



environment some good, because almost no product, from toilet paper to cars, is sold without the promise that it will make the world a little better.

This is not by chance, as our society is based on the steady growth of our economy, and the engine driving this growth is our ever-increasing consumption. However, this is not sustainable. The most threatening consequence - and a direct result of this quest for constant economic growth - is in fact the climate crisis.

Many consumers don't understand what sustainability really is, says consumption researcher Pia Furchheim. Instead of detaching themselves from materialism, they seek solutions within consumption and then develop into «green materialists». According to a study by the Zurich University of Applied Sciences ZHAW, almost one in three people in Switzerland belongs to this type of consumer.

«Buy me and make this world a little bit better» is the key message found among sustainable brands' marketing. But the truth is that consumption rarely helps to make anything better. With most sustainable consumer goods, we only minimise the damage we do. These eco-friendly consumers who don't act in accordance with this reality are likely to consume more and more.

As long as prices aren't revised, production will continue to pollute. In the end, the price of an item always reveals the truth and many consumers do not resist the temptation to resort to a cheaper and environmentally harmful product. But this is where politicians must intervene as it is their task to ensure that the true (environmental) costs are included in the selling price, in the interests of sustainability and animal welfare. The idea of helping the environment with resource- and energy-saving products is now 25 years old, but still it fails to work.

Ecology seems to be very popular today, but is it really? We can easily answer this question using figures, for example, the global consumption of energy. Indeed, the latter has continued to increase rapidly since the turn of the millennium, and an end to this tendency is not foreseeable.

A genuine commitment to climate protection will hurt, because only giving up on certain things will not suffice. Many people will have to change their lifestyle for there is no right to freely consume everything. Even in countries with a democratic system and a free market economy, freedom ceases to exist when everyone's livelihood is threatened.

We do have the freedom to change our way of life now before we are simply forced to do so in the future. But this is a thought that we understandably prefer to put aside, because we would have to change much more than just the way we consume today.

We can only meet the 2015 Paris climate change targets if the majority of us change our behaviour. However, structural changes in our society are necessary, so that the changes become really effective. As a matter of urgency, politicians must establish a basic framework today, so that effective climate protection becomes feasible and easier for all of us in everyday life

*Sources: Marcus Jauer, Tages-Anzeiger 10.12.2018, Peter Carstens, GEO 22.08.2018, Markus C. Schulte von Drach, Süddeutsche Zeitung 13.07.2019, Andrea Pramor, Tsüri 13.8.2019, Andreas Brenner, Tages-Anzeiger, 14.7.2019, Urs Bruderer, REPUBLIK 24.08.2019*