

Sustainability Transformation Conference 2026

Living within Planetary Boundaries

Facing Facts • Rethinking Strategies • Building Bridges

A European Sufficiency Conference

Date: 6 October 2026

Location: Umweltforum Berlin (Germany) and online

Conference host: Leonhard Nima

Programme

08:30 *Registration*

09:00 **Opening**

Words of welcome

SRU, UBA, EEAC, Youth Delegates

09:15 **Session 1**

Facing the facts: Planetary boundaries

The stability of the Earth system is increasingly threatened as seven of the nine planetary boundaries have now been exceeded. This session examines the science and asks: how can societies rapidly reduce material pressures while unlocking pathways to well-being within ecological limits?

Keynote

Johan Rockström, Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research
Keeping Earth resilient within planetary boundaries

Digging deeper

Line Gordon, Stockholm Resilience Center
A striking case: Planetary boundaries, food and health

Cecilie Friis, CONCITO
Planetary politics on a national scale: The case of Denmark
Discussion

10:30 *Artistic intervention*

10:45 *Coffee break*

11:15 **Session 2**

Rethinking strategies: Facing political and social realities

The science is clear—but politics contested. As agendas of sustainability transformation face resistance from economic, social and political actors, this session examines how to sustain ambition amid geopolitical tensions, tendencies to polarization, populist narratives and competing priorities.

Keynote

Dirk Messner, German Environment Agency
What do we have to talk about – and how?

Digging deeper

Maarten Hajer, Utrecht University
Somya Joshi, Stockholm Environment Institute
Discussion

12:45 *Artistic intervention*

13:00 *Lunch*

14:00 **Session 3 Building bridges: How do we create perspectives and partnerships for real world changes?**

Parallel sessions

3.1 Policies: Tackling problematic production and consumption patterns in EU member states and regions

While technical solutions come at a price in the form of ecological trade-offs and high costs, sufficiency shifts focus to reducing material and energy demands and redefining needs. This session explores how EU member states, regions and cities can reduce demand through policies aimed at patterns of production and consumption, and whether and how sufficiency is gaining traction in policy debates.

Chair

Johanna Kentala-Lehtonen, Finnish Expert Panel for Sustainable Development

Impulse

Alicia Valero Delgado Energaia Institute, University of Zaragoza
Beyond overconsumption: Material limits and the path to sufficiency in Europe

Lassi Linnanen, Finnish Expert Panel for Sustainable Development
Perspectives on sufficiency from Finland

Niamh Garvey, Irish National Economic and Social Council
How are the social aspects of sufficiency being dealt with in Ireland?

3.2 Materials: Limiting critical material flows with circularity and sufficiency

Circularity in the economy aims to reduce absolute material use—but rendering current volumes of material flows circular isn't fully feasible. This session explores how combining circularity with sufficiency can reduce critical material flows, and how demand reduction is key to making circular strategies effective and successful.

Chair

Christina Dornack, German Advisory Council on the Environment

Impulse

Janez Potočnik, International Resource Panel

Yamina Saheb, Sciences Po

Alexander Janz, German Environment Agency

Melanie Jaeger-Erben, Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus-Senftenberg

3.3 Economics: Economics of a livable planet

The failure of current economic structures in providing equitable well-being within planetary limits challenges predominant paradigms. This session explores how a welfare-oriented economic system can be geared towards quality of life, resilience, and fairness: How do policy frameworks need to be reframed when reoriented towards well-being?

Chair	Claudia Kemfert , German Advisory Council on the Environment
Impulse	Subhra Bhattacharjee , Forest Stewardship Council
	Richard Damania , World Bank
	Matthias Schmelzer , University of Flensburg
	Stanislav Shmelev , University of Bath
	Anna Valero , London School of Economics
	3.4 Communication: Strategies for re-strengthening sustainability
	<i>The partly successful discourse on social-ecological transformations of the last decades in Europe is facing strong backlashes. This session explores how communication and strategy must adapt: how can ambitious sustainability and social justice agendas be reframed, new alliances built, and linked more convincingly to societal needs?</i>
Chair	Carsten Neßhöver , German Environment Agency
Impulse	Eva-Maria McCormack , Talking Hope
	Followed by group work on different topics
16:00	<i>Coffee break</i>
16:30	Session 4 Looking back and looking ahead
Keynote	Wolfgang Lucht , German Advisory Council on the Environment Sufficiency and the unfinished project of Ecological Democracy <i>If modern societies are to halt their destabilization of Earth and forge a more inclusive future, they must evolve into ecological civilisations. Democracies are challenged with integrating the ecological dimension into their liberal and social foundations. Engaging with “sufficiency as a strategy of the enough” as a means of reconnecting with the purposes of democracy is essential.</i>
Political Reflection	Philippe Lamberts , European Commission Planetary boundary governance in the light of political boundaries and possibilities
Synthesis	Perspectives for moving forward Youth Delegates Reactions and closing SRU, UBA, EEAC
17:45	<i>Artistic intervention</i>
18:00	<i>Get-together</i>