



HEADLINE – SINKING OF AN OIL TANKER IN EAST CHINA SEA

Last Sunday, the sinking of « Sanchi » an oil tanker in the East China Sea caused an ecological catastrophe. An oil spill covers an area of 109 km² and according to several experts it is almost impossible to detect the surface area, because the condensate poured is a light hydrocarbon (between oil and gas, very similar to gasoline). Once this hydrocarbon is released at sea, it does not form a slick of oil. However, the worst is probably the pollution in the atmosphere due to the burning of the condensate for a week. The building was carrying 136,000 tonnes of condensate and thirty crew members died as a result of this accident. It is important to know that if « cetaceans, fish, birds and plankton come into contact with this pollution, they can either die in the short term or contract diseases, disabilities or become sterile, » said Richard Steiner, expert on oil spills.



LITIGATION – WINDMILLS

« Wind power federates oppositions and, in this regard, everyone has a clear opinion, » said Antoine Guiheux, a lawyer specializing in wind projects, on Wednesday, January 24 at the Logis du Roy in Amiens.

The Nature Protection Act dated 1976, the Decentralization Act dated 1982 and the generalization of public inquiries dated 1983, resulted in the emergence of environmental protection associations and local authorities in the United States in litigation for the protection of the environment.

« Citizens no longer hesitate to seize justice, » said Florence Jamay, deputy dean of the law school. Administrative tribunals have had to evolve and adapt. Administrative judges made decisions, filled gaps and created case law, which was followed by other judges. This does not necessarily appeal to lawyers defending the holders of wind projects. From now on, the opponents have only to dip in the regulation to find their arguments.

In the end, the judges demanded that 500 meters of distance be respected between the wind turbines and the houses, without the supervision of engineers to accompany the lawyers, and the legislator seized this jurisprudence to bring this rule into the law.



TECHNOLOGY – GREENHOUSE GAS WILL NOW BE MONITORED BY SATELLITES



On January 16, was presented the program of the industrial chair TRACE, this new research program of four years aims to develop better methods of monitoring greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) resulting from the activities carried out by men. The use of satellites coupled with the installation of new mini-sensors positioned near the industrial sites, will make it possible to know exactly the quantities of GHG emitted by these sites. This program is half co-financed by Thales Alénia Space, Total, and Suez, coordinated by Philippe Ciaï and led by UVSQ in collaboration with CNRS, CEA and Ecole Polytechnique. The reason for its adoption lies in the commitments made by 196 countries with the signing of the Paris Agreement, these commitments provide for limiting global warming to less than 2°C by 2100. To achieve this goal, GHG emissions will need to be halved every 10 years. GHG emissions inventories are based on data not always reliable that countries provide each year. « This program can someday be used to sanction large emitters of GHGs (States, regions or companies). However, it is not today the spirit of the Paris Agreement » says Philippe Ciaï.



SAFETY – EARTH POTENTIALLY IN DANGER BECAUSE OF NEO

Our planet is undergoing major damage lately. Indeed, a large number of potentially dangerous NEOs such as comets and asteroids are able to approach the Earth at a distance of less than 20 times that of the Earth-Moon in the next 12 months. The « 2018 AL12 », one of the detected NEOs, measuring 29 to 63 m in size, approached Earth on January 26, 2018 at 02:27am with a minimum distance of 3 131 185 km, which is equivalent to 8.1 times of the distance Earth-Moon with a speed of 19.7 km / s.

The next day, another « 2018 BU1 » NEB with a size of 33 to 73 m, larger than the one before, reached the Earth a higher minimum distance equal to 3.1 times the Earth-Moon distance. Therefore, the list of detected NEOs does not stop here, it remains long. The expected period for the passage of these NEOs begins January 25, 2018. It represents a threat of collision with significant consequences on our planet and the risk is increasing day by day.



ASBESTOS : THE PRESUMPTION OF A CAUSAL LINK CONDITIONED BY THE MANAGEMENT OF THE DISEASE

French Suprême Court, second civil chamber, December 14, 2017 n°1589

In this case, by contact with her husband's clothes, a woman has pericardial pleural blemishes before revealing a thoracic tumor disease. In order to be compensated for various asbestos-related damages, she seized the FIVA (Asbestos Indemnity Fund). FIVA is obliged to seek the opinion of the Asbestos Contamination Review Commission (CECEA) because the victim is not covered by the current legislation concerning professional diseases.

CECEA did not give a positive opinion on a direct causal effect between bronchopulmonary cancer and asbestos. The wife appealed to the Paris Court of Appeal under Article 53-V of the Act of December 23, 2000 on the compensation of asbestos victims.

The Court of Appeal dismissed the claim, for lack of evidence of the existence of a direct and certain causal link between bronchopulmonary cancer and asbestos exposure, however, it recognized the existence of this link between pericardial pleural plaques and asbestos.

The beneficiaries of the deceased victim, as a result of his illness, appealed considering that there is a recognition of presumption of causality between the disease and asbestos, when a victim dies as a result of a disease related to the exposure to asbestos. Moreover, they considered that the Court of Appeal reversed the burden of proof.

The second civil chamber of the French Supreme Court in its judgment dated December 14, 2017, rejected the appeal on the grounds that there is no presumption of causality in this case because the victim is not taken care of in the case of an occupational disease caused by asbestos, it is therefore for the plaintiff to prove the causal link between cancer and asbestos. In this case, however, only the blemishes were due to the direct and certain causal link to exposure to asbestos.



The regions of North Africa are experiencing a real ordeal in the water supply. Running water is undrinkable, water breaks are becoming more regular, last longer and regions are experiencing a significant deficit in agricultural irrigation. Morocco is one of the precursors of the MENA region to denounce the extent of the African water crisis in the face of « poor

governance » and « insufficient investment » according to the World Bank. Morocco has set up on November 27, 2017 a program 2018-2025 for the supply of drinking water and irrigation water to cope with the crisis, for the enjoyment of activists and experts who have been alarming for months on the urgency of the situation. This program consists of the construction of 25 dams, 5 per year for the period 2017-2021.

In Tunisia, the running water is less and less drinkable, the main cause is the deterioration of the infrastructure of SONEDE (the national water company). As a result, during water transfers, the estimated loss is 30% of the total amount of water.

Finally, Cape Town is currently experiencing the worst drought, which is expected to worsen in the coming months, and does not seem to be able to cope with it. By April 2018, Cape Town will no longer be able to distribute water to the population. Faced with the seriousness, the city is already asking the population to limit water consumption to 87 liters per person per day.



ENVIRONMENT – FLOOD IN KINSHASA

In Kinshasa, five children from the same family on the night of Wednesday, January 4 were found dead, due to heavy rains that fell in the towns of Ngaliema, Bandalungwa, Barumbu, Limete and Selembao. An assessment revised upwards by the authorities of the capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo: on January 6, 44 people were reported dead. These floods occur as Kinshasa lives under the threat of a cholera epidemic, with 220 cases and 23 deaths since last November.

The floods and their consequences reveal urbanization problems in these neighborhoods, as indicated by the provincial ministry of social affairs, Dominique Weloli. Indeed, many of these people live or survive in precarious conditions for housing, health, public transport, food, education. Many voices rise to demand stronger measures such as building gutters to evacuate water from the rain, but also to put an end to the anarchic constructions that are multiplying in the neighborhoods of Kinshasa.



ENVIRONMENT – FLOOD IN PARIS



Anne Hidalgo said on January 25, 2018 that the Seine still rises, exceeding 5.7 meters. But the situation is completely controlled by the city of Paris even if the recession looks difficult.

Some roads are flooded, the RER C is interrupted, the consequences of this flood are important. Museums are under surveillance in the face of the rising waters, especially the museums of the Louvre and Orsay who took their precautions to protect the works by evacuating their basement. Villeneuve-Saint-Georges (Val-de-Marne) is one of the most affected municipalities at the confluence of the Seine. According to the Secretary of State for the ecological transition, Mr. Sébastien Lecornu, more than 600 people have been evacuated, mainly in the Val-de-Marne. A thousand subscribers out of 6.2 million are without electricity and this figure could exceed 14,000 according to some forecasts. On January 25, more than

ten departments at the national level were still in orange vigilance due to flooding, mainly around the Seine basin, the Rhine or the Doubs.