

GLOBE EU event – 2025 Overshoot Day – European Parliament, 29 April 2025

Introduction:

Sirpa Pietikäinen MEP welcomed everyone, including students from four European schools in Brussels and online participants from Adani International School and Ryan International School in India. She emphasized the importance of engaging young people in policy processes and thanked Matthew Pye and Nicolas Duquenne for coaching the students.

First Round:

The first question was posed by Mia Guerrero, who asked about the European Union's thoughts and measures to tackle overconsumption and whether these measures are effective in reducing excessive consumption. Sirpa responded by outlining several EU policies, including the circular economy package, sustainable food initiative, farm to fork strategy, textile strategy, and new legislation on consumer rights. However, she noted that the EU is not yet halfway to achieving the necessary goals and needs to focus more on designing waste out, increasing product longevity, repairability, upgradability, and reusability.

Next, Alice Marques inquired about the EU's alignment with the Paris agreement goals on curbing overconsumption. Sirpa explained that the EU is lacking roughly half of the necessary actions to align with the 1.5 degrees target and that more drastic and faster measures are needed across all sectors. Manuela Ripa MEP agreed and highlighted the challenges in the European Green Deal, including the need for binding targets and systematic reduction of absolute use of resources.

Alice then asked a follow-up question about whether there should be legislation targeting sectors like aviation or fast fashion to limit absolute consumption. Manuela emphasized the necessity of binding targets and the importance of supporting industries in transitioning to more sustainable practices, as voluntary measures alone are not sufficient.

Edwards Pavluts asked about the role of the European Green Deal in fighting overconsumption. Sirpa explained that the Green Deal aims to change economic incentives and policies to support environmentally friendly and effective practices. It includes measures like changing budget laws, supporting startups, financial reporting, public procurement, and research funding. Manuela added that a more circular, local, and regional economy is needed rather than a linear and globalized one.

Edwards then asked if the Green Deal and other policies would be enough to solve the problem. Manuela expressed strong belief in the Green Deal's comprehensive approach but warned against diluting its goals.

Mia asked how young people can be educated about the overshoot day. Manuela emphasized the role of schools and informed consumers in making better choices, while Sirpa suggested spreading the Climate Academy model to all European schools and supporting it with EU funding.

Alice inquired about the EU's role in promoting regional products and informing consumers about their choices. Manuela advocated for informative labelling, such as "Made in Europe," to help consumers make responsible choices.

Mia asked how locally sourced products can be made more affordable. Manuela suggested financial incentives, such as removing VAT on healthy food and making unhealthy food more costly. Sirpa proposed labelling products with their cost per using hour to inform consumers about the true value of longer-lasting items.

Arnav Sharma questioned why the western media often portrays India negatively regarding resource extraction, despite Europe exceeding India in per capita extraction. Manuela acknowledged Europe's historical

responsibility and emphasized the need for Europe to lead the way in creating a more resilient and circular economy.

Second Round:

Zoé Nagy asked about the impact of European Rearmament on overconsumption policies. Bruno Tobback MEP explained that rearmament and warfare are examples of overconsumption and have a negative impact on resource use.

Melina Raptis inquired about technological solutions that show the most promise in promoting repairability. Sara Matthieu MEP highlighted the importance of design phase improvements, legislation promoting repairability, and shifting business models to products as a service.

Abigail Pillet asked how these solutions can be integrated into public policy and businesses effectively. Bruno explained that the eco-design regulation aims to design products for recycling, and circular economy regulations facilitate recycling within Europe.

Abigail followed up by asking how to ensure that repairing products will cost less than buying new ones. Bruno suggested making repairing affordable and offering products as a service to incentivize repairability.

Aishani Swain asked if regions like the EU and US should be held accountable for their environmental impacts at COP events. Sara emphasized Europe's need to show leadership and take historic responsibility, aiming for significant emission reductions and climate financing.

Aishani then asked about concrete policies the EU is considering to achieve drastic reductions in material consumption. Sara mentioned the Fit for 55 package, which includes goals for CO2 emissions, building renovations, and renewable energy, but noted that more policies will be needed to achieve the 2040 targets.