

## CLIMATE, CARBON NEUTRALITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Opinion of the ESEC on the draft law to combat climate change and strengthen resilience against its effects

At the request of the Prime Minister, the ESEC has examined the draft law to combat climate change and strengthen resilience against its effects. The future law should enable us to achieve national climate objectives and meet our international commitments, in a spirit of social justice. In France, the National Low-Carbon Strategy (SNBC) sets a target of reducing domestic greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 40% by 2030, compared to 1990, in order to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.

The ESEC has already expressed its views on national mitigation policy on several occasions and has indicated that France is not on track. And while the annual rate of emissions reduction should be tripled in order to achieve a six-fold decrease by 2050, the many measures in the bill, which are generally appropriate, are often limited, deferred or subject to conditions that make their implementation in the near future uncertain.

- Some measures, such as those concerning the balance between urbanisation and natural and rural areas, will have a significant positive impact in the long term, but their implementation depends on the coordinated efforts and determination of local authorities and the national government;
- Many measures are adjustments to existing provisions;
- Far-reaching changes in sensitive areas such as air and road freight transport are de-emphasised in favour of safeguarding existing models in the current crisis situation, without giving a clear vision for reorienting them toward real sustainability;
- The bill refers on several occasions, particularly regarding agricultural or

aviation policy, to European or international negotiations, without any clear indication of France's desire to influence these negotiations;

- The effectiveness of many measures depends primarily on the human and budgetary resources devoted to them. If resources are not provided to the departments responsible for implementing and overseeing these measures, then they will never come to fruition.

The scant few climate impact estimates provided show the inadequacy of these measures. As such, to say that the bill is "in line with the SNBC", as the introductory report does, is overstating the case.

In addition to this critical assessment, the ESEC, which has been analysing climate policies for the past 10 years, has issued its recommendations.



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Because action is urgently needed, the ESEC makes the following recommendations:

### TRAVEL RECOMMENDATIONS:

- prioritise the objective of reducing required travel “at source” whenever possible, in order to reduce the associated GHG emissions.
- align tax incentives for freight transport with the desired GHG emission reduction trajectory. This trajectory will have to be coupled with measures to offset the negative economic and social impacts.
- develop measures for businesses, transport employees and consumers.
- increase pressure to challenge the exemption of international air and maritime transport from carbon or environmental taxes and the EU carbon market.

### HOUSING RECOMMENDATIONS:

- the sincerity and success of these aspirations will depend on the level of public and other funding made available both for climate objectives and to ensure social justice.
- specify the resources allocated to develop the Public Service for Housing Energy Performance (SPPEH), which ensures that requests are treated uniformly throughout the country.
- harmonise the objectives of reducing land take and biodiversity loss, and the measurement tools used to monitor these objectives.
- ensure consistency between, on the hand, the objectives of combating land take at the national and regional levels, and on the other hand, those adopted in sub-regional documents.
- support the definition of protected areas by providing financial and human resources commensurate with the objective, particularly in the overseas territories given their isolation and rich biodiversity.

### CROSS-CUTTING RECOMMENDATIONS:

- allocate the majority of the proceeds from the climate and energy contribution to fund the ecological and energy transition, to ensure ongoing funding for the transition beyond the recovery plan alone, and for greater acceptability.
- incorporate climate change strategies and policies to tackle inequalities. In particular, climate policies need to be assessed in terms of their benefits for the 20% most vulnerable and poorest people.
- review the rules for socio-economic assessment of investment projects that the government applies to its own funding.
- implement the Jobs and Skills Forecasting Plan (PPEC) included in the 2015 LTECV Act following a recommendation by the ESEC, whose urgency is confirmed by both the employment situation and the need for rapid adaptation to climate change.

A full summary of the recommendations in each category is given in the ESEC opinion.