

• **In your opinion, what should a Sustainable Europe look like in 2030?**

A sustainable Europe is not for us just a matter of economy and good understanding to persist over time. Now we have to take into account climate change, energy progress and the pollution we generate. It is no longer a race for the first place in the world, but a wish to preserve our place while preserving our territory: resources are exhausted and Europe will be sustainable if it does not destroy them. For this purpose, we have highlighted six themes: renewable energies, waste management, transport, health, agriculture and territory planning. General decisions must be taken by the EU and for all the EU countries. The fundings however must be relative for every EU country.

**1. Renewable Energies**

There are a lot of renewable energies available to have a complete energy mix: Solar, wind, biomass, hydraulic, geothermics.

The EU objective for 2030, in terms of renewable energies, is 27% of the European consumption, since the ratification of the "energy-climate package" in 2014.

We think that 27% is a reachable goal but not that ambitious. A more ambitious goal would be around 35-40% for the Clean Energy Package and would be more 'adapted to the climate change emergency'.

To make sure this aim would be reached, the EU could finance subventions on green energies and cut those on energies from fossil fuels. Subventions on carbon neutrality could also be a good investment. EU could also make great communication campaigns about fossil fuels divestment (cf The Guardian campaign 'Keep it in the ground').

Also in the field of sustainability around energy, EU should support the construction of zero emission buildings, sustainable materials for constructions. Buildings that produce the same amount or more energy than it consumes.

EU must avoid the so-called 'bioenergies' which favour the destruction, for instance, of entire forests in protected lands and the use of fertile lands to grow crops used for 'bioenergies'.

**2. Waste Management**

We would like to point out that waste management is going to be decisive in the next decades. EU could encourage european companies in every manufacturing sectors to think of the recyclingness of a product from its conception, its production and the end of its life cycle so it would have a small, neutral or a positive environmental impact.

Furthermore, EU should increase its efforts in encouraging recycling and reducing the unnecessary packaging of many products.

Also, making refundable bottles an obligation in all EU countries would reduce the amount of waste and would avoid unnecessary recycling (which can consume a lot of energy).

Circular economy must be promoted and encouraged. Moreover, the small and local distribution channels must be supported to develop local businesses.

The EU countries should also take the path of 'bioeconomy'. 'Bioeconomy' is a concept that propose to do economy in a sustainable way, avoiding the degradation of the environment and ecosystems and in the meantime, to work in order to preserve or even repair those ecosystems.

According to the following article, the CESE (Economical, Social and Environmental Council) points out essential issues:

- Establish some environmental, economical and social criteria concerning the production of bio-products.

- Harmonize national and european objectives.
- Adopt a regional approach for an optimum use of the resource.

### **3. Transports (and pollution)**

Encourage all green transports and also in urban areas (metro, trams, electric buses, bikes or other).

Moreover, encourage big cities/capitals to decrease the number of cars inside the city. With the objective to reduce air pollution.

Set up measures about freight road transportation and pollution. Encourage vehicles which consume less gas and put a tax on old vehicles that pollute a lot.

### **4. Health**

EU completes the national politics in the health part. It acts with norms and regulations and have a fund for research (7.5 billion euros are planned for 2014-2020 in order to improve the healthcare in Europe).

Our question is: don't we need to focus on our way to life as much as we try to fight diseases? A sustainable Europe in 2030 will see moreover: it would try to prevent, or reduce diseases, not to offset it in the first place. Three roles (from the objectives of « europa.eu ») are not efficient enough for us.

- The fight against the strong health threat in a few countries in Europe:

Some country in Europe cannot drink water straight from the tap: Estonia, Romania, Croatia, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Hungary, Slovakia (according the USA's Center for Disease Control and Prevention). To drink unsafe water can give you diarrhea, Hepatitis A, typhoid or cholera. Water pollution is a problem which seems to us very far. However some countries of eastern Europe are suffering from the lack of sanitary installations. Repair the outdated infrastructures, reduce the water contamination and change the current way to irrigate cultures are important.

- Help some European countries to address common challenges:

The harm of some products containing endocrine disruptors has been proved a long time ago. However the proposition of a definition took too much time; this slowness (pointed out and condemned by the European Court of Justice itself against the Commission) is the result of powerful lobbies (agro-industry (most pesticides having a disruptive role), and plastic industry).

Since the 4th of June 2017, the definition is signed. But it is not satisfying for us: it excludes pesticides from the definition. However, the economic cost of endocrine disruptors in Europe is estimated at more than € 157 billion, or 1.2% of the European GDP (taking into account the chronic diseases caused by these disruptors) and the list of hazardous products keeps growing. Stopping the use of bisphenol A in Europe and its classification as a "substance of very high concern" since June 2017 is a first victory. An interdiction in the whole Europe will ensue. Let's just note that this product is banned in France since 2010. We are expecting EU to be the right example.

- Prevention and a healthier way of life:

Prevention is a way to progress indirectly on health in Europe. Overnutrition (pathological condition caused by an excess of nutrient) and its consequences are increasingly problematic. There is a great need of communication on this subject; indeed we can control which products enter in Europe, but not what people choose to eat. It seems important to us to take some measures in this direction, particularly educational measures: school canteens are a good way. At the "Grenelle de l'environnement" Forum, France pledged to introduce 20% of organic products into school canteens by 2012. In 2017 this figure is 2%. In other countries this percentage is very variable: for Italy it is higher, some other countries do not even speak about it. It would be a good decision to homogenize this in Europe. Let's start by educating children, and through them: their parents. It would also be an opportunity to promote the development of a healthier agriculture.

## **5. Agriculture**

Agriculture is a subject especially relevant in France, with a big impact on Europe: most of our foods come from France. With the Climate Change and a poor care of the soil, many crops are lost each year. Agriculture "all chemistry, all tractor, all oil" is not acceptable anymore. It is based on intensive exploitation of non-renewable resources, causes increasing environmental and health damage, and has considerable negative consequences (resistance to herbicides and insecticides, loss of biodiversity and soil fertility, etc.).

We need to take some measures as important as near-abandonment of plowing, permanent soil cover, agroforestry, crop rotation, use of auxiliary animals culture and permaculture. This will necessitate in many cases a complete overhaul of our production systems, in order to produce as much – maybe more – and better, but with less. An "ecologically intensive agriculture", based on the intensification of ecological systems, and still able to feed Europe. Three points are the first decisions, according to us:

- Use of pesticides

Some advances in pesticide reduction are noticed in Europe (interdiction on the application of pesticides into surfaces of ecological interest). But the effectiveness of such measures is not efficient when pesticides are widespread around, including some which are banned by EU members. For example, France banned the use of nicotinoid pesticides (for early 2018) and glyphosate (current) in its territory: this last is the first contaminant in rivers in France and "probable carcinogen in humans". However, its use had been extended last year for 18 months by the EU, and now we are talking about extending it for ten years (restarting of the procedure on 16 May 2017). This decision would go against the full sense of the current progressions and still shows the power of lobbies. We encourage the banning of this substance throughout EU.

To go further, we can also talk about the "zero-phyto" plan in France (or "Labbé" law) which prohibits the use of phytosanitary products since 1st January 2017 to all municipalities, departments and public institutions. On January 2019, this same law will prohibit the sale to individuals of these same products. This law was proposed to be generalized in EU (proposal on March 28 and adoption of the senate on May 19). For us, there are two advantages: reduce the spread of pesticides in the soil, and educate the population about this subject because the townships inform a lot about this change in their maintenance of green areas. Moreover, other European countries are already in the same process: Belgium, Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Hungary.

- Some farmers engaged in organic farming are waiting for the European aids due to them

The agricultural model in Europe is based on grants and subsidies. It is a choice that leads to a certain speculation, but which can encourage the desired agriculture; indeed in the new CAP, EU is encouraging 'crop diversification, maintenance of permanent grassland and conservation of ecological areas of interest, agri-environmental measures and support for organic farming'. So there are some aids allocated to the encouragement of a more reasonable agriculture (reconversion, maintenance of the exploitation). But the farmers who asked for it were late in receiving it for two years. Certainly, these subsidies will be paid; the problem is that the aids for the organic agriculture are those that are returned last. On the contrary, they should be encouraged. In the order to encourage these new farming methods, other ways than grants are possible; establish a 'quota' of organic farms by country would be a good way to take it seriously.

- The soil protection

Water pollution and Air pollution are already part of famous protection and measures in Europe. The progress is slow, but it does exist. But the soil has no specific legal protection in the EU, although it has qualities directly related to our health. It produces what we eat, it filters out the water we drink, it protects us from climatic vagaries (absorption and storage of water), and it contains an extremely rich biodiversity. The soil needs a general protection in Europe, particularly because of the unequal distribution of activities on our territories (industries, agriculture, etc.). We can imagine several kinds of protection: protect a very productive soil from the urban extension and set it aside to the non-intensive agriculture without pesticide; protect a soil above a sensitive groundwater, maintain its permeability and prohibit pesticides, protect industrial soils and take some measures against industrial pollution, protect the soil during a construction by working on the compaction effect by machinery, etc. A reflection at a European level would be necessary.

## **6. Territory**

Each country has its own geographic breakdown with more or less wide area and governance. A sustainable Europe does have a large-scale vision to unify its members, but also a finer scale in order to encourage the dynamic development and to protect its territories from harmful consequences.

The goal is not to stop the advances, but to think about the development we really want. For this we must continue to build and develop the territory with a preservation of the environment. The "Compensatory measures" are a European tool which is able to compensate the damages on the environment. But this measures are ineffective according to the environmental actors of the territory: it is impossible to compensate the loss of biodiversity. But we can use this funding to upstream identify sensitive areas for specific species (this can be made not by private offices that depends on funding, but by a public institution that will be devoted to this issue in each region) and to protect the environment before the impacts. It is also a matter of stopping to encroach on agricultural land (by a huge and ineffective compensation in terms of hectares), but to focus on actions about endangered species and ecosystems. We propose to use this tool to allow the establishment of zones where a no ending management plan must be respected.

Finally, we would also like to talk about the Natura 2000 network created by the EU: an important tool for addressing environmental challenges. It had some success at the beginning and has only changed a little since its inception. Now it would be useful to create a new dynamic by:

- correcting the geographical disparities of Natura 2000 sites
- addressing the lack of concrete management actions
- developing a system for assessing the state of conservation of Natura 2000 sites in order to monitor their progress and to judge the effectiveness of management measures
- granting legal recognition of Natura 2000 sites to prevent any voluntary or involuntary degradation

Protecting our environment means respecting a biological richness and enabling future generations to have the chance to know it. And that is what this all essay is about: think about the next generations ...

• **What are the three biggest challenges for implementing a Sustainable Europe by 2030?**

- **Renewable energies** are the center of a sustainable Europe. Those kind of energies allow to produce and consume energy without CO2 emissions and use renewable sources of energy instead of the so-called 'fossil fuel energies' that cannot be sustainable in time, because limited in quantity.
- **Agriculture:** be able to feed Europe by ourselves is the best way to be independent from the other countries. Water and food are both very important means of pressure in the world politics and are in the first place to be sustainable.
- **Health:** protecting the human must remain an important value for Europe.

• **What actions should be taken – with immediate effect – to support the transition towards a Sustainable Europe in 2030?**

- Encourage all sustainable energies to have a diversified energy mix.
- Encourage all green and electric transports.
- support the organic agriculture with aids and reduction of product prices
- prohibit the use of the endocrine disruptors
- stop the sale of glyphosate in the all Europe

In conclusion, we want to add that the EU was threaten during the last years. In order to become sustainable, it needs to stay united and so to have a greater transparency and traceability within the European Commission. A new inter-institutional agreement has been proposed the 28 September 2016. The aims are to enhance the transparency of the work of interest representatives at the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Council of the European Union, in order to increase public trust in the EU decision-making process. The Commission has already led by example in making meetings with its decision-makers conditional upon interest representatives being publicly listed in a Transparency Register. We encourage real efficiency and speed in these negotiations. Confidence in the EU depends on it, as well as major health issues.

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