

# PRESS'ENVIRONNEMENT

## HEADLINE – GLYPHOSATE CASE, MONSANTO WAS CONDEMNED FOR THE FIRST TIME

On August 10, 2018, US justice sentenced US giant Monsanto to \$ 289.2 million in damages for the dangerousness of its glyphosate-based Roundup that would cause the cancer of the plaintiff Dewayne Johnson, a Californian gardener. The judges considered that Monsanto had acted maliciously. After years of "fighting" against Monsanto on the true impact of glyphosate use on human health, this is a case law that can influence the five thousand similar procedures in the United States against Monsanto. Monsanto reacted directly to the announcement of the verdict, announcing a probable continuation of the case on appeal supporting the non-dangerous nature of its product.

## NATURAL DISASTER – EARTHQUAKE IN INDONESIA

Nature continues to scare us. Indeed, on August 5, Indonesia was, once again, hit in the heart by a powerful earthquake. Indonesia is located on the Pacific Ring of Fire, making it a land of quakes. Compared to France, in the Pyrenees (the most seismogenic region), the tectonic plates move an average of two millimeters a year, in Indonesia and its many islands, the movement reaches six centimeters in one year.

Fifteen days before, an earthquake had caused the deaths of many people. Now, the human toll is 90 dead and more than 200 injured.

## ENVIRONMENT – BALANCE IN LAOS AFTER THE BREAK OF THE DAM



In Laos there are dozens of dams under construction mostly financed by China. Such constructions are motivated by the supply of electricity that can generate from 2019, 90% to be exported to Thailand. These constructions have been singled out by environmental organizations, which endanger the development of fauna and flora while local populations depend on them.

One of the dams broke on a tributary of the Mekong in Attapeu province, five billion cubic meters of water spilled. The consequences are appalling for Laos, there are 31 bodies found, 130 still missing. And this finding provided by the local media would actually be well below reality. The houses were destroyed, nearly 6000 people had to flee.

While the country relies almost exclusively on the export of hydroelectric power, which makes it a significant source of revenue. Now, this is causing a huge environmental and human disaster.

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT – CHILE IS THE FIRST LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRY THAT PROHIBITS THE USE OF PLASTIC BAGS IN TRADE

A law prohibiting the use of plastic bags in commerce has just been adopted in Chile. The adoption of this law makes Chile the first country in Latin America and the seventy-first country in the world to take this measure which aims to reduce the pollution produced by the 10 million plastic bags that are used every minute in the world. However the law includes a derogation of 6 months: a maximum of two plastic bags can be given to customers at each checkout. At the end of these 6 months of exemption, the ban will be total and applicable to supermarkets, pharmacies and other department stores. An additional 18 months has been granted to local shops. In addition, it is expected that a fine of \$ 370 will be imposed on all those who do not respect what was established by law. According to the government, it is produced in Chile each year a total of 3200 million plastic bags. When announcing this law, the Chilean president said that "a plastic bag is produced in one second, it is used less than 30 minutes, which represents the journey from the supermarket to the home, and after it takes 400 years to biodegrade. 90% of bags end up in landfills or in the sea where they are eaten by birds or fish.

**Judgment of the European Commission Case C-205/17 Commission / Spain**

In this case, the European Commission notes that Spain does not comply with Directive 91/271 / EEC of 21 May 1991 concerning urban waste water treatment. Indeed, it provides that if an agglomeration has a "population equivalent" greater than 15,000, ie the pollution produced each day by a resident, then it must provide for a system for the recovery and treatment of water urban and industrial. Member States had until 31 December 2000 to comply with it.

In 2010, the Commission has already brought an action against Spain against the Court of Justice. By judgment dated April 14, 2011 the court of justice considered that Spain failed to fulfill its obligations for a majority of agglomerations.

In 2017, the commission renews its appeal against Spain before the court of justice considering that Spain has still not applied the decision. Indeed, seventeen of its forty-three agglomerations do not respect this obligation. Consequently, it requires, among other things, the payment of a penalty payment of € 171,217 per day of delay and a lump sum of € 19,303 per day of delay between the date pronounced and the judgment of 2011.

The court granted the commission's request that Spain failed to comply with the directive or the previous judgment for the collection and treatment of waste water from seventeen of its agglomerations. It considers that this failure has considerable repercussions on the environment and Spain's legal and economic difficulties can not exempt it from its obligations. The particularly long-lasting loss of 19 years since the implementation of the Directive in 2000 accentuates its responsibility.

Spain is therefore condemned to pay the European Union a lump sum of 12 million euros and a penalty of 10 950 000 euros per semester late.

The management of radioactive waste is still the source of the nuclear energy problems. According to a report on the French fuel cycle delivered to the Minister of the ecological transition, Nicolas Hulot on July 17, 2018, it is mentioned that about 13,770 tons of used fuel were stored awaiting reprocessing. By 2030, storage pools will be saturated. EDF has a project to build a new centralized pool to remedy the fuel storage capacity.

Of 1200 tons of fuels charged to reactors each year, only 120 tons are MOX (Mixed Oxides of Plutonium and Depleted Uranium) fuels, which means a low recycling rate of 1%.

 **PESTICIDES – TRUMP TO WITHDRAW RESTRICTION ON PESTICIDES KILLER OF BEES**



President Trump's government has recently rescinded the ban on pesticide use linked to declining bee populations, a ban that was introduced by Obama two years ago. In addition, it also put an end to the ban on planting GMOs such as corn or soybeans in US nature reserves.

According to scientists, these pesticides would also threaten other pollinating insects and be harmful to the environment. However, Fish and Wildlife Service vice-president Greg Sheehan is reassuring, saying that these genetically modified organisms will help improve crop yields, and pesticides may be needed for some farming practices. In addition, it also states that their use will be treated on a case by case basis.

 **TRANSPORT – ALERT IN ITALY: EXPLOSION OF A TANKER TRUCK**

On Monday, August 6, early afternoon, a tanker truck exploded on the ring road of Bologna, in the northeast of Italy, causing a huge fire. The accident left at least one person dead and 68 injured, several of them in serious condition, according to the prefecture. Most of the injured are burned or have been hit by broken debris or shattered windows in the neighborhood. Firefighters took almost two hours to extinguish the fire, which spread.

The explosion occurred near Borgo Panigale neighborhood, near the airport. The tank truck carrying flammable material would have collided with other vehicles. This is not the first truck explosion carrying flammable products, as an accident occurred in Austria near the Slovakian border last year. The explosion caused one death and 18 injuries and caused disruptions in supply also to Croatia. It occurred at the Baumgarten terminal, and was followed by a fire that was quickly brought under control.