

HEADLINE – VOTING ON GLYPHOSATE POSTPONED: THE UNCERTAINTY OF EUROPE AND FRANCE

While a European committee gathered on October 5th to discuss the potential extension of the Glyphosate authorization for the next ten years, the advisory vote had been cancelled. The International Agency for Research on Cancer considers the controversial active substance as a potential carcinogen. On August 30th, Nicolas HULOT had publicly pointed out that France will be against this extension. Remarks that he tempered subsequently. Edouard PHILIPPE, the french Prime Minister, clarified France's position on Glyphosate by assuring that « abruptly stopping the use of this product which agriculture is largely dependent on is obviously difficult » and that the government will plan a progressive and irreversible transition from Glyphosate since there is currently no substitute product. Besides, he reaffirmed his « commitment to achieve significant progress towards the prohibition of dangerous substances and an agriculture less dependent on pesticides around the end of the five-year presidential term ». The European Commission must receive a qualified majority to extend the authorization on Glyphosate. Any abstention or voting against is another bad point for Glyphosate. The date of the vote remains uncertain. «It won't happen this week. The date of October 23 was mentioned, but nothing is sure... », says Françoise VEILLERETTE.

TRANSPORTATION – CHINESE GOVERNMENT HEADING FOR A POTENTIAL ELECTRIC VEHICLE INDUSTRY

On September 29, at a time where the environmental issue appears to be one of the stakes of our era, the Chinese Minister of Industry and Information Technologies announced his project to develop and market electric vehicles. This project is symbolized by the establishment of quotas for the major car manufacturers (more than 30 000 marketed per year) located in China. The implementation of this Chinese policy tends to decree the major manufacturers to produce and market electric cars to show the involvement and efforts carried out by China in the environmental matter. This project will start in 2019, from where major car manufacturers will have to make a quota of 10% electric cars compared to their annual sales. In the end, this project would lead to the sale of 1,4 million electric vehicles a year in China. From a general point of view, it is clear that the Chinese automotive industries have quickly anticipated the transition from thermal cars to electric cars. While major European and German groups are struggling to market their electric models, the Chinese major manufacturers have sold nearly 50 000 electric vehicles for BYD and around 36 000 for Beijing Electric Vehicle since the beginning of 2017. It should be reminded that 750 000 electric cars are sold each year of which about 40% in China. The issue of electric cars is one of the environmental and also economic concern of our time, and China is well aware of that. The establishment by the Chinese government of manufacturing quotas of electric cars to the car manufacturers seems to be one of the means that could encourage us to change our use, namely to substitute thermal vehicle for electric vehicles.

POLLUTION – YOU SHALL NOT PASS! SUNDAY, OCTOBER 1ST: “DAY WITHOUT MY CAR”



This was most likely a sentence that every Parisian motorist could hear on Sunday, October 1st upon the third edition of a day without cars in Paris. In order to make residents aware of their behavior regarding the use of their vehicles, the city of Paris has decided to block access to private cars in to fight against pollution caused by road traffic. This is how 113 roadblocks were established from 11 am on October 1st in to block any motorist wanting to go to the capital. In addition, the Airparif association was able to measure the air quality all day and noted the success of the operation due to a strong decrease in the level of nitrogen dioxide throughout the area targeted by the operation. However, traffic was not completely blocked: the Parisians had to rely on public transport (buses, bicycles, Cityscoots etc ...) that were allowed to circulate. The VTCs have also been authorized in the streets of Paris with the obligation not to exceed 30 km / h. In general, this car-free day organized by the city of Paris is a great success in the fight against road pollution within the capital. Nevertheless, this kind of operation cannot be carried out repeatedly due to the Parisians' dependency on cars. More effective additional solutions need to be considered to combat air pollution and global warming.

TELEPHONY - THE SMARTPHONES SCREENS' EFFECTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT

According to the latest forecasts from the International Data Corporation worldwide smartphone sales are expected to exceed one and a half billion in 2017. Throughout its cycle of life, a smartphone has impacts on the environment, both at the time of its production as well as during its use and end of life. Ressources depletion, toxic emissions and greenhouse gas are the main environmental effects of smartphones. These impacts are mainly due to the manufacturing of smartphones. Indeed, the production of a smartphone is accountable for about three-quarters of these impacts, which are largely attributable to the screen. Therefore, the larger the screen of a smartphone, the higher the environmental impact. The current fashion trend is to large screens, like the iPhone X and its screen of 5.8 inch or even the Samsung Note 8 and its screen of 6.2 inch. Efforts must be made on a manufacturing level. By using your smartphone for as long as possible, you avoid the production of new devices and you therefore protect the environment!

JURISPRUDENCE

COUNCIL OF STATE, 2 OCTOBER 2017, MINISTRY OF ECOLOGICAL TRANSITION V. SOCIÉTÉ FERMIÈRE ÉOLIENNE DE SEIGNY

In the present case, the company Ferme éolienne de Seigny requested the urgent applications judge of the Administrative Court of Dijon to suspend the execution of the decision from 28 October 2016 by which the Prefect of Côte-d'Or refused its application for a single authorization for the installation of a wind farm of five machines on the territory of the Seigny commune.

The judge decided to suspend the execution of that decision. Following his ruling, the Minister for the Environment, Energy and Sea requested the Council of State to nullify the said decision.

In its judgment, the Council finds that the urgent applications judge has a right to suspend the enforcement of a decision where urgency so warrants, but that in the present case the nature of the urgency could not be characterized.

Finally, the Council of State replies that the Minister for the Environment is therefore entitled to seek the annulment of that ruling on the ground that the urgent applications judge vitiates his ruling for insufficient reasons.

NATURE - INDONESIAN VOLCANO AGUNG (BALI) WOKE UP



The Indonesian volcano Agung had been asleep for over 53 years. Agung is a stratovolcano of more than 3 000 meters of altitude, located on the island of Bali, Indonesia. Since August 2017, the Agung volcano has experienced shallow volcanic tremors and earthquakes associated with tectonic plates. On September 18, the alert level of the volcano changed from a watchfulness status to a wakefulness status. The population started to be evacuated. On September 22, the maximum warning was issued by the Indonesian authorities and a nine-kilometer exclusion zone around the crater was set up. In 1964, the last eruption of Agung had propelled ash up to 1 000 kilometers to the west, impacting Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia. About a thousand people had perished. The increase in the number of seismic shakes shows that the magma continues to rise towards the surface, the volcano entering a critical phase. On Monday September 25, nearly 564 seismic shocks were recorded according to the Indonesian Vulcanology and Geological Hazards Observatory. Nearly 75 000 people have already been evacuated.

ENVIRONMENT - FRANCE'S PARTICIPATION IN THE CONFERENCE « OUR OCEAN » (MALTA, 5-6 OCTOBER)

This year, the 4th edition of the conference « Our Ocean » taking place October 5-6, is called Our Ocean, an Ocean for Life. The overexploitation of the Mediterranean Sea is the subject of special attention at this conference, as France recalled its commitment to the sustainable protection of the oceans. Upon the conference, the Secretary of State to the Minister of State, the Minister of Ecological and Solidarity Transition, Mrs. Brune POIRSON represents France. She presented 21 commitments for the environment, safety at sea and the blue economy. During this conference, France particularly committed to double its maritime ecology by 2030 by reconciling its uses. A draft charter of sustainable practices for sea transport was also submitted to the attending States. Since 2014, Our Ocean conferences have encouraged world leaders to look to the future and make high-level commitments while turning the challenges ahead into an opportunity for cooperation, innovation and entrepreneurship

POLLUTION - 75% OF THE WORLD'S HONEY CONTAINS PESTICIDES HARMFUL TO BEES



A Franco-Swiss study published on Friday October 6 in the reviewed journal Science reveals that neonicotinoid insecticides - or "neonics" - contaminate the vast majority of honey harvested. This level of contamination varies considerably from region to region: 86% for honey analyzed from North America, 80% for Asian honey and 79% for Europe. These figures give a good idea of the extent of the landscapes' contamination because the bee is an excellent sensor of the state of the environment. The concentrations found in 198 samples of honey produced throughout the world are not considered dangerous for humans. They are indeed lower than the limit authorized by the European Union. However, the level of contamination found is likely to cause a variety of disorders that do not cause the immediate death of the bee, but induce cognitive impairments, memory loss - foragers forgetting the way back to the hive - decreased immunity, increased susceptibility to certain pathogens, a collapse in the ability of populations to reproduce, and so on. This contributes to the extinction of this species essential to biodiversity.