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Annual report to Parliament on implementing France's Environment Round Table commitments

Ressources, territoires, habitats et logement
Énergie et climat
Prévention des risques
Développement durable
Infrastructures, transports et mer

**Présent
pour
l'avenir**



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Program Law relative to implementation of the Environment Round Table commitments

Article 1

"The State will report to Parliament on the implementation of the commitments undertaken by the Environment Round Table in an annual report to be submitted by 10 October at the latest, as well as on the impact on public finances, local taxes and compulsory deductions relative to the principle of maintaining stable tax pressure on private individuals and businesses."

Article 31

"The report mentioned in Article 1 will include a specific study on the impact on the agricultural sector of the measures contained in this Act."

Introduction

Immediately following his election in May 2007, the French President, based on the observation that France was in the midst of a major climate and ecological crisis, decided that any action to be taken should be defined by society as a whole, since the objective was to mobilise everyone, immediately and in the long term.

France's Environment Round Table was ground-breaking in several ways:

- All sectors of civil society were invited to take part in this project, aimed at defining a shared vision and a strategic plan to improve environmental protection. Discussions were held between five panels, all the same size, designed to represent the different stakeholders in environmental issues. As was to be expected in dealing with such a subject, these included the State, local authorities and business; the involvement of a "trade union" panel made it possible to introduce a social dimension to the discussions in a more systematic fashion, while the fifth panel, made up of environment protection associations, was, for the first time ever in this type of forum; given an equal footing as the other panels. This configuration enabled environmental issues to be tackled within the framework of a sustainable development approach, since it meant that representatives of each of the mainstays of sustainable development were involved.
- The scope of the discussions was particularly broad,, encompassing all the different environmental issues as well as public policy, for instance, on energy, transport, building and agriculture, each considered from the angle of its environmental impact. The discussions were structured according to 6 main themes: fighting climate change and managing energy demand, protecting biodiversity and natural resources, developing a healthy environment, adopting sustainable production and consumption behaviour, constructing an ecologically-responsible democracy, promoting ecologically-responsible development methods that boost competitiveness and create jobs.
- No documentation was drawn up prior to the discussions, thereby ensuring that any proposals put forward by the players were their own;
- The various national and local players had only five months, including August, to examine all the problems raised and reach a consensus, a particularly short amount of time.

The work carried out by the six workgroups demonstrated that all the panels shared the same desire to take action to deal with the increasingly urgent environmental challenges. By the summer of 2007, these six workgroups, within the "5-panel governance" model, had drafted several hundred proposals. A large-scale consultation then followed: Nineteen regional meetings involving nearly 17,000 participants, 2 Internet forums, generating 11,000 contributions, two debates in Parliament and referral to 31 advisory bodies. The level of media attention and public interest in the entire process was exceptional. The four Round Table discussions that followed, held on 24, 25 and 26 October 2007 and chaired by the Minister of State, enabled the five panels to reach agreement on 268 commitments which were all endorsed by the French President.

Finally, in December 2007, the Minister of State set up 34 operational committees, each led by a Member of Parliament or recognised expert, tasked with proposing concrete action to implement the commitments. Most of the studies were completed by May 2008, opening the way to the "Parliamentary stage".

1 - Mobilising all the stakeholders

1.1 - Legislative texts resulting from the Environment Round Table

1.1.1 - *"Grenelle 1": Law on implementation of the Environment Round Table commitments*

To transmit the conclusions of civil society players to the Senate and the National Assembly for debate, the Minister of State decided to present a Program Law to Parliament, known as the "Grenelle 1" Act (First Environment Round Table Act), which sets out the Environment Round Table's commitments, with different wording, as appropriate to a legislative text.

In-depth debate was pursued from October 2008 to July 2009: 3,290 amendments were proposed, 689 of which were adopted. Following two readings in each House, on 21 October 2008 and 17 June 2009 before the National Assembly, and on 10 February and 1 July 2009 before the Senate, all resulting in a practically unanimous vote, the Program Law relative to implementation of the Environment Round Table was eventually adopted by Parliament on 23 July 2009 and was enacted on 3 August 2009 (published in France's *Journal Officiel* on 5 August 2009).

The Senate and the National Assembly ultimately confirmed the major commitments made by

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