

# What policies to *promote the evolution* of society *towards sobriety*?

ALBERT RITZENTHALER

The climate emergency and the loss of biodiversity require a rapid and strong transition that questions our societies and lifestyles in all their components in order to move towards greater sobriety. This transition is an essential vector for staying below the 2 °C global temperature increase and reversing the erosion of biodiversity.

## MOVING SOCIETY TOWARDS A CHOSEN, POSSIBLE AND DESIRABLE SOBRIETY

Taking a structural approach, the ESEC points out that calls for eco-gestures during a period of crisis are not equal to these challenges, even if they can have a knock-on effect.

Based on a citizen participation process (online consultation and workshop), this opinion proposes a reflection on the conditions for sobriety and its inclusion in strong, fair and democratically deliberated public policies at all levels of economic, social and environmental decision-making.

The ESEC formulates 19 recommendations which emphasise that there are no insurmountable oppositions, but concrete and adaptable solutions. The time has come to organise all the initiatives (of citizens, companies, etc.), to frame them in a public policy framework, and to involve the territories for effective and operational sobriety. It is a dynamic move towards a society of better living and greater solidarity, compatible with an economic and social model consistent with the SDGs.

**According to Carbone4, behavioural changes would reduce the carbon footprint by about 20% of the effort needed to reach the 2 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per year per person compatible with the Paris Agreement by 2050.**

## DEFINITION

### HOW DOES THE ESEC QUALIFY SOBRIETY?

A set of measures, collective organisations and everyday practices that avoid and reduce the demand for energy, materials, land and water while ensuring well-being for all within planetary limits.



# Promote *the evolution* of society towards *sobriety*

## 1 ENSURING FAIR SOBRIETY

### → Recommendation 1

Take into account and act against social and gender inequalities in the design of sobriety policies and in measures to raise awareness of them.

## 2 PROMOTING REPRESENTATIVE AND PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY IN THE SERVICE OF SOBRIETY

### → Recommendations 3+4 (partly from the participatory workshop)

Set up a permanent mechanism for the participation of residents and other stakeholders (local economic actors, etc.) via existing territorial bodies (CESER, CODEV, neighbourhood committees, etc.) and organise a national debate aimed at defining the criteria for sharing the effort.

## 3 ACTING ON SUPPLY AND DEMAND

### → Recommendation 9

Involve all stakeholders in companies and administrations by favouring a local social dialogue on the environmental consequences of the company's decisions in terms of sobriety.

### → Recommendation 12 (partly from the participatory workshop)

To influence the evolution of consumption patterns, promote information on sobriety, implement a two-level environmental display to reach the entire population, and strengthen the regulation of advertising.

## 4 IMPLEMENTING SOBRIETY IN TIME AND SPACE

### → Recommendation 16

Encourage stakeholders to negotiate agreements on the organisation of work (working time, teleworking, mobility plans, etc.) as part of the social dialogue at the relevant level.

## 5 FROM THE CONSUMER SOCIETY TO THE WELFARE SOCIETY: BUILDING NEW SHARED NARRATIVES

### → Recommendation 19 (partly from the participatory workshop)

Recognise and support the role and contribution of citizens' and associations' initiatives to set up and promote the dissemination of sobriety actions, create and support territorial sobriety projects.

### The rapporteur

#### Albert Ritzenthaler

albert.ritzenthaler@lecese.fr • 01 44 43 64 07

Albert Ritzenthaler is the President of the CFDT group at the ESEC. He sits on the Environment Committee, the Education, Culture and Communication Committee

and the Delegation for Women's Rights and Equality. He chairs the Temporary Committee on End of Life. He has already co-reported/ reported on three opinions on issues relating to food and guidance for young people.