



BOSCH

July 18, 2016
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How social is Bosch today?

Some thoughts on the OncoCure initiative

Statement by Dr. Volkmar Denner,
chairman of the board of management of Robert Bosch
GmbH,
at the press briefing on July 18, 2016

Check against delivery.

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Ladies and gentlemen,

Today is the first time a Bosch management board member has spoken at this hospital since it was inaugurated by Robert Bosch. But the topic I want to address today is one that is very close to my heart. The fact that the hospital and the Stiftung have formed an alliance against cancer, which is still the second most frequent cause of death worldwide, is something that moves me greatly. The company that has made “Invented for life” its rallying cry wants to open up the alliance against cancer for its associates. Effective immediately, we will give associates with cancer access to the latest diagnostic tests here in the hospital, with the costs being borne by the company. We have called this initiative “OncoCure.” It will initially be offered to associates in Germany, and later to associates worldwide. For this purpose, we will make roughly one million euros available each year. Our objective is clear: we want to use precision diagnostics to improve the prospects of successful cancer treatment. This will help the associates affected, their families, their friends, and not least their colleagues. In this, we see ourselves as following in the footsteps of our founder Robert Bosch.

Yet Robert Bosch always saw his social commitment from a business perspective. His speech at the inauguration of this hospital reads almost like his legacy to the company. It starts with relatively stern words: “If an institution is to bear my name, then it should especially heed the following principles.” What followed was a list of the principles of efficient work – principles that were formulated for the hospital but could have applied equally to his company. Robert Bosch called for conscientiousness and thrift. All tasks were important, he said, even the most modest. He also placed great importance on addressing problems openly: “We should all strive to improve on the status quo: none of us should ever be satisfied with what has been achieved.” Simply and clearly, this sentence describes how an innovative company sees itself. However, it can also be understood as an exhortation to persevere in

the fight against diseases that appear to be incurable. Neither a purely business perspective nor a purely social one can explain Robert Bosch – he always had both perspectives in mind.

In times of significant change as well, the company that bears his name seeks to reconcile these two perspectives. The word we use here is transformation. Its root causes lie in the economic sphere – socially, we make its repercussions as acceptable as possible. When reconciling entrepreneurial and social interests, this is our ideal. However, there is one thing that needs to be made even clearer: in the long term, our company's transformation is directly relevant for society. If we did not react, or reacted too late, to seismic shifts in the market and technology, then we would be putting the existence of everyone's jobs at risk, not just those of a few. And socially, nothing could be more irresponsible than that. In the end, only a dynamic company can act socially. Robert Bosch himself did not leave it at the magneto ignition device. If he had, it is unlikely his "Workshop for Precision Mechanics and Electrical Engineering" would have developed into a company employing 400,000 people worldwide.

It is above all technological progress that bears fruit for society. This is not just because innovations are the only way a company like Bosch can develop strongly. It is also because much of the pioneering work done by our company has truly been "Invented for life." We are reminded here of systems such as ABS and ESP, which prevent accidents on our roads – or indeed of our packaging technology, which helps ensure that medicine and vaccines reach patients safely. And as part of this continuing tradition, we are also taking up the fight against a disease like cancer. In each instance, the solutions differ, but the way we see our task is the same. Just as Robert Bosch would have said, every success in the fight against cancer is important, even the most modest one. And any progress we achieve here makes more than just economic sense – it will always also benefit society as a whole. For our associates, the OncoCure initiative is a first step in this direction.