



## Delayed Earth Overshoot Day points to opportunities to build future in harmony with our finite planet

*COVID-19 has caused humanity's Ecological Footprint to contract, pushing the date of Earth Overshoot Day back more than three weeks compared to last year. The challenge of relaunching our economies presents countries with a unique chance to act on the future we want. In cooperation with the Global Footprint Network, the Club of Rome is [organizing an online event on August 20<sup>th</sup>](#)*

**WINTERTHUR, SWITZERLAND — AUGUST 17, 2020** — By August 22, humanity will have demanded as much from nature as Earth can renew in the whole year, according to [Global Footprint Network](#). Coronavirus-induced lockdowns caused humanity's Ecological Footprint to contract almost 10% but we still use as many ecological resources as if we lived on 1.6 Earths. As public health and economic recovery have emerged as dominant concerns globally, decision makers are called to act on the unprecedented current disruption to build a future where all thrive within the means of our planet ("one-planet prosperity").

On the occasion of Earth Overshoot Day 2020, the Club of Rome and Global Footprint Network are inviting decision makers and members of the media to the European Launch on August 20<sup>th</sup>, 9am CET (see below for details). The Club of Rome and the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK) will use this online event to formally introduce an updated [Planetary Emergency Plan](#), making the case that the pandemic has highlighted our fragility and the profound links between disease, nature, climate and emissions, equity and justice, the finance sector, and food systems.

"Sustainability requires both ecological balance and people's well-being ensured over the long-term, therefore this year's sudden Ecological Footprint contraction cannot be mistaken for progress," said Global Footprint Network CEO **Laurel Hanscom**. "This year more than ever, Earth Overshoot Day highlights the need for strategies that increase resilience for all and #MoveTheDate."

"To build back better post COVID-19, Business as Usual (BAU) is not an option! This crisis has taught us that we can transform our lives when faced with disaster and reduce our environmental footprint. But this cannot be at the cost of human lives or livelihoods. That's why we must build resilience to future health and environmental shocks into our economic, financial and societal systems **now** for both the short- and long-term well-being of all citizens" said Club of Rome Co-President **Sandrine Dixson-Declève**.

"Governments tempted to rollback climate and nature commitments to shore up collapsing economies should think again. This century is characterized by speed, scale, connectivity, and surprise. Global pandemics, climate chaos, deforestation, and mass extinctions are part of the same problem and interact and reinforce each other," said **Johan Rockström**, director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research.

Many solutions exist already. The Planetary Emergency Plan 2.0 responds to humanity's massive ecological overshoot by providing a set of key policy levers addressing the cross-cutting challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss, and human health and well-being. It outlines a vision of transformation and regeneration, a roadmap for governments to set in motion a decade in which the development path of our planet is steered onto one which is inherently beneficial for all living species, leaving no one behind.

Because we need to prepare for a world increasingly shaped by climate change and resource constraints, [Overshootday.org](https://overshootday.org) spells out [what individuals can do](#), while the [Footprint Calculator](#) can help them measure their progress. Also, up and running initiatives by businesses, governments, communities, and individuals to effectively advance sustainability are celebrated on the [crowd-sourced interactive #MoveTheDate Solutions Map](#).

### **Programme August 20th\***

Our public event will combine live engagement with video messages from 'green champions' throughout Europe, who make the case that radical transformation is possible and that we can move towards living within our planetary boundaries rather than continuously 'overshooting' them.

#### **European Launch Earth Overshoot Day (9:00h am CEST):**

Mathis Wackernagel, President of Global Footprint Network

#### **Presentation Planetary Emergency Plan 2.0:**

Sandrine Dixson-Declève, Co-President of The Club of Rome

Johan Rockström, Director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research

#### **High Level Reflections – Planetary Emergency Plan in Practice:**

Minister Teresa Ribera, Vice-President of Government and Minister of Ecological Transition of Spain: working towards a green transition and recovery for Spain

Marieke van Doorninck, Deputy-Mayor of Amsterdam: implementing Doughnut Economics in Amsterdam

Terry A'Hearn, CEO of the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency: towards COP26 in Glasgow and a successful Decade of Action

Frank Niederländer, Member of the BMW Foundation Herbert Quandt Board

Adélaïde Charlier, Co-Founder Youth for Climate Belgium & Maria-Claire Graf, Vice-President of Swiss Youth for Climate: the role of youth in pushing back the date and ensuring a sustainable future for all

Q&A (9:45-10:00h am CEST)

\* The speaker's list will be updated as we get closer to the event date

**Global overshoot** started in the early 1970s. Now, the cumulative ecological debt is equivalent to 18 Earth years. In other words, it would take 18 years of our planet's entire regeneration to reverse the damage from overuse of natural resources, assuming overuse was fully reversible. Solutions suggest that it is possible to live within the means of our planet. If we #MoveTheDate 5 days each year, humanity would be using less than one planet before 2050.

### **Additional resources**

[Press release of the Global Footprint Network in multiple languages](#)

[Infographics for download](#)

[June 2020 press release \(for more info about Earth Overshoot Day 2020\)](#)

[How Earth Overshoot Day 2020 was calculated](#)

[Steps to #MoveTheDate of Earth Overshoot Day](#)

[#MoveTheDate Solutions Map](#)

[Solutions](#)

[Ecological Footprint data for more than 200 countries and regions](#)

[Planetary Emergency Plan of the Club of Rome](#)

### **About the Ecological Footprint**

The [Ecological Footprint](#) is the most comprehensive biological resource accounting metric available. It adds up all of people's competing demands for biologically productive areas – food, timber, fibers, carbon sequestration, and accommodation of infrastructure. Currently, the carbon Footprint makes up nearly 60 percent of humanity's Ecological Footprint.

### **About Earth Overshoot Day 2020**

- The [later date](#) of Earth Overshoot Day 2020 reflects the 9.3% reduction of humanity's Ecological Footprint from January 1<sup>st</sup> to Earth Overshoot Day compared to the same period last year, which is a direct consequence of the coronavirus-induced lockdowns around the world. The major drivers behind the historic shift in the long-term growth of humanity's Ecological Footprint were decreases in wood harvest and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, which resulted in reduction in forest products Footprint (8%) and carbon Footprint (14.5%).
- Humanity currently uses 60% more resources than what can be regenerated – or as much as if we lived on [1.6 planet Earths](#). From Earth Overshoot Day until the end of the year, humanity grows the ecological deficit which has been increasing most years since the world fell in ecological overshoot in the early 1970s, according to the National Footprint & Biocapacity Accounts (NFA) based on UN datasets (with 15,000 data points per country per year).

- Earth Overshoot Day is calculated using the National Footprint and Biocapacity Accounts now maintained and updated by [York University in Toronto](#) and governed by the new [Footprint Data Foundation](#).

## **About Global Footprint Network**

Global Footprint Network is an international sustainability organization that is helping the world live within the Earth's means and respond to climate change. Since 2003 we've engaged with more than 60 countries, 40 cities, and 70 global partners to deliver scientific insights that have driven high-impact policy and investment decisions. Together, we're creating a future where all of us can thrive within the limits of our one planet. [www.footprintnetwork.org](http://www.footprintnetwork.org)

## **About the Club of Rome**

In 1968, a network of entrepreneurs, diplomats, scientists and economists was created in Rome on the initiative of the Italian industrialist Aurelio Peccei and Alexander King, then Science Director of the OECD.

The group was united in their concern about the future of humanity and the planet and assumed responsibility to make politicians and decision-makers worldwide aware of the most crucial issues of the future. The Club of Rome was born.

In the first report on the predicament of humanity, "[The Limits to Growth](#)", the Club warned of unlimited material growth and uninhibited consumption in a world of limited resources: if human activity was to continue in the same way as between 1900 and 1972, humanity would be about to overshoot the carrying capacity of planet earth by the end of the century.

The Club's [100 members](#), world renowned experts in their respective disciplines, are still devoted to the founding principles of the Club: A commitment for a sustainable future of humanity from a holistic, systemic and long-term perspective. The Club's central argument is that the global challenges facing humanity are interconnected and cannot be tackled as singular, isolated events.

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**Interviews available in English, German, Spanish and French.**