



Bachelor or CEMS Master Thesis

## **Regulatory options for increasing the sustainability of online retailers**

### **Key tasks and objectives of the thesis**

Companies in all industries are facing the sustainability challenge: How do I master the energy transition? How do I make my business operations energy-efficient? What role do PV/solar systems play for me? How can I become climate-neutral while keeping my energy costs under control? These & other questions are increasingly becoming focus of considerations in business and politics.

Environmental and sustainability aspects are also being addressed in the context of online retailing. According to a study conducted by ECC Cologne in 2016, the shipping area in particular offers a variety of starting points for acting in an environmentally conscious manner. Already 53 percent of retailers pay attention to the ecological use of packaging materials. At the same time, 46 percent of retailers try to minimize the number of packages by combining orders into as few shipments as possible. For 40 percent of retailers, working conditions in their own company are another way of doing more for sustainability than is required by law. When it comes to assortment design, it is crucial for 26 percent of retailers to offer ecologically and socially compatible products. The issue of sustainability also plays a role when working with partners: for around 20 percent of retailers, it is important to work with producers, suppliers and service providers who act in accordance with ecological and social standards. However, 20% of the companies also do not implement any sustainability measures.

The thesis is to conduct a structured research of scientific, as well as practice-oriented sources, in order to

- design a model for assessing the sustainability of (online) retailers based on the literature
- evaluate the status quo regarding the sustainability of German online retailers on this basis by means of literature and practical reports
- present the current regulation (in terms of the legal framework) with regard to the promotion of sustainability for online retailers
- identify starting points for the optimization of this regulation via analogies from other industries or with a view to other countries.
- conduct an evaluation of these starting points and to develop a recommendation

The paper can be written in English or German.

### **Your profile**

- Study of economics, best with focus on energy economics
- Interest in sustainability topics
- Independent, with a drive to acquire new knowledge

### **Literature**

- Zimmermann (2020): Die Ökologisierung des Onlinehandels – Teilbericht 1
- Zimmermann (2021): Die Ökologisierung des Onlinehandels – Teilbericht 2
- Heyen (2019): Governance-Ansätze für nachhaltige Transformation auf dem Prüfstand dreier Praxisfelder

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