See a Chance and Take it

Dear Reader,

We will survive. The coronavirus crisis will not bring our economy to its knees, but the damage it causes will be considerable. Financial support programs, new borrowing, one-off payments and bridging loans will bolster up the big companies and hopefully provide effective help for SMEs as well. This represents the ideal opportunity to make the investments that we have been avoiding for some time, with the aim of bringing about a genuine transformation. The cancellation of almost all flights, the dramatic reduction in the use of other forms of transport and the closing of businesses have led to a short-term decrease of around 5 % in global CO₂ emissions. The forecasts for Germany are indicating a potential fall of 40 % or even more. It is obvious that this change will not be permanent, because it has been triggered by the unprecedented situation we find ourselves in. But we could succeed in holding on to some of the positive developments, because every crisis gives us the opportunity to question the status quo, including current production methods and technologies. During a time of rapidly falling oil prices why not take a close look at the other options? Why not make use of the spare refinery capacity to speed up the development of alternative fuels? Why not exploit the government's willingness to invest and make progress with new environmentally friendly technologies? As things currently stand, we will at least be able to meet our targets for 2020.

After the crisis is over, levels of pollution will increase again. This goes without saying if we want to go back to a certain degree of normality. And just as quickly the concerns about the climate will return to the forefront of public debate. It would be excellent if we could come up with some concepts and solutions that would have a more long-lasting impact. Meeting the 2020 targets and sitting back on our laurels will not take us far along the road to carbon neutrality. It is highly likely that we will only have been able to achieve this as a consequence of the current economic conditions and we definitely do not want them to continue. I would be happy not to see a long-term lockdown during the course of the coming year.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue of MTZ.

Marc Ziegler
Deputy Editor in Chief

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