



CITIZENS' CONVENTION ON CLIMATE REPORT

Drafted based on the Final Report adopted by
the members of the Convention on 21 June
2020.

SUMMARY

Free citizens, without ties to any political parties, free of any influence and representative of society: we are a group of 150 men and women aged between 16 and 80 years old, of all origins and from all professional backgrounds.

We have been drawn by lot based on the random generation of telephone numbers, without having volunteered in advance, to be members of the Citizens' Convention on Climate in order to portray an image of French society that is capable of representing you. We are not experts, we are ordinary citizens, representing the diversity of our society. We have the power to make decisions and bring about change, a power which we have exercised with particular attention towards the most fragile, in a spirit of social justice.

Our Citizens' Convention experience

The Citizens' Convention on Climate is the first democratic experience of such magnitude based on random selection and which therefore recognises the capability of citizens who are neither specialists nor activists to express themselves on an important future topic.

Over the course of ten months, we were involved in an unprecedented and intense human experience together, which led us to become aware of the pressing need for significant change in the way our society works and how we live.

We openly discussed our diverse range of opinions with a view to answering the question "How can we reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40% by 2030 while ensuring social justice?". We drew from discussions with experts and economic, organisational and public representatives to ensure our ability to draft concrete measures, with full knowledge and complete independence.

We have learnt to become more attentive and more tolerant to others' opinions thus respecting our diversity. We have worked hard, with conviction, desire and a sense of urgency as regards the climate in order to draft shared proposals.

Outside of the work sessions which brought us together, many of us have become strongly involved in our territories to share our mission, our newfound awareness and our ambitions. We made this choice in the belief that it is our responsibility to breathe life into the places we inhabit. During this time, we have listened to our friends, neighbours, fellow citizens, associations, elected representatives, and local and national institutions. These meetings have enabled us to take on board our correspondents' experiences and feelings and thus compare our collective views with the daily reality and economic, geographic, political and social issues of each territory.

Our diversity and each session's discussions, as well as all of our meetings outside of these sessions, have enabled us to be fairer and have allowed our work to be more pertinent. Our overseas departments have not been left out. Several overseas citizens within the Convention

were committed to making their experiences and expectations heard. The concern for not only tackling this issue from a "metropolitan" perspective is shared by the 150 members who understand the strong sentiment of being distanced from the political decisions made in Paris and of little recognition of the importance of overseas territories in public decisions. For this reason, the measures put forward have been revised to avoid any negative effects for overseas territories. We believe that overseas territories can be wonderful laboratories in terms of energy self-sufficiency, new farming practices or in terms of construction.

What we would like to say to the French society

We have gained new awareness regarding the climate emergency: the Earth can survive without us, but we cannot survive without it. By way of example, heat wave temperatures above 50°C in the shade, which will become more frequent, will be deadly in some regions of the world where the moisture-saturated air prevents sweat from evaporating. We must open our eyes and act! We are not only faced with the choice of applying an economic policy to tackle an economic, social and environmental crisis, we must act now to stop the global warming and climate change which are threatening humanity's survival. If we do not make up for lost time, many regions of the world will become inhabitable due to the rise of water levels or too-arid climates. It is a matter of life or death!

We are not in competition with elected representatives or with other actors in French society: we must all substantially change our behaviour to ensure our children and grandchildren a sustainable planet. We must act quicker and harder than ever before, although great initiatives have already been implemented, particularly by local authorities and associations. The efforts must not only be made by others. Citizens, public authorities, economic stakeholders, NGOs must all come together to tackle the climate emergency and make social justice one of the drivers of our reflection.

We expect the government and public authorities to step up the ecological transition particularly in their strategy to end the crisis, by making the climate a priority in public policies by assessing results and sanctioning deviations. The 21st century could be the new century of Enlightenment by taking an ambitious, virtuous and democratic political stance! This will require us to view ecological issues as economic issues (in the traditional and restrictive meaning of the GDP) and to ensure that no citizen is left behind, least of all the poorest.

We invite economic stakeholders to take more proactive action to promote ecological transition, by making this issue an opportunity to substantially rethink our ways of producing and consuming, and to encourage better distribution of wealth. The climate emergency dictates that we take difficult yet vital decisions: let's be creative.

OUR PROPOSALS

In order to reduce GHG emissions by at least 40% by 2030, it appears inevitable that we must revisit our way of living, consuming, producing and working, of travelling, of housing and of feeding ourselves: in 2019, the average French national had a carbon footprint of 11.2 tons when this number should have been 2 tons per year to meet the objectives set out in the Paris Agreement.

CONSUMING

Our consumption and overconsumption habits have a strong impact on the environment. We consider changing consumers' habits an essential task to reach the goals we have set ourselves. More restrained and virtuous consumption on an environmental level must be attainable to all, regardless of purchasing power. This must not be a constraint forced on us, nor a luxury or an act of activism. It must not only rely on the consumer but must also entail an in-depth transformation of our production and distribution methods.

With this in mind, we believe that information, education and awareness are powerful and effective tools to make lasting and sustainable changes to our future society whilst acting quickly to encourage change in our daily lives. Lastly, we wish to make every individual accountable without force: every individual must be able to act based on their desires but also based on their capabilities, particularly to respect our social justice values.

- Make education, training and awareness raising tools for responsible consumption;
- Create an obligation to display the carbon impact of products and services;
- Regulate advertising to reduce incentives to overconsume

However, we also believe that some measures and recommendations are needed to facilitate these changes. In particular, we have noted that our consumption generates a significant amount of waste, and notably packaging: therefore, we suggest changing consumption habits and practices to reduce the use of single-use plastic.

- Restrict overpacking and the use of single-use plastic by promoting bulk purchasing and instructions on distribution sites;
- Encourage digital sobriety in order to reduce environmental impacts.

In addition, the work carried out by the Citizens' Convention on Climate have allowed us to learn of many existing initiatives and laws to preserve the environment. And yet, the problem often remains: for various reasons, they do not work. Thus, first and foremost, we believe that existing rules should be applied and respected by all subject to heavy penalties. Secondly, the rules in force – even when applied – do not appear to be effective. They must be each be independently examined and reviewed.

- Ensure better application of environmental public policies and assess them to increase their effectiveness.

TRAVELLING

The movement of persons and the transport of goods as they are organised and produced today account for over 30% of greenhouse gas emissions in France. This total includes cars (52% of the total), heavy goods vehicles (19%), utility vehicles (19%) and domestic flights (4%).

It is crucial that we act to individually and collectively change our behaviour, how goods are transported, and to act on vehicles and within territories to reach the goals of reducing CO₂. We must act on behaviour, technology and on territorial organisation.

- Change the use of private cars, by ceasing to use single-occupant cars and offering alternative solutions to the dominant model (thermal cars and solo driving);
- Reduce and optimise road freight transport by enabling modal transferral towards railways and/or waterways;
- Assist with the transition towards a cleaner vehicle fleet, by regulating which vehicles are declared apt to circulate and by accelerating the change based on what is planned today;
- Act at local level alongside companies and administrations to better organise travel;
- Limit the negative effects of air transport.

Throughout our discussions and works, we have become certain that such change is possible and desirable: by accompanying the transition to using transport differently, by combining different means of transport, by redeveloping the territory to enable such an evolution, we can travel better and transport goods in a new way (and sometimes less) whilst ensuring social justice.

In our view, starting today, some measures could offer very quick results, while others could offer results mid-decade and others later still. It is in our interest and that of future generations that these changes happen quickly and without complacency, by making them socially possible through suitable support, prohibition and accompaniment measures.

HOUSING

The organisation of housing and of all constructions (including accommodation, buildings and infrastructures) directly or indirectly contributes towards 2/3 of greenhouse gas emissions in France. Urban formats and the condition of our buildings have a significant impact on our energy consumption, on travel, on the production of waste and on consumption habits. The French housing stock (residential/tertiary sector) alone accounts for 16% of greenhouse gas emissions in France and these emissions must be reduced by 10 to reach the carbon neutrality goal in 2050.

In the shorter term, to reach the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40% by 2030 buildings' greenhouse gas emissions must be halved (-49% compared to 2015 to respect the trajectory set out by the National Low-Carbon Strategy (Strategie Nationale Bas Carbone - SNBC)). A lot of action is currently being taken; however, such action mainly involves incentives that have not been enough to reduce emissions. We must therefore act on a massive scale, globally.

In our territories, we want housing renovation to enable every individual, including the most underprivileged, to live in well-insulated and comfortable housing.

- Make the complete energy renovation of buildings mandatory by 2040.

We want to significantly reduce the consumption of fossil fuels in cities and buildings.

- Significantly limit energy consumption in public, private and industrial areas.

Changing habits to limit energy consumption per person and developing individual houses to the benefit of collective housing are also vital tasks.

We call for strong measures against urban sprawl, to sustainably protect our natural, farming and forest areas which store carbon, and to reduce forced mobility and non-consensual travel. We want to raise French citizens' awareness of the advantages of a more compact city and of the need to end the individual house model.

- Combat soil artificialisation and urban sprawl by making life in cities and towns more attractive.

We are convinced that cities can be pleasant when vegetated, renovated and built with bio-sourced materials and when public policies accompany cities and towns. Lastly, we believe that the transition to renovated cities will have positive effects on the economy and employment and will reduce oil and gas bills.

EATING

Greenhouse gas emissions resulting from farming and the food industry account for 31.5% of all of the territory's emissions (Solagro, 2018). The emissions produced by the agricultural and food industry must be halved to reach the carbon neutrality goal by 2050. In the shorter term, to reach the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40% by 2030, agricultural and food industry greenhouse gas emissions must be reduced by 20% compared to 2015. Measures, programmes and actions are already in place today but have not succeeded in instigating sufficient change to the consumer's plate in order to reduce emissions.

We intend to use levers for action to reduce emissions, which work as a whole. We believe it is important to act on the entire food chain from the consumer to the farmer. This in-depth transformation of our system requires that we change our habits and gradually adopt a new plate. By 2030, our plate must contain 20% less meat and dairy products and more fruit and vegetables, dried vegetables and cereals.

- Ensure a system that enables healthy, sustainable food that is less animal-based and more plant-based, that respects production and climate, that produces low GHG emissions and is accessible to all; notably by ensuring the effectiveness of the EGALIM Act;
- Transform our agriculture to generate a sustainable agricultural industry that produces low GHG emissions, based on agroecological principles and which banks on agricultural teaching and uses aids such as the PAC as levers;
- Given that the ocean and its ecosystem absorb 93% of excess heat and stores 30% of CO₂, encourage low GHG emission fishing by regulating fishing methods and protecting coasts and marine ecosystems;
- Design a future marketing policy model that strives to encourage healthy eating and low GHG emission farming in France;
- Make educating and training (future) citizens on the food industry compulsory to make them actors of the necessary change in behaviour to reduce GHGs for our food industry;
- Place ethics at the heart of our food industry; Regulate the production, importation and use of additives/auxiliary substances (particularly in the agri-food industry) in order to improve food quality in compliance with French and European standards;
- Safeguard ecosystems by creating laws on the crime of ecocide. We have expressed the desire for this proposal to be subject to a referendum.

We do not want to dictate what people must eat. We would rather ensure that everyone has access to the correct information on the health and climate implications of their purchase or consumption choices, that choosing suitable products is made easier and accessible to all; that producers are helped and accompanied with adapting their practices so that their offer matches new needs. We are aware of our food system's external connections: our desire is to take effective action in a globalised context.

PRODUCING AND WORKING

Solutions are in place to transition towards the gradual elimination of greenhouse gas emissions. However, the current context, whether the direction of investments, public procurement rules or the accompaniment of companies and training, does not allow us to fully take on this task.

The transition towards a low-carbon society implies fully transforming the production system and even businesses. Many companies and individuals will witness the disappearance of their activity or will at least be strongly affected. This transition could be an opportunity for economy and employment, but without support and suitable mechanisms, many might suffer.

Our proposals aim to ensure that we produce and work better, in a responsible manner by designing sustainable products and favouring local production. We ask for the gradual abandonment of all carbon-based energies.

- Promote more sustainable production, develop the reparation, recycling and waste-management sectors;
- Add a carbon report to the balance sheet drafted by all structures required to produce one;
- Production, storage and redistribution of energy for and by all;
- Accompany the development of digital technology to reduce its environmental impacts.

All our production tools must be transformed and adapted to match ecological transition requirements. This requires that we anticipate in order to change the behaviour of all stakeholders: citizens, companies and even public players.

- Support the conversion of companies and the transformation of businesses at regional level;
- Develop and support transition innovation;
- Find and support financing to transform companies' production tools as part of the ecological transition;
- Reinforce environmental clauses in public procurement contracts.

As part of a globalised economy, we must ensure that we take this requirement into account when importing.

- Better consider GHG emissions due to importation in European policies;
- Protect ecosystems and biodiversity.

CONSTITUTION AND GOVERNANCE

We suggest two revisions to the French Constitution of 4 October 1958 in order to better ensure that the fight against climate change and respect for the environment – which are now vital issues for the living system – are included in the French Republic's fundamental text.

The aim of these revisions is to meet two ambitions:

- One symbolic ambition, by including the fight against climate change as one of the Republic's objectives;
- A strong desire to rally the nation around this fight, through reinforced commitment towards effective actions against climate change, notably by creating concrete and operational tools for all public bodies and administrations.

Our proposals aim firstly to complete the Constitution's Preamble and its Article I with a view to reinforcing France's responsibility in preserving biodiversity, the environment and the fight against climate change. We have expressed our desire that these proposals be subject to a referendum.

Secondly, our works suggest constitutionalising environmental control, which could be exercised by a new body: a "defender of the environment". Lastly, we wish to grant citizens more power by turning the CESE into a "Chamber for Citizen Participation".

ORIENTATIONS FOR FINANCING THE TRANSITION

In a highly uncertain economic period following the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, we consider it our duty as citizens to suggest as many sources as possible to finance the climate transition. These sources include taxation, the mobilisation of existing institutions and financing instruments, the direction of public or private finding, recourse to loans and to punctual or more innovative sources of financing, and measures that aim to develop financial transparency.

These will need to be adjusted and finetuned based on context, but they provide an overall view of the financing methods that should solidify the fight against climate change in our country, based on two principles:

- Promoting a diversity of sources of financing rather than one single solution;
- Pursuing a social justice goal so that this transition does not occur to the detriment of those who are most vulnerable.

A CITIZENS' CONVENTION ON CLIMATE, BUT WHAT NEXT?

We think that this Convention's success will largely depend on the Executive respecting its commitment to forward our proposals "without filter", i.e. without them being rephrased or tweaked, but also on their consideration by the legislative branch.

The Citizens' Convention on Climate, the French National Assembly and the Senate must work together to reach the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, with all the necessary political courage. We wish to continue to be involved in feedback and, above all, in monitoring the implementation of our proposals. We want to be stakeholders in sharing our proposals with the general public, to ensure they are understood and disseminated.

Lastly, we strongly encourage the holding of new Citizen Conventions on fundamental French society topics, to ensure that citizens are heard and involved in decisions. Citizen involvement in political decisions must not be seen as an obstacle but rather as a democratic strength.

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