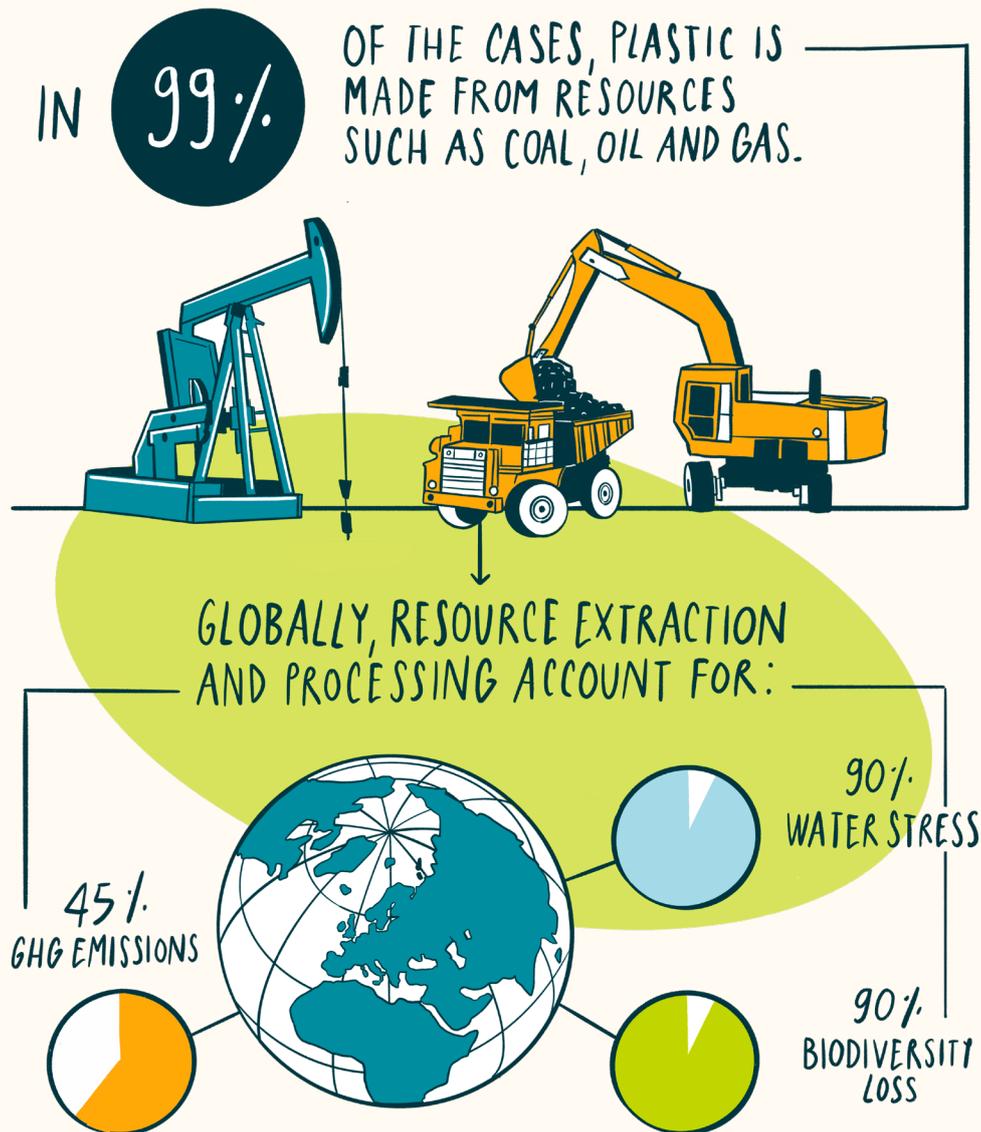


Resourcing A Material World

How the EU can fund real solutions



Did you know that the production of plastics requires the extraction of finite fossil fuels? In 99% of the cases, plastic is made from resources such as coal, oil and gas. The remaining 1% are made from crops or forestry resources.

The impact of plastics on resource use

The production and consumption of plastics is a driver for natural resource depletion as it uses extracted resources as a raw material, and mostly fossil feedstock.

But environmental impacts related to plastics accompany its entire lifecycle from cradle to grave, impacting the biosphere and the planet's resources in more ways than one. Globally, resource extraction and processing account for 45% GHG emissions, 90% of water stress and 90% of biodiversity loss. In a world where resources are finite and their extraction and use impacts humans and the environment alike, it is necessary to reevaluate our relationship towards natural resources and the needs they are fulfilling.

A research study of more than 10,000 people in 29 high-income and middle-income countries found that 70% believe that "overconsumption is putting our planet and society at risk".

Overproduction and overconsumption is often fuelled by plastics - in the fashion industry the use of plastics has enabled the soar of fast and ultra fast fashion brands, in the packaging world single use food and beverage packaging has driven the disposability and on-the-go culture to a whopping 188 kg of packaging waste per capita in 2021.



What does it mean for Europeans?

Many EU citizens are familiar with the concept of circular economy, i.e an economy where resources are held in use for as long as possible through reuse, repair, remanufacture and at the end of products very long useful lifetimes, recycled.

The multiplication of zero waste shops, repair cafés, refill stations in supermarkets, and uptake of alternatives to disposability (e.g. reusable cotton pads, reusable nappies, menstrual pants & cups, etc.) are real life examples of such a circular economy.



However, to ensure the circular economy fits in line with the planet's carrying capacity, it is important that the actual size of the circular economy actually gets smaller.

To do that, EU decision-makers need to promote and vote for policies that achieve an absolute reduction of EU production and consumption, driving sufficiency and well being, and business models that do not rely on extractivism.

Resources to go further

[Sustainable Resource Management in the EU](#) - European Youth Forum, Friends of the Earth Europe (2024)

[Plastics](#) - European Environment Agency

[Plastics and the Circular Economy](#) - Global Environment Facility (2018)

[Consumption and Consumer Footprint: methodology and results](#) - JRC Publications (2019)

[The plastic crisis has deep corporate roots: to protect our planet, they need to be exposed](#)
The Conversation (2022)

Support the campaign with #PlasticsAndEU

Find out more at www.breakfreefromplastic.org/plastics-and-EU

