

THE ENVIRONMENTAL ECONOMIST WITH A PENCHANT FOR JUSTICE

New Robert Bosch Junior Professor **Linus Mattauch** wants to explore how climate protection can be made into an economically attractive prospect around the world, without creating any new injustices.



When Linus Mattauch and four colleagues set off on a mountain hike, one joked: “Now five environmental economists are going to look at melting glaciers.” Mattauch has been working for years on the question of how climate protection can be implemented socially and economically. Back then on the mountain path, he already knew his professional path. After studying math and philosophy at Oxford, Mattauch earned a PhD in economics in Berlin, spurred on by the issue of environmental protection and the opportunity to contribute to social change.

“There are always losers when a social change takes place.”

Linus Mattauch explains his approach for a just climate policy in this video:




Today, the environmental economist is a lecturer at the Environmental Change Institute at the University of Oxford and Deputy Director of the Economics of Sustainability Program at the Oxford Martin School. But not for much longer. Mattauch is returning to Germany in early 2021 as a Robert Bosch Junior Professor. “The funding means that I’ll be able to set up my own research group,” he says. He has a lot to do, after all. His research project “How inequality and identity affect global climate solutions – and what economics can do about it,” which he is carrying out at the Technical University of Berlin, aims to clarify how climate change can be stopped without

creating any new injustices. “There are always losers when a social change takes place,” he says. “In this case, they are very influential.”

This isn’t just about lobbying, but about the costs of climate protection – for example, in terms of industrial jobs. The issue gets complicated as soon as a person’s livelihood or the economic power of a region comes to depend on the change. “I used to ask myself why nothing was happening. Surely it’s all clear?” says Mattauch. But now that he is a philosopher and economist he has a better understanding of the challenges. That’s why his mission is to lay the foundation for making environmental protection an economically attractive prospect – worldwide and for everyone.

WHY DOES NOTHING HAPPEN?

Simply raising CO₂ prices is not the solution. “That will have an even greater impact on the poor – in Germany at least,” says Mattauch. “In relative terms, poorer people consume more CO₂ per dollar. This doesn’t mean that these people produce more greenhouse emissions. Quite the opposite. It is the rich who produce higher CO₂ emissions. But the rich also spend money on things that are less environmentally damaging, such as culture or organic products.

Far less is understood about comparable relationships in emerging markets. Who would be affected by pollution taxes in countries like these? Mattauch is certain that climate protection and economic growth can also be reconciled in emerging markets. “It completely depends on how the actual economic policy is shaped and developed.” Over the next five years, the new Robert Bosch Junior Professor will be examining just what this might look like.  *Eva Wolfangel*

People are more united than divided

What should our common future look like? Insights from the UN.



People from around the world expressed their hopes and concerns.

“When Brazil is on fire, when Sudan is underwater, when the largest iceberg has just broken off the Greenland ice shelf, what world are you leaving behind?” This was the appeal young French climate activist Nathan Méténier made to government representatives from around the world at the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the United Nations (UN) in the General Assembly. To mark the occasion, the organization started a worldwide conversation under the motto “The future we want, the UN we need.” The aim of the conversation was to find out how global problems such as climate change can be solved, and in what sort of world people like Nathan want to live.

What are your hopes and fears? Where should the priorities in international cooperation lie, and what role can the UN play in all this? These questions were the focus of the initiative, which is supported by the Robert Bosch Stiftung. Over a million people took part in the initiative and demonstrated that people around the world are more united than

they are divided. They want better access to resources such as clean drinking water and greater solidarity for the future – especially during this coronavirus pandemic. At the same time, they are concerned about climate change and its effects. A large proportion of those surveyed are sure that the UN has an important role to play in tackling these challenges, which can only be overcome through cooperation at an international level.

At the official anniversary celebration in New York, UN Secretary-General António Guterres presented the results of the initiative to the heads of state and government of UN member states. A political declaration on the future of the United Nations and international cooperation was jointly adopted. It contains 12 resolutions through which UN member states want to achieve “the future we want and the United Nations we need.”

You can read the report

“UN75: The Future We Want,

The UN We Need” here:

www.bosch-stiftung.de/UN75report

Nathan Méténier is giving his generation a voice.

