Introduction - Everyday Consumer Behavior

Since global climate change is proceeding at a slow pace, it is – unlike the weather¹ – not directly visible or perceivable. Yet it concerns all of us and for that reason we all have a responsibility to counteract it. This requires a change of lifestyle, of actions and most of all, attitude. To some extent, an increase in CO2-consumption can already be prevented by taking small steps. Research has shown that knowledge about climate change has a limited and rather small influence on how seriously people take the issue and whether they support climate protection measures. Other factors, e.g. emotions, political convictions or social background have a greater influence.

So how can every single person, by way of their behavior and everyday actions, contribute to climate protection and counteract climate change?

The CO2-emissions, which are to a large part responsible for global warming, appear in many different areas and must be reduced considerably. The chain of products and services ranges from production, processing, trade, and consumption to disposal. By choosing certain products and ways, the consumer also has an influence on these individual steps. In the end, conscious consumer behavior also elevates one’s own life quality due to healthier dietary habits, environmentally aware actions or even long-term savings. An animal- and environmentally friendly production of consumer products also relieves the resources for subsequent generations for whom we are responsible.

In all everyday action, the guiding principle of sustainability², also known as “Sustainable Development Goals”, should be incorporated, which targets a long-term ecologically compatible, socially just, yet economically efficient development. The enclosed slides offer an introduction to the topic of consumer behavior and its effects on climate, along with possible actions to be taken. Thoughtful consumption contributes to climate protection and furthermore supports human rights as well as environmental and social standards. Further suggestions can be found in the “Sustainable shopping cart”³.

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¹ Potsdam-Institut für Klimafolgenforschung (PIK) e. V. KlimafolgenOnline, Klimawissen: Klima und Wetter, in: www.KlimafolgenOnline.com [Stand 09.10.2019].
³ Regionale Netzstellen Nachhaltigkeitsstrategien. Der nachhaltige Warenkorb, in www.nachhaltiger-warenkorb.de [Stand 09.10.2019].