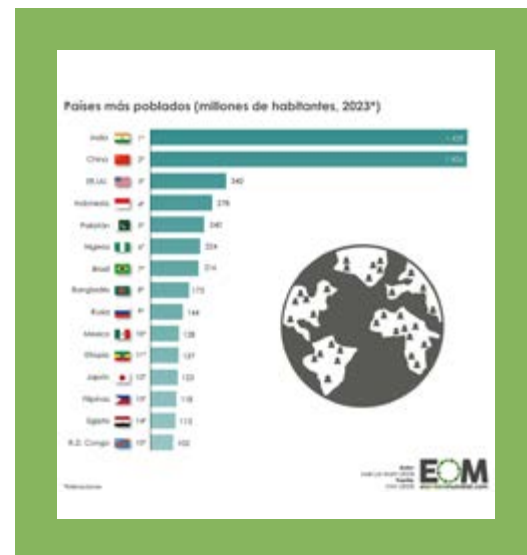


Module 4: Málaga Municipality

4.3 Our species. The social crisis

4.3.1 Evolution of the size and distribution of the world's population.

The world has experienced several major demographic events in recent months. First, in November 2022, the planet reached 8 billion inhabitants; shortly afterwards, at the end of the year, it became clear that China, the great demographic engine of the last century, had lost population for the first time in its recent history; and in mid-April 2023, finally, India managed to overtake the Asian giant as the country with the most inhabitants in the world.



The world is at a critical crossroads. On the one hand, the human population is growing exponentially, driven by medical, technological and social advances. On the other hand, the planet's natural resources, such as water, land, minerals and energy, are finite and unable to sustain this rate of expansion indefinitely.

On the other hand, the uneven distribution of population between large cities and rural areas is a global phenomenon that presents major challenges for sustainable development. This trend, characterised by the rural exodus to cities and the depopulation of the countryside, generates a series of negative consequences that affect both rural and urban areas. Geopolitics of deserts: 5% of humanity lives in blue zones, 5% in the red zone.



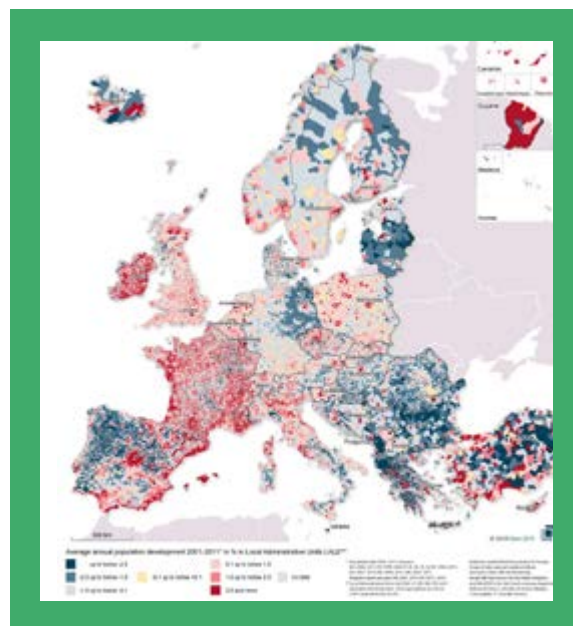


4.3.2 The European case

Population decline is projected in 61 countries by 2050, especially in Europe, with low fertility rates and an ageing population.

The [following map](#), produced by German researchers, provides a detailed picture of population change in Europe between 2001 and 2011. It was produced by the German Federal Institute for Urban Affairs. The areas that have gained the most inhabitants are shown in red. The areas that have lost the most population are shown in darker blue.

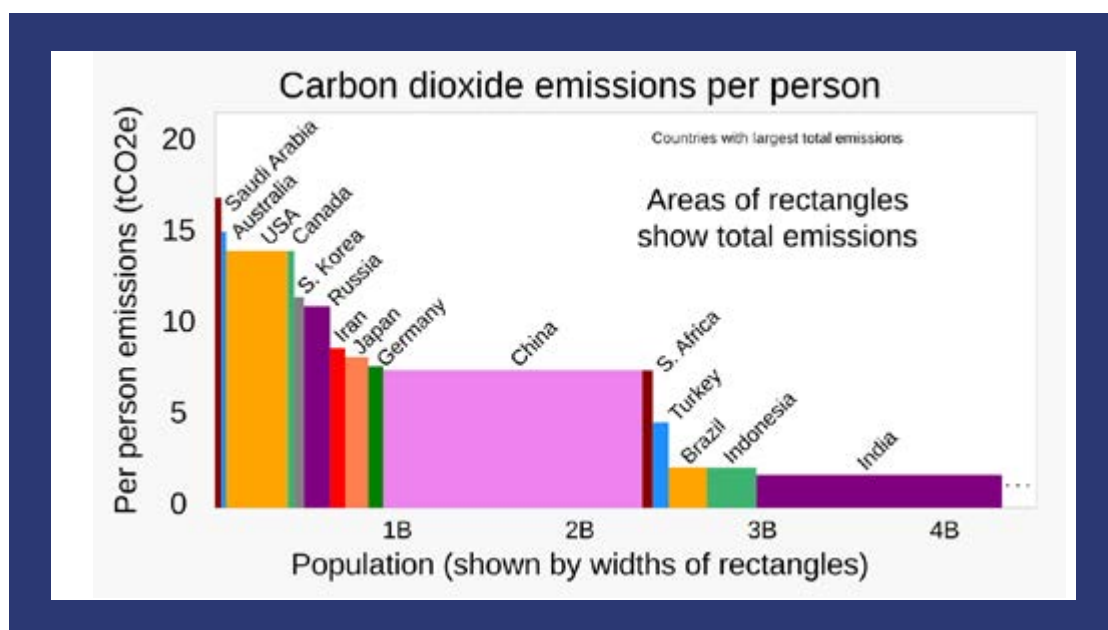
· Population change in Europe between 2001 and 2011:



· Demographic change in the EU has an impact on the labour market:

- 1. The Labour Market
- 2. Employment
- 3. Care Services
- 4. Demographic Balance
- 5. Rural Areas
- 6. Europe's Position in the World

According to the latest report published by the EU , entitled [Demography and Climate Change - The EU in the Global Context](#), shows that population growth remains one of the main drivers of emissions. Major emitters will need to ensure a significant and rapid reduction in their emissions, while countries with low emissions but high population growth need support to find ways to grow in a way that avoids significant increases in emissions.



4.3.3 Urban Systems. Dependency and Deficit Systems.

Urbanisation is increasing, with 55% of the world's population living in cities, which could reach 5 billion by 2025. Well-managed urbanisation can contribute to sustainable growth, but it also poses challenges such as demand for housing, infrastructure, basic services and employment. Cities are responsible for a large share of energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. They also face climate risks, disaster risks and public health challenges, as evidenced by COVID-19. Intense policy coordination is required to build green, resilient and inclusive cities.



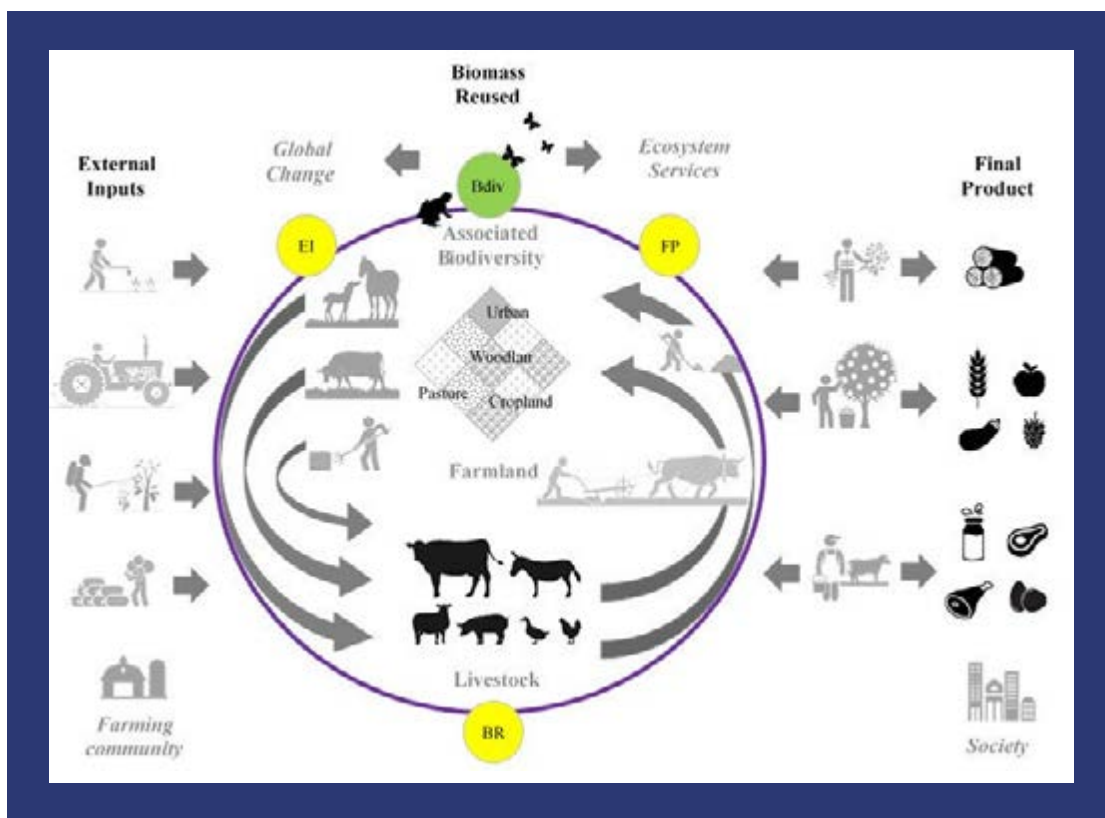
To change this situation, we have to change lifestyles and redefine the rules of how cities function. The movement to achieve this has already begun and we already find a multitude of collectives and cities demanding a change, a humanisation of the city, a return to respect, a greater connection with the outside world, a contact with the producer, giving priority to reparability, everyday life and sharing.

Building cities that “work” - that are green, resilient and inclusive - requires intensive policy coordination and investment decisions. National and local governments have an important role to play: they must act now, shape the future development of cities and create opportunities for all people. [The city in the face of the ecological crisis](#)



4.3.4 Rural systems. Overexploitation and Forced systems

Rural areas in the EU are an essential part of the European way of life. They are home to 137 million people, representing almost 30% of its population, and cover more than 80% of its territory. They are widely recognised and valued for food production, natural resource management, protection of natural landscapes, as well as recreational activities and tourism. Many of our traditions and festivals as well as our culture have their origins in rural areas of Europe.



· The following are some of the main causes of overexploitation:

Intensive agricultural practices:	The excessive use of fertilisers, pesticides and water in conventional agriculture is degrading soil quality, polluting water sources and affecting biodiversity.
Extensive livestock farming:	Large-scale livestock farming, with its associated deforestation and overgrazing, is contributing to the loss of natural habitats, soil erosion and greenhouse gas emissions.
Overfishing:	Uncontrolled fishing, without respecting natural cycles and catch limits, is jeopardising the sustainability of fish stocks and the balance of marine ecosystems.
Unsustainable logging:	Indiscriminate logging, without adequate reforestation plans, is leading to deforestation, loss of biodiversity and desertification.

· Consequences of overexploitation:

Resource depletion:	Unsustainable extraction of resources such as water, soil, minerals is jeopardising their long-term availability.
Environmental degradation:	Overexploitation is causing soil erosion, water pollution and a large increase in biodiversity loss.
Food insecurity:	Declining agricultural productivity and fisheries, coupled with increasing demand, can lead to food shortages and jeopardise the food security of populations.
Social conflicts:	Competition for scarce resources can lead to social conflicts between different population groups, especially in rural areas.

A balance needs to be found between the exploitation of natural resources and the protection of the environment. Sustainable rural development must be based on practices that ensure the conservation of natural resources and the well-being of local communities in order to secure their population and prevent the exodus of their inhabitants to urban areas.



4.3.5 Indicators

· The linear economy trap:

Today's society is at a critical crossroads. Our development model, based on unbridled consumption of material resources, is depleting the planet's natural resources and generating serious environmental impacts. It is urgent to rethink our development model and to disassociate it from the idea that progress is measured only by the quantity of goods we consume.



Strategies we can implement to decouple development from material consumption and build a more sustainable future:

1. Increasing material efficiency:

Reducing the amount of materials needed to produce goods and services.

3. Dematerialisation:

Developing products and services that require fewer physical materials.

5. Changing consumption patterns:

Reducing unnecessary consumption of goods and services, and encouraging more sustainable lifestyles.

2. Circular economy:

Implement an economic model in which materials are kept in use for as long as possible and waste is minimised.

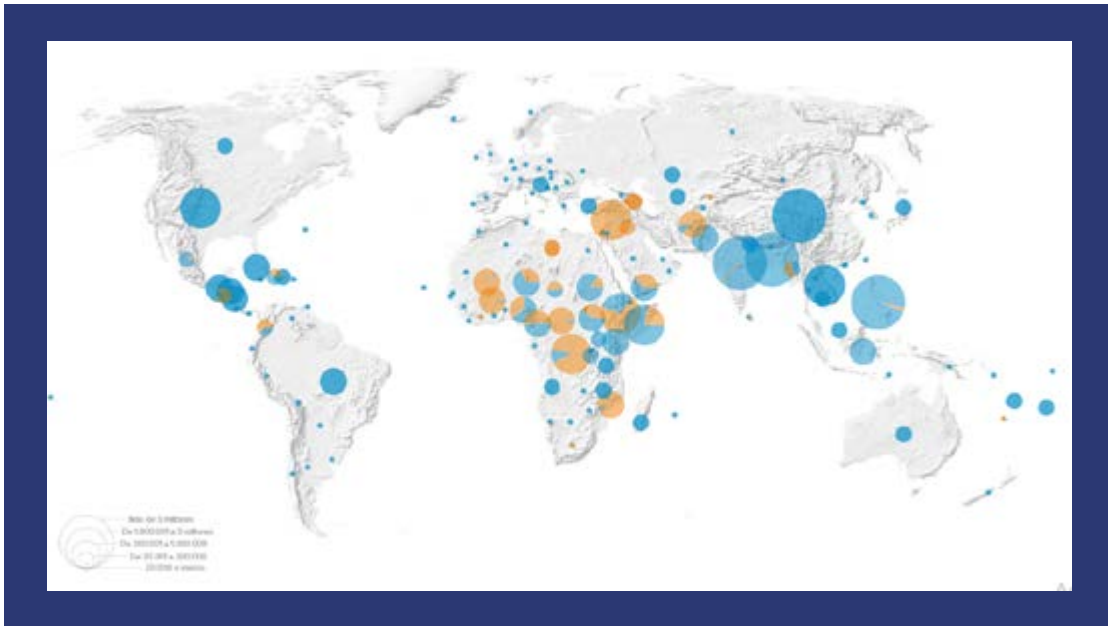
4. Extending the useful life of products:

Repairing, reusing and sharing products instead of throwing them away.



· Climate Migrations:

Climate change causes significant migration due to natural disasters, rising sea levels and other phenomena. In 2020, 30.7 million displacements were caused by natural disasters. The lack of a specific legal framework for climate refugees complicates the protection of their rights. International legal recognition is needed to provide them with the necessary assistance.



Environmental and climatic reasons interact with each other and often make it difficult (or impossible) to differentiate these movements from other migratory flows.

The following map, downloaded from the website <https://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2021/spanish.html>, shows the number of displacements caused by natural disasters in 2020.

· [Practical activity. Learning control](#)

