



To the point!

Cross-Asset- and Strategy-Research

Since yesterday we live on credit

Humanity does not come close to respecting planetary boundaries

The day before yesterday was the so-called "[Earth Overshoot Day](#)" (EOD). This was the date on which, since the beginning of the year, humanity has consumed as many resources as our planet is capable of regenerating in the course of an entire year. Since yesterday, we have been living on credit.

The earth's population acts as if there were 1.7 planets to fall back on. Humanity is thus living far beyond its means. Planetary boundaries are binding in the long term. For a while we can finance the overexploitation of the planet. Just as a gambling addict can indulge his vice by gradually pawning all his valuables.

But for how long can this go well? Between 1994 and 2014, the availability of natural resources per capita worldwide decreased by a staggering [40%](#). It certainly hasn't gotten any better since then.

For us in Germany, by the way, the imbalance is even more pronounced. Our national EOD was in early May. If the entire population of the earth were to live the German lifestyle, almost three planets would be needed!

Unfortunately, overconsumption of natural resources has actually increased in recent decades. As the figure shows, we were still roughly in equilibrium in the early 1970s. The EOD was just before Christmas.

Compared to 2022, the EOD has "improved" by five days, i.e. moved toward the end of the year. But less than a single day of that is actual improvement. The other four days can be attributed to better data used for the first time in this year's estimate. If we "improved" by just one day each year, we would not be back in



Moritz Kraemer -- Chief Economist

LBBWResearch@LBBW.de

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Mankind consumes 1.7 earths every year

Earth Overshoot Day (1972-2023)



Source: overshoot.org

balance until 2174. The planet will not give us that much time. We are still a long way from achieving any kind of sustainability.

What to do?

If we do not want to rely on the interplanetary colonization fantasies of an Elon Musk, the only thing left is a more prudent use of the resources available to us on our home planet.

To counteract the worrying trend of overexploitation of our planet, there are [numerous starting points](#). A few examples:

- By cutting food waste in half, the EOD can be pushed back 13 days toward the end of the year.
- Global introduction of a CO₂-price of \$100: 63 days.
- Application of existing technologies to increase energy efficiency: 21 days.
- Halving meat consumption: 7 days.
- Halving global car traffic: 13 days.

If you want to calculate your personal EOD, you can do so [here](#). I could not resist. To be honest, the result was sobering and shocked me a bit. I dare not mention the date of my personal EOD here. Only this much shall be revealed: I am highly motivated to get at least to the level of the average citizen in Germany (EOD at the beginning of May) next year.

What do you think is your personal Earth Overshoot Day? I wonder whether your guess is equally far off the mark as mine was!

If we "improved" by one day each year, as we did in 2023, we would be back in balance in 2174.

Calculate [here](#) your personal "Earth Overshoot Day"!

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