

Petition: Socially fair financing of the consequences and inferences of the Corona crisis

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I am a geographer and therefore, in the Corona crisis, I do not belong to the professional groups that are called "systemically relevant". I do not sell food or medicine. I do not work in the medical or nursing profession and I am not a politician who has to make the most difficult decisions at the moment. I also cannot sew face masks. I can only say that I have a good overview of how measures and projects for sustainable development can be successfully implemented and which structures contribute to success. For more than 20 years I have been working professionally in the municipal environment in the field of sustainability promotion. During my studies in the 1990s I already dealt with climate change, among other things. Just like a pandemic, climate change is a

global challenge, most likely even greater than Corona. In my view, the explosive nature of the Corona pandemic is not only due to the threat to health and the impact on the economy. For me, Corona is above all like a magnifying glass that makes the grievances in our society and the need for action even more visible. What has been driving me since the beginning of the Corona crisis is the observation that our governments are "disbursing" many billions of euros to support the economy. Politicians, no matter from which party, are outbidding each other with proposals for rescue packages and financial aid. As understandable and important as the short and medium-term aid payments are in principle - the central question is that of financing and how this can be organised in a socially just and long-term sustainable manner!

Petition: Socially fair financing of the consequences and inferences of the Corona crisis



"Who pays the piper?" The petition calls for the German Bundestag to set up an interdisciplinary commission of experts at the earliest possible date to develop implementation proposals to ensure socially just financing of both the consequences of the Corona crisis and the conclusions drawn from it. Billions are rightly currently being made available from the national budgets. But this is hardly ever discussed: Where does the money come from? How can all this be financed? Especially since there is

currently "only" talk of the short-term economic consequences. The financing of long-term sustainable structures, which must be established and financed both in Germany and worldwide, is not discussed at all! The Corona Crisis, in addition to the direct "impact" of illness, death and economic threats, acts as an indicator of social ills and inequalities. It becomes clearly visible who is most "vulnerable" in Germany and all over the world. Those who are economically on the "fringes of society" will be hit hardest by the pandemic! SOLIDARITY is needed today more than ever! Therefore, there must be no barriers to thinking when it comes to financing the consequences and implications of the Corona crisis in a socially just manner! The challenge we face is summed up in the current book by Italian scientist and writer Paolo Giordano in the book „In Zeiten der Ansteckung, 2020) (see references at the very end of this text).

Distinguishing between consequences and inferences:

By "consequences" is meant that the current measures taken by the government are causing direct economic damage that must be remedied or mitigated. These "consequences" are at the forefront of the current debate and in the aid packages already put together by the federal government and the federal states. These are undoubtedly important, but on the whole they only have a short-term effect, are not systematically backed up by social and ecological criteria and cannot prevent economic distortions on an international scale.

By "inferences" is meant that for a "post-Corona period" changed, less vulnerable and more sustainable structures must be created. In order to make these structures as independent of individual interests as possible and to take social, ecological and economic criteria equally into account, they must be financed primarily by the public sector. This will further increase the need for public funding and thus also the relevance of new or as yet unused or not exhausted financing instruments.

On the one hand, this long-term view concerns all areas that must be better prepared in the event of a new pandemic (possibly with an even more dangerous virus) in order to protect and help people directly. These include in particular the medical, health and care sectors. On the other hand, however, areas should also be strengthened in the long term and measures should be financed which make our society as a whole more sustainable and resilient, initially in Germany but at the same time also in close cooperation with the states of the European Union, in international development cooperation and in cooperation with the relevant United Nations organisations. An interdisciplinary, scientific and practice-oriented approach is crucial here, such as research into:

- interactions of viral diseases with other stresses such as particulate matter and pollutants,
- relationships between the origin and spread of viruses and the suppression of natural ecosystems and the loss of biodiversity
- factors that favour mental and physical resilience
- prevention options through sustainable lifestyles
- stability factors in economic cycles through sustainable management
- the preventive effect of Education for Sustainable Development -
- and many other areas.

Rationale

The Corona Pandemic affects us all, more indirectly than directly, whether through economic, social, psychological and/or health impacts.

The coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 and the disease COVID-19 are currently undergoing initial scientific and medical evaluation. The recommendations derived from this will be translated politically into measures aimed primarily at containing the transmission of the virus and thus preventing overloading of the health care system in Germany. This is largely comprehensible and meets with a broad understanding in the population. However, the implementation of these measures, which are also accompanied by massive restrictions on civil liberties, have very direct negative consequences for the economic and social situation of millions of citizens. In extreme cases, the measures can lead to an existential crisis and/or lead to secondary health burdens, possibly even damage.

In order to at least mitigate the economic consequences, aid packages worth billions have been put together. The volume of the federal government's budget-effective measures alone totals 353.3 billion euros. The Federal Ministry of Finance says that the "protective shield for employees, the self-employed and companies is the largest aid package in the history of the Federal Republic of Germany" (reported at www.bundesfinanzministerium.de on 27 March 2020).

In addition, there are the state-specific programmes - Bavaria alone has provided 20 billion to date - as well as aid from the European Union. The follow-up costs arising from social needs and necessities (e.g. support for families, single parents, the socially needy) are not yet quantified, but should be given big attention when considering the consequences of the Corona crisis.

In view of a worldwide crisis situation that may repeat itself at any time for similar or other reasons due to the extent of globalization, it will continue to be important to provide funding for economically weaker countries and contributions to globally active organizations such as the WHO. With regard to Africa, a broad alliance has already been announced: "This pandemic can only be defeated if Africa is involved" (news of 15 April 2020 on www.bundestkanzlerin.de). Against the background of the extremely high total of billions of euros for the German state and thus its taxpayers, the question of long-term and socially just financing arises. The state budgets will quickly reach their limits with the existing instruments. It may still be possible to cushion the consequences, but when it comes to the consequences of the crisis, i.e. when it comes to preparing state institutions and our society for future, possibly even more serious pandemics and crises (for example, the consequences of climate change, which among other things also promotes the spread of diseases), appropriate financing instruments must now be developed or, if already available, used. Socially just and ecologically sensible taxation should be developed by an interdisciplinary commission appointed by the Federal Government. Given the historically exceptional explosiveness of the Corona crisis, there must be no party-political, party-tactical or interest-driven preliminary rulings. The Commission should be allowed to enter into an open discourse. In doing so, already known instruments such as the financial transaction tax and wealth tax as well as possibilities for taxing multinational corporations should be taken into consideration. It goes without saying that the aim is to develop and use a balanced and socially just financing portfolio. The Council for Sustainable Development might be a suitable body to initiate the process of appointing a Commission, as a competent cross-cutting approach is guaranteed here.

Literature tip that illustrates the full extent of the social global challenge: Paolo Giordano - Nel contagio (2020), German translation: „In Zeiten der Ansteckung“

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