

The interview with Ms Miriam Campos Leiros (Teachers for Future Spain) completed online by the students of Gimnazija Kraljevo, Nina Kekeric and Viktor Nikolic, on April 27th, 2022

Sustainability – Europe's Future

1. Is recycling truly beneficial for the environment?
Of course, but bearing in mind that reducing is the first step.
2. How does recycling save energy?
It reduces the extraction of raw materials from nature which requires the consumption of a lot of energy.
3. Why is it important to put only the items that can be recycled in the recycling bin?
Because it is a hard job to separate the different materials.
4. Is recycling the best option for waste management? What other options are there?
There are other options like reusing or refilling bottles or containers.
5. What is composting? Is it truly beneficial for the environment?
Composting is the recycling of the organic material to make soil good for the plants to grow. It is good for the environment because it reduces waste at the same time you help plants to grow without chemicals.
6. Is there something we should never put in recycling bins?
Yes, there are some items that can not be recycled so we shouldn't mix them with the ones that can be recycled.
7. Do you believe that waste sorting can really raise our awareness about sustainability and influence our behaviour in everyday life?
It helps but we need education about other issues such as reducing the consumption of products whose packaging can't be recycled, reusing, using renewable energy, transports that don't pollute, etc.
8. Does it exist both in households and public places in your country?
Yes, it does.
9. Are paper or plastic shopping bags better for the environment? How about reusable bags versus disposable bags?
The best option is reusable bags.
10. Are plastic or glass bottles better for the environment? What about aluminum, tin and steel cans?
Plastic never. Glass is a good option. Steel also can be good since it is thermal so you can keep your liquid hot or cold.
11. How much time is required for other packaging materials to degrade in nature?
Hundreds of years.

12. How can we fight microplastics in seas, oceans and coasts, and how does it affect the biosphere near shores (pericoastal flora and fauna)?

Avoiding its consumption so companies find other materials to make their products.

13. What is something we, ordinary people, can do in practice to help fight waste buildup?

Reuse, refill, repair, separate our waste, buy products without packaging or don't buy products that don't have an eco design, don't eat so much meat...

14. Climate change - to what extent and in which particular aspects is it a serious problem for the planet Earth?

We are in a critical situation, there is no time to repair what we have been doing for years. The air pollution is a problem, the water pollution, the microplastics, the lost of the biodiversity...

15. How do you tackle the burning issues of waste management and climate change in your country, local community and the organization Teachers for Future Spain? Do you have any recommendation for other countries, organizations and individuals? From the school. Education is essential. Aware children are the best ambassadors for their families and for the rest of the people.

16. In your opinion, who should be engaged most in solving all the problems (or making their own contribution to it) discussed so far?

Politicians are the ones who have the power to decide. So we need to vote the matches that care about the environment.