SECTION FOR ENVIRONMENT

2014-13

ADAPTING FRANCE TO THE CHALLENGES OF GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE

RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE
LIBERTÉ - ÉGALITÉ - FRATERNITÉ
CONSEIL ÉCONOMIQUE SOCIAL ET ENVIRONNEMENTAL

It is essential that we adapt to cope with the changes in our climate brought about as a result of human activity. It is, of course, vital that we limit global warming to less than 2°C as a matter of urgency, but even at this level, harmful consequences will be felt in the overseas territories and departments and later in mainland France. Our country must therefore be prepared for this. Different regions will need to deal with new illnesses and allergies, risks to forested areas, fires, the threat of flooding and an increase in heatwaves and extreme precipitation, among other things.

The present report looks at ways of adapting where life on Earth is concerned and takes into account the National Action Plan on Climate Change, which is currently undergoing a mid-term review. Looking beyond the aforementioned plan, it emphasises the need for exchange and learning at regional and greater regional level, natural places and levels for planning responses to climate threats..

CREATING A SHARED VISION OF CLIMATE ACTION AT REGIONAL LEVEL

Making data and studies more widespread and more readily accessible is a prerequisite to involving all parties in the process of adapting to climate change in practical terms. All players must be able to contribute to formulating informed responses to certain changes, the parameters and scope of which are as yet unknown.

The introduction of practical, sector- or region-specific services will be a key condition of such action. This will mean making observatories more widespread in the greater regions, which will, in turn, need to involve both public networks and networks of professionals. Scientific teams should also be invited to develop regional indicators.

Furthermore, consultation must be undertaken, with the support of experts, regarding the issues associated with future risks and working with the insurance sector in particular will also be important.

The two components of the fight against climate change, namely mitigation and adaptation, must go hand in hand at all levels of the decision-making process.

Antoine Bonduelle
is co-founder and a member of the Executive Board of the Réseau Action Climat - France ('Climate Action Network - France', RAC-F).
He sits on the ESEC section for Environment, in which he represents the Environment and Nature Group.

Contact:
antoine.bonduelle@lecese.fr
+33 (0)1 44 43 62 27

It is essential that we actively support the scientific community, notably with regards to producing regionalised climate projections and simulating the effects on regions, professional sectors and natural environments.

Jean Jouzel
is a Researcher and Director of Research at the CEA ('French Alternative Energies and Atomic Energy Commission').
He sits on the ESEC section for Environment, in which he represents the Qualified Individual Group.

Contact:
jean.jouzel@lecese.fr
+33 (0)1 44 43 62 27

Contact: env@lecese.fr - +33 (0)1 44 43 62 27

DEVISING FUTURE ADAPTATION SERVICES AND OPENING THE DEBATE WITHIN SOCIETY

- **Health.** Adaptation must be taken into account in the French National Health and Environment Plan, as well as in national and regional health and research strategies. The hospital system and medical networks must be involved in the development of regional climate and energy plans.
- **Agriculture.** It is important to reconcile various time frames for adaptation and action, from short-term recommendations to medium- and long-term developments. The resilience of production systems for each region will also need to be improved.
- **Forestry.** The uniting of private owners and the production of sustainable management documents must be accompanied by the development of a vision of adaptation that is shared by both private forest owners and public forest managers.
- **Biodiversity.** Ensuring the implementation of the elements of ecological continuity identified in the documents produced by the State and the regional authorities is the priority. It is important that policies regarding protected areas be considered in accordance with existing or future climate changes.

  Emerging expertise concerning the incorporation of plant and animal biodiversity into urban planning initiatives will also need to be developed in light of the heightened risk of heatwaves.
- **Seas, oceans and fisheries.** Priority must be given to protecting and restoring ecosystems, and outstanding areas in particular, and to reducing coastal artificialisation. Consideration must continue to be given to the vulnerability and management of coastlines and existing infrastructures and built-up areas must be reviewed.

INCORPORATING ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE INTO PUBLIC INITIATIVES BASED ON A SERIES OF COMMON RULES

State-region regulatory plans and local operational climate plans are a suitable framework for planning and implementing adaptation policies, which must be coordinated with initiatives designed to mitigate climate change. The system must be coherent and ambitious and concern the country as a whole. Measures designed to prevent risks in the future in particular must be made more enforceable.

The ESEC would also suggest that reference projections and climate change vulnerability maps be incorporated in planning documents. Such climate references and vulnerability studies must also be made available to all parties.

The Council would recommend incorporating the available knowledge of future climates and their impact into risk management and prevention documents, notably by updating local development plans. Symbolically, the term 'natural' risk could be removed from the titles they include.

Public adaptation policies will require national solidarity efforts to be stepped up, particularly where the overseas territories and departments are concerned.

DEVELOPING BASIC AND APPLIED KNOWLEDGE

The scientific community must be supported, notably in the formulation of climate projections, by placing the emphasis on the regionalisation of such projections and simulating the potential effects on regions, natural environments and professional sectors.

These objectives require new calculation codes to be developed, along with a series of climate services that should make it possible to assess the impact and the vulnerability of both the environment and of society to climate changes. Particular attention should be paid to extreme phenomena and the risks associated with the worst-case scenarios. In order to achieve this, it is important to continue to implement basic and applied cross-disciplinary research initiatives with regards to both the integrated climate-impact simulation plan and the relevant socio-economic and cultural issues.

Furthermore, greater emphasis should be placed on promoting research in the fields of health and the environment by means of clear political choices and the corresponding budgetary means. These choices should feature among the priorities of the ANR ('French National Research Agency').

Ultimately, it is important that agronomic research and agricultural innovation be intensified in order to encourage the development of a form of agriculture that is better adapted and more resilient by anticipating changes in diseases and pests and by reaffirming the fundamental importance of the food safety objective.

It is important to take on board the idea of a future that is notably very different from our present and to incorporate this factor into all studies on sectors of production, professions and professional practices.