

## HEADLINE – VEOLIA INAUGURATES THE FIRST RECYCLING SITES OF SOLAR PANELS

The first of its kind in Europe, the Rousset plant, near Aix-en-Provence, will recycle all panels collected in France. They were previously sent to Belgium. It will be a first in France and even, says Veolia, in Europe. On July 5th, the group will inaugurate at Rousset, near Aix-en-Provence, the first photovoltaic panels recycling plant. It works in test for a few weeks. On the storage area, 600 tons of panels are already waiting to pass the hangar door where they will be cleared of their aluminum frame, electrical box and copper cables before being shredded. Along the chain, bags receiving glass, silicon, plastic, etc., which the process separates and ejects.

## NUCLEAR – NICOLAS HULOT IS PLANNING TO CLOSE SOME NUCLEAR REACTORS, LOWERING TO 50% THE SHARE OF NUCLEAR IN THE ENERGY MIX

On June 29, Nicolas Hulot, the Minister of Ecological Transition has committed to put in place a precise timetable to reduce the share of nuclear power in the energy mix. The announced objective is a 50% decrease in the share of nuclear power in the French electricity mix. This schedule will predict which reactors will close.

This measure is part of the multi-year programming that Nicolas Hulot wants to develop. Nuclear power is at the center of the multi-year energy program, which the government is due to present a preliminary draft in July.

As a reminder, this preliminary project was the subject of a public consultation with around a hundred meetings and around 8,000 participants.

## FOREST – WORRYING DISAPPEARANCE OF AFRICAN BAOBABS



The baobabs of Africa have not only an environmental value but also a mythological value. In order to protect them, UNESCO has declared some baobabs as World Heritage. This is the case with the avenue of baobabs of Madagascar. The baobab is also considered a "sacred tree" in the vast majority of African cultures because of its therapeutic virtues and the close attachment that

people have with it.

However, last June, Adrian Patrut, a researcher specializing in baobabs, issued an alarming call for the blinding disappearance of baobabs in Africa. According to him, in twelve years, nine of the thirteen older baobabs will die. Thus, the largest and oldest baobab in Zimbabwe, of 2450 years old, is dead. The exact causes of this plague are not yet scientifically established. However, the researchers believe that this ecological incident could be related to global warming.

## GOVERNANCE – LAFARGE: FIRST MULTINATIONAL CHARGED WITH « COMPLICITY OF CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY »

Lafarge cement has been accused of financing terrorism, including groups belonging to the Islamic State organization in order to continue its activity in Syria. The French group, which merged in 2015 with the Swiss Holcim, is suspected of having paid a total of nearly 13 million euros between 2011 and 2015 to jihadist organizations, amounts corresponding to the payment of a "tax" for the free movement of workers and goods and purchases of raw materials including oil to suppliers close to the Islamic State, according to the survey. The company was indicted on June 28, 2018 for "complicity of crimes against humanity" following the investigation. This is an unprecedented situation in the world since it is the first time that a legal person is indicted. After two years of investigation followed by numerous indictments of Lafarge executives, the magistrates decided to hold four charges against the company: « financing a terrorist enterprise », « putting in deliberate danger the life of employees », « violation of an embargo » and « complicity of crimes against humanity ». The magistrates followed the logic advocated by the NGO Sherpa and the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights (ECCHR), which lodged a complaint in June 2017 triggering the opening of the judicial information. Sandra Cossart, director of Sherpa said: « The indictment of Lafarge is a historic step in the fight against the impunity of multinational companies in which Sherpa has been engaged for 17 years. This case must set a precedent for all those companies that fuel armed conflict. Access to justice for thousands of victims of war-torn countries, including Syrian plaintiffs, depends on it ». The NGO now wants to open a compensation fund for all former employees of LCS (Lafarge Cement Syria, a subsidiary of Lafarge in Syria) and their families. However, the Lafargeholcim Group, born of the merger in 2015 of French and Swiss Holcim, subsequently announced that its subsidiary LSA would appeal to the Court of Appeal to challenge "offenses that do not fairly reflect (its) responsibilities."

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The Council of State was seized of an action in excess of power against a prefectural decree.

The applicant asked the High Court to recognize that the prefectural authorization given under the Water Police for the work and reprofiling of a stream violated provisions for the protection of the natural heritage. The latter was taken under the IOTA authorization scheme.

In fact, prior to the introduction of the new environmental authorization regime by Ordinance No. 2017-80 of January 26, 2017, the objective of protecting natural heritage was subject to an independent specific legal regime. It was then necessary to obtain a special derogation under the legislation on the protection of the natural heritage.

The Council of State stated « if the administrative authority competent to issue the authorization under Article L. 214-3 of the Environmental Code was aware, especially in view of the impact study attached to the application for authorization, which should in principle reveal the existence of protected species in the area concerned, of the possible risks to which certain protected species were exposed, and could then alert the petitioner to the need to comply with the legislation on protection of the natural heritage, on the other hand, it could not legally make the granting of the authorization requested under the water policy subject to compliance with this legislation on the protection of the natural heritage ».

The prefect did not have to ensure that the authorized project respected the prohibitions provided for by the law on the protection of the natural heritage.

Acting as the competent authority under the water policy, the prefect therefore did not have to verify that the execution of the authorized facilities, works, works and activities (IOTA) complied with the prohibitions laid down in the legislation on the protection of the natural heritage, contrary to what the Administrative Court of Appeal.



While the European Commission has initiated the review of the Air Quality Monitoring Directive, the French health agency is targeting thirteen new substances that are not regulated. Of these, 1,3 butadiene has been classified as a certain carcinogen for humans since 2012 by IARC (International Agency for Research on Cancer). This gas is emitted by cigarette smoke or motor vehicle exhausts for example. The Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Ecology had asked ANSES to propose a list of new priority pollutants. ANSES has thus benefited from the evolution of knowledge on the toxicity

of substances and their emissions into the atmosphere in order to identify thirteen new pollutants. In the same way, not being the subject of regulation, the very dangerous ultrafine particles are another pollutant proposed by ANSES as being able to be the subject of a surveillance. These ultrafine particles can penetrate the blood or reach the placenta of pregnant women. They are emitted by diesel engines or residential heating. Eleven other pollutants are added to the list: soot carbon, manganese, hydrogen sulphide, acrylonitrile, 1,1,2-trichloroethane, copper, trichlorethylene, vanadium, cobalt, antimony and naphthalene.

 **SEA – SENEGAL'S SEA AND MARINE RESOURCES THREATENED BY OIL EXPLOITATION**



On June 1, 2018, Senegalese parliamentarians passed the law authorizing the President of the Republic to ratify the cooperation agreement between Mauritania and Senegal for the exploitation of the Grande Turue / Ahméyim (GTA) gas field. During his speech at the 3rd National Conference on Sustainable Development, the Prime Minister of Senegal, Mouhamed

Dionne, after recalling the economic importance of this project, recognized the existence of risks due to the drilling and the exploitation of the gas and oil on the ecosystem. These risks include the country's coasts and natural resources. Senegal should sign all the conventions of the International Maritime Organization (IMO). In the future, it is reasonable to hope that the Senegalese authorities will come forward and take precautionary and preventive measures relating to the protection of the marine environment and fishery resources.

 **CLIMATE – A VICTORY FOR CORAL: UNESCO WITHDRAWS THE BELIZE REEF FROM ITS LIST OF ENDANGERED SPECIES**

The Belize Coral Reef, the largest barrier reef system in the northern hemisphere, has been removed from the list of UN World Heritage sites in Danger. Unesco indicated that its heritage committee had voted to remove the reef from its list of threatened sites because it no longer faced an immediate danger of development. « In the last two years, especially last year, the Belize government has made a real difference in transformational change, » said Fanny Douvère, marine program coordinator at the UNESCO World Heritage Center. United Nations officials first cited « the mangrove cutting and over-development » as the main concern when the reef was added to the list of World Heritage in Danger in 2009. They also expressed their concerns about the reef. oil exploration. Since then, the Belize government has imposed a moratorium on oil exploration around the reef and put in place protections for coastal mangrove forests. Experts warned, however, that the long-term danger to the reefs of the climate change world remains real. « The main threats are still there, » said John Bruno, marine ecologist at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The main, of course, is the warming of the ocean. If most of the world's coral reefs die, as scientists increasingly fear, some of the richest and most colorful life in the ocean could be lost, as well as the revenue generated by reef tourism. In the poorest countries, lives are at stake: hundreds of millions of people derive their protein mainly from reef fish, and a reduction in this food supply could become a humanitarian crisis.