« Please, Tell France: There Is No Climate Emergency! »

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European Parliament, Brussels, November 20th, 2020

**I. France’s climate ambitions**

There is no climate emergency. *Il n’y a pas d’urgence climatique.* Anyway, France is still going to save the planet all by itself.

France organized the COP21 in Paris in 2015, in which the Paris Agreement was approved. This was only the beginning: now France is on the forefront to fight a non-existent problem.

Climate diplomacy is to France what sport diplomacy is to Qatar: a showcase for the influence of the country. Climate was not an important issue in the last presidential campaign. Emmanuel Macron did not talk much about it at the time, but once elected, things changed. For example, the president set up the « *one planet summit* », which provides another occasion for virtue signalling, and spending of taxpayers’ money in meetings all around the world: Paris in 2017, New York in 2018, Nairobi in 2019. In 2020, it will be in French Polynesia.

Now we also have our energy transition, our *Energiewende*, the *transition énergétique*. France’s ambition in this field was set up by the *Programmation pluriannuelle de l’énergie*, PPE, which is the French strategy for energy and climate. It is a plan intended to fight the last war, unable to recognize the constant failure that this kind of strategy has been all around the world, in every single country who already tried to implement it. But it is even worse than that. It looks like it is intended to be a specific shot in our specific own foot. The beginning of the presentation of the PPE reads: « The immediate danger facing our civilization, global warming, is caused by the greenhouse gas emission, about 70 % of which is the result of our fossil fuel consumption. This is the use of coal, oil and gas that makes growth unsustainable. » I strongly disagree with this, but let us take it as a hypothesis. Their *own* hypothesis. Such a hypothesis should of course lead primarily to a reduction of energy consumption from fossil fuels. Instead, *two pages later* in the *same* document, one of the main objectives of the PPE reads: « 4 to 6 nuclear reactors closed by 2028. Closure of 14 nuclear reactors by 2035, the date on which nuclear electricity represents 50 % of the electricity mix. »

The important number here is the actual part of nuclear power in France’s electricity mix: 71%. As you know, nuclear power is regarded as a zero-emitter. Therefore, reduce it to 50% will not reduce carbon emission at all, since it is mathematically impossible to emit less than nothing. Unfortunately, nowadays ignorance prevails. A recent poll showed that as much as 69 % of the French people believe that nuclear energy does emit CO2 and therefore contributes to some climate disruption.

Apart from this blatant general ignorance maintained by those in charge, the fact is: even by the IPCC’s own standards, most of the French energy strategy against climate change is meaningless.

In France, we like to say that our country has, in every matter, a *specific responsability*. « Une responsabilité particulière ». Don’t ask me why: that’s the way it is. Hence, France has to lead by example. Surely, when the other countries see what we do, they will do the same.

The caveat in the reasoning, apart its arrogance, is that, as regard CO2 emissions, France is already leading the developed countries, thanks to its nuclear power plants. Per capita, France emits twice less than Germany or Japan, and three times less than the United States. But still, the French example is not followed by others. Other countries just don’t care about what France does. How can it be?

To make the energy transition more popular, the Government set up some weeks ago the *Convention citoyenne pour le climat*, an assembly of 150 citizens chosen at random, to discuss the best way forward. The official mission of this assembly is: « to define a series of actions to be taken to achieve a reduction of at least 40% in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. » Such an objective is simply impossible to reach without a dramatic reduction in our standard of living.

**II. Totalitarianism**

Let me say it again: the debate set up for the *Convention* is not a discussion about the usefulness of the energy transition. Its only question is: « how could we go faster? » Its guarantor is a pure environmental activist, a filmmaker that has no qualification whatsoever in climate science, in geology, or in any science. Nor in policymaking. Nor in management.

This has nothing to do with democracy. This has all to do with a Potemkin village.

But no one cares. Sure, you’ll hear some voices to object to the idea that 150 non-elected citizens could rule the country instead of our elected representatives. But nobody would go further, nobody would express concerns about the partiality of the question asked to the *Convention*.

In France, you cannot find any significant political party willing to question the alleged necessity of an energy transition, let alone the so-called consensus on climate. During the last presidential campaign, the meaningless slogan « the least polluting energy is the energy we don’t use » appeared in the manifesto of most candidates, from the far left to the far right.

In the medias, the same phenomenon occurs. Apart from one right-wing weekly magazine, there is simply *no* significant media available to hear about dissent views on climate, energy or environmental issues.

In schools, environmental alarmism is now everywhere in the curriculum. You can even find it in the curriculum of art history for pupils, where you can read the following interesting and original item: « Art, energy, climatology and sustainable development ». Unfortunately, I’m not kidding. And now a bill is debated in our National Assembly to make climate and ecologism a compulsory part of every single academic degree, whatever its speciality.

The times are so difficult that many high-profile scientists and high-level policymakers are afraid to speak out. Several of them have been writing to me, encouraging me while being sorry for not being able to do more.

**IV. Costly, ineffective and socially unfair**

Two years ago, a study was made by an official think tank to evaluate the validity of the frequent assertion in our country according to which Emmanuel Macron is « the president for the rich ». Part of this study was about the fiscal policy related to environment. The main graph was striking: it showed very clearly that the poorest would have to pay much more than the wealthiests to save the planet. No one emphasized on this. In retrospect, we can fairly consider that it was a warning of the coming *Gilets Jaunes* protests.

The country forgot it now, since the *Gilets Jaunes* have become an amorphous group without clear objectives, but the very beginning of the protests was about the rise of the carbon tax. Their success in its cancellation is the main achievement of the *Gilets Jaunes*, along with their inspiring and wonderful initial motto: « The elite is scared by the end of the world; we are scared by the end of the month. »

Climate realism has an important potential among ordinary people. Despite constant propaganda about the so-called « climate crisis », polls repeatedly show that at least on French people on three does not believe in the climate narrative. Also, opposition against windfarms are becoming more and more important, especially in the countryside. People are increasingly aware of the huge costs associated to the *transition énergétique*.

Also, a quite unexpected argument opposed to windfarms is the preservation of landscapes. I have a lot of things to blame my country for, but the truth is that it is a wonderful place to live, and that our citizens are aware of the chance they have. Beyond economical issues and uselessness of the energy transition, people just want to preserve their landscapes. This is quite typically french.

**V. Envoi**

I would like to repeat it again. There is no climate emergency. The point is not about « global warming », « climate change » or « climate crisis ». It is about *climate evolution*.

*Evolution* is one of the most important paradigms of our time. Darwin’s ideas made us understood that not only, as Copernicus understood in the sixteenth century, our place in the universe is nothing special in *space*, but that there is also nothing special about our place in *time*. Things are different today from what they were yesterday. Tomorrow, they will be different from what they are today: *this* is a fondamental law of life on Earth. Such a law should make us acknowledge that there is no, and there were *never* any « golden climate age ». As history teaches us, none of the different climates we humans had to endure before the twentieth century were anything close to a Garden of Eden.

Change is the rule, but we are so willing to imagine an immutable world that we desperatly try to find something stable. So we say that the world has to change… but only in some stable way.

This leads to another crucial paradigm of our time: in nature, change does *not* occur in a regular way. Noticeably, chaos theory and its iconic « butterfly effect » arose when searchers began to investigate climate science as well as ecology and population biology. Ironically, these are today these very sciences that have to acknowledge one of the main consequence of what they disccovered themselves: the way the world changes is itself subject to change.

This is not to say that there is no problem, or that we are allowed to pollute or to destroy the environment. This is to say that we should not be scared whenever some change happens. Change can also be positive. Even when it is not, in our chaotic world, the most sensible policy is to *adapt* rather than to try and pretend governing everything. We should also acknowledge that we, « twenty-first-centuriers », have considerably more wealth, more knowledge, and more ways to adapt than ever before.

We will not succeed by being scared for wrong reasons. Our responsability is to make our world more prosperous and nicer for all mankind.