



THE CORONA VIRUS - WHICH FUTURE DO WE WANT?

The new Corona virus sets the world on alert. The number of infections is rising exponentially in many countries. The isolating, sealing off measures of many countries have massive effects on almost all economic and social areas. They are accompanied by a growing feeling of insecurity among the population. The hardly manageable effects of the pandemic dominate the discussion. However, the Corona crisis should also be seen as an opportunity.

IMPACT ON THE UNITED NATIONS

In the SDGs (*UN Sustainability Goals*), the international community has also explicitly committed itself to combating infectious diseases such as AIDS and malaria. However, the goal of eliminating these by 2030 seems a long way off. In recent years, 770,000 of the 38 million people infected with HIV died each year (2018). Of 219 million people infected with malaria (2017), 435,000 died, mostly in Africa.

The corresponding figures for the new Corona virus, on the other hand, do not seem very dramatic at first. The fact that the pandemic is nevertheless attracting unprecedented attention is due to the particular social and political perception of the threat: this Corona virus is new to humans, transmission from person to person is very rapid, the spread and course of the disease is difficult to predict, it is unfolding in an outbreak-like manner in Europe as well and is overstressing even our health systems. In contrast to known, more predictable infectious diseases, which develop over long periods of time and at great geographical distances, the discourse on the Corona virus therefore also touches on national security in this country. It is precisely this form of social processing that can now be a catalyst for necessary reforms.

In the past, health crises with enormous pressure to act have been accelerators of innovation and structural change, as the examples of Pest (*trigger of the first international cooperation in the health sector*) or SARS (*reform of infectious disease control*) show. In times of nationalistic tendencies, the course must now be set in favour of stable structures for international cooperation. The Lazarus Union values the UN's sustainable development goals as a good framework, which should be at the top of the long-term political, social and economic agenda. Dealing with the Corona virus can also speed up efforts to tackle some of



these long-term problems. The Lazarus Union recognizes a particular impact on five UN targets in particular.

UN SUSTAINABILITY GOAL NO. 3: HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Before the pandemic crisis came, the health care system in many countries was already operating at almost full capacity, both in terms of infrastructure and personnel. However, broad access to health care has never been more important than it is today. Public and private spending must help to rebuild capacity and adapt it to current demographic conditions. This could support companies operating in the health sector, such as manufacturers of medical equipment, diagnostics, health insurance companies and others.

UN SUSTAINABILITY GOAL NO. 8: DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Today more than ever, the Lazarus Union is aware of the importance of social safety nets and emergency liquidity measures for companies. By supporting them, we protect future economic growth.

UN SUSTAINABILITY GOAL NO. 9: INDUSTRIAL INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The last few weeks have changed the way many of us work, shop and communicate. The role of technology and infrastructure has been crucial in how we have dealt with the virus. The ability to communicate and coordinate policies, the ability to work from home and provide vital goods and services, and the ability to shift economic activity from disused areas to those that need additional resources - all these are areas that we probably could not have handled in the same way ten years ago.

These developments are a sign of very rapid change. It will boost Internet use and the need for fast and efficient networks (*such as 5G*).



UN SUSTAINABILITY GOAL NO. 15: LIVING IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

At present, there is no certainty about how exactly the Corona virus is transmitted from animals to humans. However, the destruction of natural ecosystems and the associated challenges for biological diversity may have played an important role. Maintaining the delicate balance between humans and nature will continue to play a key role in protecting society from further pandemics in the coming years. The Lazarus Union expects that public and private institutions will step up their efforts in this area.

UN GOAL SUSTAINABILITY 16: PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

The current situation also reminds us of the important role of institutions in our society. From caring for our health to facilitating economic recovery. While the recent rise of populism has called into question the role of our institutions, the levels of intervention, coordination and cooperation required today remind us of their importance. It will also be interesting to see what impact this historic moment will have on the European Union. Will Europe grow even closer together in the face of such a major test or will the Corona virus mark the end of the Union?

Increased volatility naturally leads us to think in the short term. And yet there is scope for the assumption that some of the challenges we face today may well trigger a shift towards longer-term objectives. From an Lazarus Unions perspective, current developments provide a framework for identifying future investment opportunities while making our society and economy more resilient.

GLOBAL CHALLENGES: THE WORLD AFTER CORONA

ONE THING IS ALREADY CERTAIN: EVEN AFTER CORONA, THERE WILL BE WINNERS AND LOSERS.

Once the pandemic is over, inequality will have increased in most countries because of the economic consequences. Employees in poorly paid service jobs and the self-employed will be particularly hard hit.



Even if all countries now provide dizzyingly high sums of money, in many places it will not be enough to absorb all these people. Jobs will be lost. Moreover, many countries already have high levels of debt in relation to their economic performance; their scope for action is not infinite. The Corona crisis raises awareness of the fragility of our world and society.

Many questions of value are likely to be asked anew: Which industries are vital? Which values are being revalued and how?

It is often said and heard that nothing will be the same after the crisis. However, such far-reaching theses have mostly turned out to be wrong in the past.

FOR THE LAZARUS UNION THE MAIN QUESTION IS:

WHICH FUTURE DO WE WANT?

As difficult as it is to establish a basis for discussion in such a situation, the Lazarus Union encourages consideration of the following issues:

THE TRUE PERFORMERS

These days there is a lot of talk about systemically important professions and critical infrastructure. These include not only doctors and nurses, garbage collectors and postal workers, but also bus drivers, cashiers and social and nursing workers - in other words, mainly professions that are carried out by women. There is little to be heard - and little to be expected - from those who are commonly referred to as "*top performers*", in other words CEOs and managers. For the Lazarus Union the question remains as to why the latter, of all people, earn a dozen times more income than the former. In addition, it is precisely the lower income groups that are most affected by the pandemic.

THE PERPLEXITY OF THE POPULISTS

The Corona pandemic is the nightmare of many populist demagogues. Complex problems that cannot be solved with supposedly simple solutions reveal how little constructive contributions



such actors make to public life. A virus cannot be stopped by pointing the finger at others. A virus cannot be stopped by a wall.

THE QUESTION OF NECESSITY

For the first time since the end of the Second World War, the focus is not on the question of possibility, but on necessity. Despite numerous positive examples that show how a society can move closer together in such a crisis, we are obviously finding this difficult in our individualised society. After all, it has become a way of life to constantly demand more and to claim to get what is demanded. Every restriction is an imposition. This can be seen from reports of people who steal face masks, rip disinfectant from dispensers, or buy eight packs of toilet paper as a precaution. To stand together as a society, to act in solidarity, the common good as the norm - all this does not fit into a society in which its members see themselves primarily as individuals and are educated from childhood to strive for the best, i.e. the most for themselves.

THE FRAGILITY OF OUR PROSPERITY

The experience of standing in front of empty supermarket shelves is a deeply disturbing one because hardly any of us have ever had this experience. Shelves filled to overflowing with eight different types of pasta - each of them organic, vegan, fair trade, gluten-free and locally produced - are actually a matter of course. Since the outbreak of the Corona crisis, we have become aware that our prosperity is based on global value chains - and that what we find on the shelves every day just like that is also produced somewhere, by someone, in very specific places, by very specific people.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF GLOBALISATION

It is not only the direct consequences of globalisation - in the form of pollutant emissions - that are affecting our environment. The massive extinction of species over the past decades, destroyed ecosystems, monocultures, industrial meat production and the overexploitation of nature are all factors that massively promote the spread of a virus. This is also the reason why such pandemics have been increasing recently. The Lazarus Union encourages to ask ourselves to what extent the positive effects of globalisation actually outweigh the negative ones.



THE THINGS YOU CAN DO WHEN YOU HAVE TO

Always the same argument when people are in need, when schools, hospitals, roads, pension and social systems suffer from chronic underfunding of public services, or when it is a matter of dealing with the ecological crisis: more spending would put too much strain on "the economy" or "the markets". The so-called debt brake or the EU budget rules stipulate in law that a state should not spend more than it earns. But there is apparently another way: within a very short space of time, the EU and its member states not only put together loan packages worth billions, but nationalizations are even being discussed at present.

THE CRISIS AS AN OPPORTUNITY

The Corona crisis is the most massive disruption of public life in recent decades. Despite all the challenges that the pandemic brings with it, it also offers an opportunity: to reflect on whether the way we currently live together is really the best of all conceivable ways. Whether people really get the income they deserve. Whether an always-more is really the key to happiness. Whether the well-being of the markets really does weigh more than that of individual people. And whether we are all really better off when each and every one of us looks only to himself.

If we recognize how important each of us is in his or her own place and we maintain this great appreciation for our counterpart, then we have really learned something new. When appreciation and respect are more strongly introduced into our society again, then many hate preachers in the net or wherever his foundations are taken away. Discrimination, exclusion and racism will then perhaps no longer find any resonance. We now have the chance to perceive again what is really important for our living together.

The Lazarus Union encourages that we do not emerge traumatised from this crisis, but with changed values and an appreciation of the essential foundations of a functioning society.

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