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# EU overshoot day: ELSiA calls for urgent action on overconsumption

**The European Laudato Si' Alliance (ELSiA) marks with concern this year's EU Overshoot Day, falling on 3 May.<sup>1</sup> It is a stark reminder that Europeans, on average, are consuming far more resources than the planet can regenerate. This date highlights the urgent need to rethink our consumption patterns to ensure a sustainable and just future for all.**

[Earth Overshoot Day](#) marks the date when humanity's demand for natural resources in a given year exceeds what the Earth can regenerate within that same year. Once this threshold is reached, humanity has effectively exhausted nature's capacity for the year and from that moment onward, we rely on "borrowed" resources, placing increasing pressure on the planet's ecosystems and driving climate change.

This growing ecological deficit is also deeply unequal: the richest 10% of the global population (which typically includes many people in the EU27) have caused two thirds of global warming since 1990. [Within the European Union](#) itself, the richest 10% are responsible for as many planet-heating emissions as the poorest 50% combined. The EU's Overshoot Day arrives well before the global Earth Overshoot Day, which is expected on July 25 this year. This reality illustrates how the consumption patterns of wealthy European populations place a disproportionate strain on the planet's resources. The consequences of this are not only environmental but also social and economic, as those who use the fewest resources are the most impacted. Climate change is heating the European continent twice as fast as the global average, leading to severe flooding, storms and wildfires, which affect people experiencing poverty more acutely. In the Global South, ecosystem degradation linked to mining is disrupting countless livelihoods, particularly in Africa and Asia, and erratic climate-related weather events are leading to the loss of territories and cultural heritage.

This calls for a profound reflection on our lifestyles and patterns of consumption. [As Pope Francis exhorted hundreds of young people at the European Youth Conference in 2022](#), "May you aspire to a life of dignity and sobriety, without luxury and waste, so that everyone in our world can enjoy a dignified existence."

ELSiA invites the Conferences of Bishops in the EU to embrace the opportunity to lead by example in responding to our current consumption crisis, considering the pressure it places on our ecosystems and the injustice it creates for people experiencing poverty in Europe and beyond. We encourage the Conferences to build on the many initiatives already underway, recognising the inspiring work being done across Church-led communities and properties to live more sustainably and justly. The Church is uniquely positioned to foster dialogue between decision-makers and local communities, listening to their experiences and empowering them with the right tools and strategies to act, through initiatives such as the [Laudato Si' Action Platform](#). By bringing this conversation to the highest decision-making levels, Bishops' Conferences can help rethink our economies to meet the pressing needs of the 21st Century.

Caring for our common home is not only an environmental necessity or a matter of justice and responsibility. [As Pope Leo warns us](#), the challenge is also profoundly moral: "God will ask us if we have cultivated and cared for the world that He created, and if we have taken care of our brothers and sisters. What will be our answer?" This is a question each of us must confront today.

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<sup>1</sup> In 2025 and 2024, EU Overshoot Day fell on May 3; in 2023 and 2022, on May 4; in 2021, on May 5; and in 2020, on June 5 (significantly influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns, which reduced consumption and emissions).