

# KONTEXT

## Wachstum

Interview with Christopher Peterka

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## The Trap of Arrogance

*Christopher Peterka (38) organized a future workshop with students at the Cologne Congress and presented THE HUS.institute, which he co-founded with the aim of improving the world.*

**Christopher, you studied at Cologne University and returned to the World Business Dialogue. How did you experience the current generation of students?**

Basically, I liked the fact that we were less concerned with the classic career roles, but rather with students who want to take more exciting paths and are open to new perspectives and cultures.

**The workshop of you was also about sustainability. How was the topic perceived and how critical are young people about growth?**

25 students from 15 countries attended our sustainability workshop. Sustainability was not the top priority for all parts of the group, combined with a rather traditional concept of growth. These students came more from emerging markets. The paradigm of fellow students from developed industrialised countries has completely shifted. Here sustainability and a critical attitude towards growth is like a new "normal". Economy must be sustainable, because otherwise it will put us at a disadvantage. That was the credo.

**This is reassuring and frightening at the same time, but it once more reveals the danger that poorer countries could repeat our mistakes.**

It is like a wake-up call to us not to get tired of this mediation work. Being young does not automatically mean to think sustainably. We must continue to communicate intensively that we made mistakes ourselves. Many people in the industrialised countries sometimes like to fall into the arrogance trap, like it would go without saying that a sustainable economy is now necessary after half a century of wasting resources. In the current good economic situation and Germany's high export quota, the acknowledgement of mistakes is being undermined. I think that the more self-critical our attitude as an industrial nation is, the more competent and naturally would other countries see us in a leadership role in matters of sustainable economy.

**Sustainability is a central concern of THE HUS.institute, which you founded together with Rudolf Hilti. At the congress in Cologne you presented the plan for Liechtenstein to be the first country in the world to transform itself into a fully sustainable economy.**

Since 2016, we have been working towards the goal of using Liechtenstein as an example to show that the 17 sustainability goals of the United Nations from the Paris Protocol can be achieved in a very short time if the dialogue with all responsible stakeholders is conducted resolutely and transparently. We believe that Liechtenstein is particularly well suited for this. The country is doing very well economically and with its 38,000 inhabitants it has a manageable size. We believe that change is possible within five years. We would like to model the approach we are developing and make it available to other countries as an open source solution. At the moment we are recruiting a group of 150 selected, voluntary experts from all over the world - "Transformer" as we call them - to help us.

#### **How is the response of the Principality?**

Change can only succeed if the inhabitants move and also say goodbye to old thought patterns. Many feel addressed because a sustainable economy makes sense. The elders try to put a brake on our plans now and then, while the youngsters say: "It can't go fast enough for us!".

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