pity that no measures have been included to repair the damage caused so far, despite all the evidence and acknowledgement of the environmental impact. We need these measures to be mandatory for all companies that handle pellets, as there are more than 60 in Tarragona alone".

For Ivan Hortigüela, lawyer involved in the case on behalf of INSTA, "The resolution of the environmental liability proceedings is an unprecedented victory. It proves beyond any doubt the significant damage that plastic pellet discharges can cause to the environment. The environmental liability in the form of mandatory preventive measures to be taken by the Administration against different companies at different levels of the plastic value chain is a step forward in the fight against microplastic pollution".

Annex: more information on the legal case

Although the presence of plastic pellets in the environment has been recorded for decades, it has only been in the last five years, thanks to the tireless work of various organisations, that the seriousness of the problem of microplastic pollution in Tarragona has been revealed.

These tiny pieces that serve as raw material for the manufacture of plastic products are considered microplastics due to their size, generally less than 5 mm in diameter. These

granules reach the environment through constant losses by the companies that work with them.

In particular, the beaches of La Pineda and Els Prats de Vilaseca (Natura 2000 Network) have been suffering from this plastic pellet pollution constantly for years, especially during torrential rains and strong winds.

- *Surfrider has been advocating for ten years at European level to push for mandatory measures for companies in the plastics value chain.*
- *Since 2018, Good Karma Projects has been conducting extensive research and documentation on this serious problem, highlighting its extent and alerting both the national and European level to the seriousness of the situation.*
- *In 2021, the ChasingPellets expedition detected pellets even as far offshore as the Balearic Islands, which have no plastic industry.*
- *In 2022, Good Karma worked on the MEDPELLETS study on the pollution and extent of pellets in the Western Mediterranean, with a focus on Tarragona.*
- *In 2023 the entities promoted an environmental liability procedure together with INSTA.*

More about Surfrider Europe and Surfrider Spain

The NGO Surfrider Foundation is a group of positive activists who take concrete action on the ground every day to pass on a preserved ocean to future generations. Our mission: to make the ocean's voice heard loud and clear! Our tools? Raising awareness and mobilising citizens, children and adults alike (thanks in particular to 48 groups of volunteers spread throughout Europe), using our scientific knowledge to put pressure on and transform companies. Surfrider Spain transfers the NGO's mission to the national territory. More information about the association can be found at <https://surfrider.eu/> and <https://surfrider.es/>

More about Good Karma Projects

GOOD KARMA PROJECTS is an NGO dedicated to environmental action and education, located in Catalonia. The organisation was founded in 2017 by two young engineers passionate about surfing and nature, with the aim of empowering people as a tool for change to generate a positive impact on the planet.

Since then it has carried out multiple environmental education and action projects that have involved thousands of people and with a direct impact on the territory. You can find out more at www.goodkarmaprojects.org

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Surfrider Foundation Europe's "Surfrider Coastal Defenders" campaign is supported by the LIFE program set up by the European Commission. The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of its contents, which are the sole responsibility of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein..