

International Week on Sustainability 2023

HWR Berlin hosted the International Week on Sustainability for the fifth time from 3-11 and 17-20 November 2023, this year with a focus on »Circular Economy«.

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Over 50 students from nine countries, including South Korea, the UK, Spain, Finland and the Netherlands, took part in this year's International Week on Sustainability. The opening event on 3 November was dedicated to the focus on Circular Economy with the title: "The contribution of circular economy for coping with sustainability challenges". After a welcome address by Prof Dr Andreas Zaby, President of HWR Berlin and Prof Dr Silke Bustamante, Vice President for Sustainability, four short presentations were given by Prof Dr Vera Susanne Rotter (TU Berlin), Dr Ilka Weissbrod (TU Dresden), Jonas Aechtner(WWF Germany) and Prof Dr Patrick Teuffel (Circular Berlin). Afterwards, the speakers held an interesting panel discussion with Prof Dr Silke Bustamante. Over 50 students from nine countries, including South Korea, the UK, Spain, Finland and the Netherlands, took part in this year's International Week on Sustainability. The opening event on 3 November was dedicated to the focus on Circular Economy with the title: "The contribution of circular economy for coping with sustainability challenges". After a welcome address by Prof Dr Andreas Zaby, President of HWR Berlin and Prof Dr Silke Bustamante, Vice President for Sustainability, four short presentations were given by Prof Dr Vera Susanne Rotter (TU Berlin), Dr Ilka Weissbrod (TU Dresden), Jonas Aechtner(WWF Germany) and Prof Dr Patrick Teuffel (Circular Berlin). Afterwards, the speakers held an interesting panel discussion with Prof Dr Silke Bustamante.

The International Week on Sustainability took place in two parts. The first part consists of an intensive seminar week with lectures, workshops, so-called corporate talks and excursions to special places of sustainability in Berlin. In the second part, students work in project teams with representatives from start-ups and companies to develop a question on the topic of sustainability.

In addition to lecturers from HWR Berlin, international lecturers from the Netherlands, Austria, the United Kingdom, Finland, Turkey and Italy were once again able to take part in the first part, some of whom taught in person and some online on topics such as "Ethics", "Sustainable Finance" and "Visions and Objectives & SDGs".

The students had the opportunity to deal with very different aspects of sustainability. From "Psychological Aspects of Sustainability", "Legal Aspects of Sustainability" and "Digitalisation and Sustainability" to "Corporate Social Responsibility" and "Sustainable Innovation Management / Entrepreneurship", the topic of sustainability was examined from a wide variety of perspectives.

The excursions took the students to NochMall, a second-hand department stores' and to Märkisch Landbrot, a bakery with (almost) zero-emission production. There was also a special city tour of "Places of Sustainability in Berlin".

In the Corporate Talks, which were also streamed online for the first time this year for a wider audience, companies and organisations active in the field of sustainability presented themselves. This year, Ms Lanna Idriss, CEO of SOS Children's Villages worldwide, once again impressed the audience with her presentation on the need for sustainable investment in children. In addition, Katharina Richter, herself an alumna of HWR Berlin, presented her concept of the "Original Unverpackt" shops in Berlin. Dr. Juliane Kronen gave a presentation on "innatura", which brokers brand-new donations in kind to non-profit organisations, and David Lammers an alumnus of HWR Berlin as well, and Carolin Pauli presented CDP Europe, a non-profit organisation that operates the global disclosure system for investors, companies, cities, states and regions to manage their environmental impact.

In the second part of the International Week on Sustainability, the students were given a task to develop solutions to specific problems from various start-ups. The partners here were Circular Berlin and DYCLE. The students worked on the task in groups over three days. The aim was to first understand what was expected, then to familiarise themselves with the topic and then to define what exactly should be developed in order to fulfil the task, which included, for example, surveying passers-by on the street for market research purposes. On the last day, the students presented their results to the companies and received feedback on their findings

The Berlin International Week was launched in 2019 with the aim of integrating sustainability and responsibility aspects more strongly into the curriculum of degree programmes. It opens up multidisciplinary perspectives on the topics of sustainability and responsibility. Each year, the project week carries a new focus. The approach is always interdisciplinary and international.