

HEADLINE – THE REFORM OF POLLUTANT EMISSIONS' CONTROL

Following the revelation in September 2015 of a serious misconduct in the United States of the Volkswagen Group on pollutant emissions of some of its vehicles, the Ministry of the Environment has opened an investigation in France involving 100 vehicles. An independent commission has been set up to analyze the results and make recommendations. Its report was published by the Ministry of the Environment on July 29, 2016.

On Friday April 20, the European Parliament officially voted in favor of the political agreement reached in December 2017 on the reform of the vehicle certification system and the monitoring of the European car market. This reform will make it possible to adapt the current system to the new technologies available on the market and to improve the data from car emission control tests. Each member state of the European Union is therefore obliged to transpose this directive into national law. Thus, in France, from May 20 2018, all tourist vehicles will be subjected to a reinforced technical control based on a more precise reference system, which will review 133 control points (against 124 previously), but will detail especially 610 potential defects.

QUALITY – FIRST DEFINITION OF « ANIMAL WELFARE » BY A FRENCH NATIONAL AGENCY (ANSES)

For the first time, on April 25, a French agency proposed a definition of « animal welfare ». The National Agency for Food Safety, Environment and Labor (ANSES) stated: « The welfare of an animal is the positive mental and physical state related to the satisfaction of its physiological and behavioral needs, as well as its expectations. » This definition brings a mental dimension to well-being, that is to say a past, present and future consideration of well-being. Highly anticipated by animal welfare associations, this definition is needed in a process of continuous improvement of animal conditions. Moreover, these questions have once again interested the major ready-to-wear brands. After the broadcast of a video by the NGO PETA (for an animal treatment ethic) showing the suffering and conditions of exploitation of goats in South Africa, Gap, Zara, H&M and Topshop, announced on May 2 to have given up to provide themselves with mohair wool. With that being said, their credibility is nuanced because there is no transparency or traceability of mohair wool production.

TECHNOLOGY – DRIVING DIESEL CARS WITHOUT POLLUTING

Bosch, a well-known supplier in the Dieseltgate case for designing fraudulent software, announced that its engineers have devised a way to reduce nitrogen oxide emissions to a level ten times lower than the emission standards that will come into effect in 2020. This reduction works continuously regardless of the way of driving, and this improvement does not increase CO2 emissions. The new technology will not affect the price of cars. However, it can not be installed in older cars because it is not a software or a filter, otherwise a reorganization of the engine. This invention has been tested and verified by a committee of experts in Stuttgart. Bosch also said that thanks to artificial intelligence, tomorrow we will be able to drive diesel or gas cars without damaging the quality of the air.

ENVIRONMENT – A NEW ERA FOR PLASTIC



A chemistry team at the University of Colorado said they have developed a new type of plastic, which would have the virtue of being infinitely recyclable as it can be converted into its original molecule. Extraordinary discovery that can put an end to the fight against plastic waste that plague the Earth. Indeed, the recycling of plastic remains difficult. In 2015, a study published in Science Advances estimated that 6.3 billion tons of plastic waste had been generated since the 1950s, only 9% could be recycled. The polymer moves away from the original plastic formerly composed of petroleum, now the synthetic element combines durability, strength, heat resistance (mainly composed of rubber, plastic, fiber, ceramic). This discovery reminds us that France is falling behind in the recycling of plastic.



JURISPRUDENCE

Print cartridges now covered by the REP (French appeal for abuse of power, i.e. ultra vires)

The order of April 13, 2018 amends the specifications annexed to the order of June 5, 2012 on the procedure for approving eco-organizations in the waste electrical and electronic equipment sector.

The order states that from now on the print cartridges (laser, inkjet, can ...) form a new category of professional electrical and electronic waste (WEEE). These categories of waste fall within the scope of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR).

In addition, for this new category, the decree sets a target of 23% collection for the year 2018, an objective that increased over the years. The said decree also has a collection rate which is calculated in relation to the quantity of cartridges placed on the market over a year.



ENERGY – WILL ELECTRICITY BE FREE ?



the founder of SunPower, the US solar cell construction giant, « observes that the price of a photovoltaic cell tends to drop by 20% when the global cell capacity doubles. » The fact that the price of a crystalline silicon photovoltaic cell went from \$ 76.67 / watt in 1977 to a projected price in 2013 of \$ 0.74 / watt tends to accredit these observations according to The Economist. With the massive production facilities developed by the Asian giants, the price of the kilowatt will continue to approach the price close to zero dollar. Electricity is fast becoming an almost free stream, like the Internet.



JUSTICE – US STATES TO SUE THE EPA

The state of California, with the support of sixteen other states, is once again opposing the reform of the Trump administration regarding auto emissions standards. According to the California governor, Jerry Brown, this lawsuit is based on the fact that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) acted arbitrarily and capriciously, violating its own regulations, and flouting the law on air quality. California is not really on the same wavelength in the ecological field as the federal administration of Donald Trump. Greenhouse gas emission standards for vehicles were set at 4.32 liters per 100 kilometers (55 miles per gallon of gasoline) by the Obama administration for the period 2022-2025 which should be increased to 5.6 liters (42 miles) according to the Trump administration, which shows the intention of the POTUS to return to the emission ceilings imposed on car manufacturers.



WASTE – RETURN TO THE SENDER, A NEW METHOD OF FIGHTING AGAINST WASTE

Being an effective initiative to fight against pollution, in Laigneville, the mayor of the town of Oise, Christophe Dietrich, returns the goods to polluters after careful identification. In 2014, the mayor launched the first « return to sender » operations. The method works and the elected official asserts that the number of massive deposits has increased from four to five per week to less than half a dozen per year. The principle of this method is to identify those responsible for waste deposits and return their property directly to their homes. Four years today that the method is proven. These are real police investigations led by the mayor and his teams to formally identify those responsible for the disposal of litter in the municipality. He makes contact with them to invite them to collect their waste directly on site. In case of refusal, garbage will be delivered to their home within 24 hours. The return to the sender is accompanied by another device: surveillance cameras are installed at strategic crossroads of the community of towns. They serve as needed to identify the license plates of questionable vans.