

## HEADLINE – WASTES : FINAL GIFTS OF THE FESTIVE SEASON

Every end of year, and especially during Christmas and New Year's Eve, wastes pile up and containers overflow. In Avignon, it's about 20 to 30% more waste that the garbage collectors retrieve during these 15 days. This peak is caused by gift packaging's and Christmas decorations (disposable dishes, Christmas trees, etc. ...) that are thrown away after one use only, but it's also caused by food waste that increases during this period. In order to reduce the impact of the festive period on the environment, local awareness is set up. For example, the city of Roubaix organizes « zero waste » workshops before the festive season so the citizens learn how to manage their garbage and waste less. The goal of this city is to encourage its inhabitants to cut in half their waste production. Despite these initiatives, there's still a long way to go. Some lack of courtesy remains, a lot of garbage's, e.g. trees, find themselves on the public highway. 68% of the packaging's are recycled now in France when the goal is to reach 75% in 2022, which will go through questioning the bad habits of some people.

## RENEWABLE ENERGY – SELF-CONSUMPTION : A NEW TREND

We are experiencing the energy transition, an abstract concept that would tend to signal the arrival of clean energies and intelligent energy consumption patterns. The market is starting to grow as the cost of solar panels is decreasing and the price of energy is increasing. In short, everything is there. But the devil hides in the details, and the detail that can make the difference is that of self-consumption. Indeed, why not? There are already partial self-consumption systems, which would have the advantage of excluding storage and all the expensive part related to batteries. Specifying that everything depends on the needs, the essential remains a battery-free system where most of the production is consumed by the producer-consumer and the surplus is resold to the EDF network in the same way that the lack is bought from the same company. Thus, the owner who lives on the spot makes at least 25% savings on his bill and in any case, it is more profitable to self-consume than to sell his electricity. « On this kind of installation, the purchase rates are of the order of 5.5 euro cents on average kwh, Mr. Pichery (the owner) pays his electricity (the one coming from the national grid) 9 euro cents, it is therefore much more interesting for him to self-consume the electricity he produces rather than resell it, » says Roxanne Dardaine, manager of the company Libwatt, specializing in self-consumption.

## POLLUTION – A POLLUTION-FREE PLANET : A COMMITMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

On Wednesday, December 6, 2017, more than 200 countries signed in Nairobi a UN resolution to eliminate pollution from plastics in the oceans. By this document, the signatory countries hope to pave the way for the conclusion of a binding treaty. The adopted resolution provides that countries will start monitoring the amount of plastic they dump into the sea. « Even though it is not a treaty, significant progress has been made. Thirty-nine governments announced new commitments to reduce the amount of plastic in the ocean, » said UNEP Barrat, a UNEP (United Nations Environment Program) official, citing Chile, Oman, Sri Lanka or South Africa.



## FAUNA – MALAYSIA : CONCERN OVER RISING MORTALITY OF RARE ANIMALS



Malaysia is strong in biodiversity. However, concern is gaining the ranks of the defenders of nature in this country. This is due to the death of a tapir, two Malaysian bears as well as animals of other rare species in recent times. Tapir is a species of bear considered a « species in danger of extinction » and the Malaysian bear is considered a vulnerable species by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). These numerous disappearances are due to road accidents as well as poaching. In addition, their habitat seems threatened by the extension of the Malaysian motorway network. The local branch of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) explains in a press release that « the tapir was cut up by a group of natives who discovered its carcass on the side of the road ». Regarding the Malaysian bears, « they were cut and sold on the market of the city ». It urges to take « drastic measures for the protection of wildlife » in this country.

## ASBESTOS

### ANXIETY DAMAGE

#### **DECISION OF THE SUPREME COURT OF FRANCE, SOCIAL CHAMBER, SEPTEMBER 21 2017, N°16-15.130**

The High Court recalls that the non-material damage resulting from the risk of developing an illness induced by the exposure of an employee to asbestos constitutes the harm of anxiety, which is only compensated if the employee has worked in one of the establishments mentioned in article 41 of the law n° 98-1194 of December 23, 1998 and appearing on a list established by ministerial decree during a period where asbestos or materials containing asbestos were manufactured or treated.

Thus, employees who do not meet these conditions cannot claim compensation for non-pecuniary damages in respect of exposure to asbestos, even on the basis of a failure by the employer to fulfill his obligation of security.

#### **INDUSTRIAL TRIBUNAL OF PARIS, OCTOBER 26 2017, N° F 13/09071**

Railroad workers exposed to asbestos from 1970 to 2000 because of their professional activity have seized the industrial tribunal of Paris to see their anxiety damage due to their exposure to asbestos repaired. This request was rejected by the tiebreaker of the Industrial Tribunal which considered that the employees did not fulfill the conditions provided for in Article 41 of the aforementioned law.

These decisions are in the same case law line.

## **CLIMATE – END OF 2017 : NATURE’S ANGER, SIMPLE HASARD OR CLIMATE CHANGE ?**



Different deadly fires and category 1 hurricanes in California, USA on December 7, 2017, passing through tropical storm Tembin which swept south of Philippines from December 22 to 24, 2017, causing floods and landslides, to record snowfalls and prolonged polar cold waves that are chilling North America (USA and Canada) in this winter weather where cooling in the wind sometimes reaches -40°C: these are the gifts of nature to the inhabitants of planet Earth at the end of 2017. So, one wonders if

these are indeed the effects of climate change or just the hazard. Since 2015, the UN had already warned that, in any case, we will witness more and more severe climate disruption. This reminds governments to put climate change among their priorities.

## **ECOLOGY – THE END OF HYDROCARBON IN FRANCE**

The bill on the end of research and exploitation of hydrocarbons in France by 2040 was voted by the National Assembly on December 19, 2017. This bill aims to bring France out of fossil fuels. Indeed, this text provides in the immediate future that no new operating permit would be issued and the operating permits would not be renewed. This prohibition affects both exploration and exploitation licenses. The law also provides for a transitional phase for an authorization of exclusive licenses for research already awarded and the possibility to first grant an exploitation concession if it follows a research permit. The text also provides for a sulfur exemption. Thus, it allows the continuation of the exploitation of the Lacq Bay. This bill makes France a pioneer in this type of ban but is perceived as symbolic since France is not a big producer of hydrocarbons. Indeed, it produces 815,000 tons per year of oil which represents 1% of national consumption. This is a small step forward on a global scale.

## **SOIL REMEDIATION – THE MAGIC TREE : THE WILLOW**

The city of Creil is close to Paris, located about 50 kilometers north of the capital. City with an industrial past, it knows massive pollution of its soil. Here, heavy metals are the most difficult enemies of local communities that need to reclaim these lands. Companies, businesses and housing are planned in this city in full expansion. However, a major problem remains when we talk about soil remediation: traditional methods are very expensive. For example, to completely replace the polluted earth with clean earth from elsewhere is a considerable step, as well as the various chemical processes, also expensive. As a result, the city of Creil chose the gentle method: remediation with biological methods by use of plants. More precisely it is about trees: willows. Indeed, the willows have depolluting virtues. Ineris, a specialized laboratory for industrial pollution control, found after analysis that the heavy metals present in the soil, are captured by the roots of these plants and then raised through the sap to the leaves. However, this is not a definitive method considering the limited length of roots and the time required for metal absorption. There is a period longer than two years, which is incompatible with most of the needs of economic actors. On the other side of the coin, it is a recovery of rare metals that are now recoverable industrially by scientists using specific processes. Zinc for example, often recovered in this process of remediation can be recycled for the manufacture of drugs. This approach responds well to the new quest for the circular economy because this mineral is in the process of being depleted.