



HEADLINE – WHAT IS THE OPPORTUNITY FOR ENDING THE HYDROCARBON EXPLOITATION?

The bill passed by the Minister of Ecological Transition, Nicolas Hulot, puts an end to the exploitation of hydrocarbons. On October 10th, the National Assembly decided on the project with a large majority (316 votes against 69). This law represents France's response to those who expressed their wish to leave the Paris Agreement in December 2015. An agreement which aimed keeping global warming below 2°C and taking France out of fossil fuels (oil, gas or charcoal). Failure to comply with this law can lead to the withdrawal of research permits, a two-year prison sentence and a €30.000 fine.



AGRICULTURE – NEW RULES FOR FODDER PLANTS SEEDS

The decree of October 2nd, 2017 regarding the marketing of fodder plants seeds establishes the conditions that must be fulfilled by fodder plants seeds (i.e. plants or mixtures of plants used for animal feeding) in order to be commercialized. From now on, seeds must be included in a category mentioned by the decree (seeds, basic, pre-basic, certified or commercial seeds). However, seeds that do not meet the requirements of any category mentioned above may still obtain authorization to be marketed from the Minister of Agriculture. To do so, they must meet other criteria listed in this text, such as being intended for selection work or scientific experiments. In addition, the decision sets the conditions of seeds packaging and package marking in French. The latter must include: the name of the species, the name of the category, the name of the producing country, the weight, the indication of active substances (e.g. chemicals), as well as any other indication established by the regulations. approved by the Minister of Agriculture.



ENVIRONMENT – CALIFORNIA IN FLAMES

California has experienced the most devastating catastrophe in the last quarter of a century. On the morning of October 10th, fires struck northern California, particularly Napa and Sonoma. The 16 fires have continued to spread since. After four days, the toll was heavy: more than 200 people have been reported missing, 35 deaths and at least 90 000 hectares burned, nearly 5 700 buildings destroyed and more than 20 000 evacuees. The United States had already experienced a murderous wave of fire in 1871 in Peshtigo, causing 1 200 deaths and ravaging 500 000 hectares of forest. In 1933, another fire hit California and caused 29 deaths. Other countries have seen their population and territories affected by the destructive effect of the flames. This was the case of the Landes region in France in 1949, where fires had killed 82 people and destroyed nearly 50 000 hectares of land. There was also the case of Australia in 1983, China in May 1987 and Greece in 2007, all having experienced deadly fires. A fire causes considerable damage and the question of environmental impact then arises. Wildfire is a destructive agent of the environment and biodiversity. This is an important factor leading to air pollution, which raises the important issue of public health protection.



NUCLEAR – CHERNOBYL'S COROLLARY 30 YEARS LATER

On April 26th 1986, the reactor N°4 of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in Ukraine has exploded. A radioactive cloud dispersed and invaded Europe, later spreading well beyond its borders. The highest radioactivity was concentrated in the vicinity of the nuclear reactor, where deposits of nuclear fuel particles projected during the explosion are the largest. All the neighboring population was evacuated beyond a 30km perimeter, a territory that is named today the « Exclusion Zone ». However, this area is not completely liveless as pets have been left behind. The authorities had to cleanse the area, but the task had not been completed due to its complexity. The « Exclusion Zone » is once again in the spotlight of a debate as there are more than a thousand stray dogs today, not to mention cats, boars and other wild animals. The NGO "Clean Future Fund" mobilized with these animals to treat, vaccinate and castrate them. Through their work and the followed-up animals, the researchers are able to identify and study the radioactivity of the area. This work is necessary for the safety of the workers on site as well as for further research on radioactivity in the « Exclusion Zone ».



JURISPRUDENCE

ENVIRONMENT

Decree dating September 21st 2017, approving the nuclear safety authority's decision n°2017-dc-0596 dating July 11th 2017, that sets the effluent discharge limit of the civil nuclear facilities of the center of Cadarache exploited by the CEA in the municipality of Saint-Paul-les-Durance

The Nuclear Safety Authority's decision dating July 11th 2017 has laid down limits to effluents release into the environment by the civilian nuclear bases installations of the Cadarache center and was approved by a decree dating September 21st 2017 (published in the OJ on October 4th).

This text sets limiting rules concerning discharges of liquid and gaseous effluents, radioactive or not, to which the French Alternative Energies and Atomic Energy Commission (CEA), currently operating on civilian nuclear installations in the commune of Saint-Paul-Les-Durance, department of Bouches-du-Rhône, has to comply. As a result, it repeals the decision N°2010-DC-0172 of the Nuclear Safety Authority dating January 5th 2010.

These discharge limits are applied to effluent discharges from installations in the surrounding environment, in order to control the pollutants and the impact of the installation on the public and the environment. These release limits set by the text are either gaseous effluent discharge limits or liquid effluent discharge limits.



HEALTH – COLOMBIA: ASBESTOS REKINDLING DISCUSSIONS



Worldwide, there are more than 100 000 victims whose deaths are caused by asbestos exposure. This phenomenon also affects Colombia as 320 people die from diseases related to professional or environmental exposure to asbestos each year. This is the case of mesothelioma, which is a primary form of cancer of membranes that envelops the lungs and causes respiratory problems. Other types of cancer such as heart, stomach or ovaries can also be caused. In France the

use of asbestos has mainly served as thermal and sound insulator in building construction and has been banned since 1997. The president of the National Association for the Defense of Asbestos Victims is still fighting for asbestos to be recognized as a dangerous product around the world. Colombia mainly imports this product from countries where its use is prohibited by the law, such as Brazil. Two Colombian activists fought for the ban on asbestos and lost their lives because of diseases related to this mineral. This tragedy has revived politics about its use. Thus, a bill has just been submitted to Congress and aims to ban the manufacture of more than 300 products used in everyday life. This is the 7th attempt to ban the use of asbestos in Colombia, the previous ones having been set aside and still not considered as a priority.



RENEWABLE ENERGY – MOROCCO'S ENERGY STRATEGY BY 2020

Morocco is committed to a new energy policy that will focus on an energy mix (i.e. renewable and fossil energies) and focused on renewable energies including: solar, wind, energy efficiency, legislative framework, etc. Morocco's energy strategy focuses on five key points. First, optimize the energy mix in the electricity sector. Then, accelerate the development of energies from renewable sources and make energy efficiency a national priority. Finally, promote foreign capital investment in oil and gas and develop further regional integration. Morocco's energy consumption is growing at a rate of 6% to 8% per year, while it does not have the natural resources able to meet such an increase. Morocco's energy strategy remains ambitious and the country seems to be moving in the right direction. There is a commitment from the parties concerned, be it from the government, large companies or individuals involved in this development policy through training or importing new technologies.



TECHNOLOGY – MULTIROTOR EHANG 184: AN ECO - FRIENDLY TECHNOLOGICAL BREAKTHROUGH



The Chinese Multirotor « Ehang 184 » could be put to use next July in Dubai after becoming a sensation at the Las Vegas Technology Show (CES). It has distinguished itself from other prototypes by its embedded technology, as it is able to carry passengers using automatic piloting. This device would allow Dubai to achieve 25% autonomy of its transport system and get closer to its goal set for 2030. While the use of drones now have

specific regulations, the Multirotor does not have any. Currently, it is forbidden for a device such as the Multirotor to enter Dubai's airspace with a person on board, which is why tests were conducted without any passengers. If drones seem more eco-friendly by avoiding the release of harmful substances, the question on recycling their battery is still pending? Today, the recycling of rechargeable batteries is not economically viable. However, research is moving fast in this area in order to overcome the problem.