

CLIMATE JUSTICE: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS FOR FRANCE

The almost universal nature of the Paris Agreement must not hide the persistent gap between the States' commitments and the effort to be made between now and 2030 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in order that keeping global warming to well below 2°C remains a possibility.

Even limited to 2°C, global warming will have consequences which our society will have to adapt to. There is a real risk that the inequalities, between those with the means to adapt and those without, will increase.

The aim of climate justice is to do everything possible to stop global warming from increasing these inequalities. It came across as a key theme during the opening of COP 21. As a strong claim which has been coming from civil society on an international scale since 2003, it is also used ahead of negotiations by political leaders of developing countries.

The ESEC (Economic, Social and Environmental Council) supports the fight against all forms of inequality. The opinion aims to contribute via its proposals to public policies which will help to limit, and if possible, to reduce

social and economic inequalities caused by global warming on a national level.



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The ESEC's recommendations:

- **In order to support a climate justice strategy, principles related to environmental protection, and economics and instruments of social justice must be taken as a basis.**

Minimal access to basic resources must be provided to the poorest people. The adjustment rate used in public economic decision-making must be changed in order to better take the interests of future generations into consideration.

- **The principles of equality and solidarity are the basis of social justice. Within the context of climate change, it is important to develop an integrated approach to fundamental rights consistent with protecting ecological balance.**

The fight against poverty must incorporate the policies for mitigating climate change and for adaptation. They must be evaluated with regard to their advantages for 20% of the poorest people.

- **Faced with the risk of increasing inequalities linked to global warming, efforts must be made in the territories and for research.**

The second phase of the National Plan for Adaptation to Climate Change (PNACC) should be to continue with the creation of annual reports on climate in France in the 21st century, as carried out between 2011 and 2015. The development of climate services, which will play a key role in strategies for adaptation and risk prevention, along with research on the trajectories of territories' vulnerability (incorporating social criteria for exposure) must be supported.

Overseas regions and *départements* must be encouraged to fully exercise powers in favour of environmental protection. The ESEC recommends implementing funds for climate justice geared towards supporting the resilience of territories.

The specific conditions in overseas France means tailored and innovative solutions must be used which take into consideration the diversity of the populations and statuses.

- 👉 **The IPCC (International Panel on Climate Change) highlights that climate change can indirectly increase the risk of violent conflicts.**

The ESEC recommends that the potential destabilising effect of climate change be subject to studies which are specific to each territory, and supports the proposed appointment of a special representative for climate security.
- 👉 **International investment is a key factor for development which can weigh heavily in the implementation of environmental policies.**

A significant part of these investments should be geared towards the most vulnerable populations. The ESEC recommends that France support a definition of investment which incorporates the principles of "climate justice" and policies fighting climate change.
- 👉 **The ESEC encourages the emergence of innovative adaptation tools and the development of public policies for climate justice.**

The ESEC recommends that the State review the socio-economic valuation guidelines for investment projects which it applies to its financing, by supplementing the calculation of an internal, global rate of return with an analysis of the redistributive effects regarding the most disadvantaged and by setting an adjustment rate which better takes into account the interests of future generations.
- 👉 **At this stage, a social planning mechanism for carbon taxation is not anticipated.**

The ESEC hopes that carbon taxation can be planned socially.
- 👉 **In view of the damages which will result from climatic events, insurance has a vital role to play.**

The ESEC considers that the need to prepare for the reform of the cover for climate risks is now urgent in general to maintain national solidarity and allow the poorest people to access insurance.
- 👉 **In all cases and in all countries, exposure and vulnerability vary depending on inequalities. A number of diseases are emerging and are likely to evolve with climate change.**

It is due to the link between climate and health that climate justice must develop in France: mitigating climate change is an opportunity to improve health worldwide and boost human development.

The ESEC advises incorporating aims for reducing environmental inequalities related to health into regional plans for health and the environment by introducing a global warming dimension.
- 👉 **The supply of housing, the residential area and town planning are the source of a number of inequalities, but they are tools which can also help ensure greater justice.**

The ESEC recommends promoting new reasoning for town planning incorporating the links between town planning and mobility, looking to optimise travel methods, relying on principles related to urban consolidation, polycentrism and social and functional diversity.

In overseas territories, the ESEC advises developing scalable social housing, continuing with housing development interventions and bringing about short or local procedures to help access housing at a lower cost.
- 👉 **Climate justice aims to incorporate objectives relating to gender equality from a perspective of vulnerability, exposure to risks and representation during decision-making.**

With regard to the "natural" disasters' assessment, the collection of disaggregated data by gender, which is vital for understanding the vulnerabilities of each gender in different contexts, must be generalised. Studies on gender vulnerability must be carried out, taking into consideration the realities in different territories and a more significant risk culture in overseas France.