

## HEADLINE – SOUND THE ALARM FOR AUSTRALIA'S GREAT BARRIER REEF

The Great Barrier Reef is one of UNESCO's world heritage jewels since it was listed in 1981. It covers approximately 348,000 square kilometers and is the largest coral reef in the world. While reefs cover less than 0.2% of the ocean surface, they are home to nearly 30% of marine animal and plant species. This is why it is important to preserve the coral barriers. According to a scientific study published Thursday, April 19, the Australian Great Barrier Reef lost nearly 30% of the coral constituting it following the heat wave that occurred in March and November 2016. Coral's bleaching reflects coral's fading away. There were four bleaching episodes (1998, 2002, 2016 and 2017) on the Great Barrier Reef. Terry Hughes, co-author of the study says, "if we continue at this rate, I do not think the Barrier will survive it."

## WASTE – 29 KILOS OF PLASTIC WASTE FOUND IN A SPERM WHALE IN SPAIN

At the end of March 2018, in Cabo de Palos (region of Murcia), a sperm whale of 6 tons and 10 meters long was found on a Spanish beach. Nothing alarming at first, however, after the autopsy of the animal, scientists were stunned to find nearly thirty pounds of concentrated plastic waste in the cetacean's stomach. This new and unusual event only aggravates the observation that we can already draw up on the pollution of our marine areas, particularly by plastic waste. At a time when we are talking about the emergence of a seventh continent to know the continent of plastic waste, it seems imperative for the world to find sustainable and non-degrading solutions about the management of plastic waste. For 2025, 50 to 130 million tons of plastic could be dumped annually into the oceans. Safeguarding the fauna and flora remains one of the priority areas for the coming years. Indeed, several solutions have been implemented to reduce the impact of humans on their environment. Nevertheless, despite some efforts, the pollution of our planet and more precisely that concerning our marine areas is constantly increasing.

## EARTH – ACCORDING TO IPBES, 90% OF THE EARTH WILL HAVE BEEN DEGRADED BY HUMAN ACTIVITIES BY 2050

The Intergovernmental Science and Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) revealed, in a study published early April 2018, that by 2050 human activity will have degraded almost the entire Earth's surface, that is, 90 %. The study was the result of three years of work and cost over a million dollars. "We have really changed the earth's surface"; these words were uttered by the president of IPBES, Robert Watson, who made a sad statement about our planet's state of health in a conference conducted in Medellin. He also stated that: "We have transformed a large part of our forests, our grasslands, we have lost 87% of our wetlands". The degradation of the oceans by the presence of many wastes (plastics, hydrocarbons, wooded beams) is also a factor leading to the degradation of our living environment.

In addition, the study also focuses on our consumerist buying methods which result in a substantial reduction of the space of cultivable land; soil pollution from the use of chemicals is probably the major cause of such a decrease. Finally, concerning the issue of climate refugees, the analysis carried out by IPBES tends to show that in 2050, the degradation of the grounds will cause the displacement of 50 million human beings to see 700 million if no action is taken to stop these future disasters.

## WASTE – EUROPE WANTS TO TAKE SPACE DEBRIS IN ITS NETS

Since 1957 and the launch of Sputnik, the first satellite to be orbited around Earth, space debris have become more and more numerous. Indeed, about 23,000 objects are in orbit around the Earth: more than 6,000 satellites were launched during the space age, but less than 1,000 of them are still active. The rest is abandoned and may fragment. Given the number of objects already in orbit, the space environment may not be sustainable if no mitigation or remediation efforts are undertaken. The European project ADR1EN, which brings together several SMEs financed by the European Union, has validated its large format demonstrator for the recovery of space debris by nets. Thus, the ADR1EN system will help solve the problem of space waste by reducing the number of these wastes. The first operational mission is scheduled for the year 2023.

**COUNCIL OF STATE, MARCH 16, 2018**

**ICPE (French facility requiring environmental impact assessment): clarification about the rights of third parties and obligations of the prefect**

On March 16, 2018, the Council of State had the opportunity to specify under what conditions it was possible to challenge a prefectural order authorizing the operation of an ICPE.

It confirms its consistent jurisprudence, applying article L. 514-6 of the French Environmental Code which states that third parties, in this case farmers growing zucchini, having acquired their property after the authorization to operate, are not eligible to challenge this authorization.

The Council of State took the opportunity to establish a new obligation to the prefect.

Indeed, it states that the latter, even after having authorized a legal exploitation, must continue to watch over pollution and other environmental damage in order to protect the interests referred to in article L. 511-1 of the French Code of the environment.



On Thursday, April 19, French MPs voted amendments for this aim. Meals in canteens should include, at the latest in 2022, at least 50% of products from organic farming or taking into account the preservation of the environment. If we can only welcome such an idea, we can only be sorry for the formulation “taking into account the preservation of the environment”. Indeed, if it is easy to define what is organic farming, what is “taking into account the preservation of the environment”?

If we can think of short circuits or labeled products, it will surely wait until the decree implementing the Agriculture and Food Act in which this amendment will be incorporated. Regarding organic products, it must represent at least 20% of the total value. For comparison, school canteens in the small town of Nice, whose mayor is not known to be a convinced ecologist, are entitled to a fully organic menu per week.

 **WASTE – PROHIBITION OF PLASTIC STRAWS IN THE UK**

Plastic straws and cotton swabs may be banned in the UK by the end of 2018 as part of the government's attempt to reduce plastic waste. British ministers have reported that about 8.5 billion plastic straws are thrown in the UK each year. Michael Gove, Secretary of State for the Environment, speaks on reducing the use of plastic: “We have only one planet: we need to make sure our seas and oceans are free of waste by reducing the amount of plastic we use.” Theresa May said that plastic waste is “one of the biggest environmental challenges facing the world”, and prompted Commonwealth heads of government to follow the lead in the fight against plastic waste.

 **ENERGY TRANSITION – THE AMBITION OF COZZANO, A VILLAGE IN CORSICA, TO BECOME A POSITIVE ENERGY TERRITORY**



The project supported by the University of Corsica and the CNRS was born about twenty years ago. The idea is to produce more energy than the village consumes. Environmental sensors and data are at the heart of this “Smart Village” project.

After developing a number of energy infrastructures (biomass boiler, removal of halogen bulbs by low energy bulbs ...), they used digital technology to optimize the management of resources. So they installed environmental sensors to measure the quality of the air, the water, the temperature of the buildings, the energy consumption. All data is processed and explained to residents to optimize their resources. The project aims to ultimately raise awareness of the population to new environmental issues.

Awareness of environmental issues is necessary, which is why this type of project deserves to be developed throughout the national territory.