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CONTRIBUTION "THE 5G OR THE 5 GUARANTEES NECESSARY TO HUMAN PROGRESS".

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Contribute to citizen reflection so that technological progress is a contribution to the human race.

At the beginning of October, the auctions that divided the distribution of the frequency lots of the new cell phone technology among the four main telecom operators in France were completed, and they should bring in nearly 2.8 billion euros for the French State. In the meantime, **moratoriums called for by elected officials and voted by several left-wing communities and municipalities have expressed a strong democratic demand for debates on the consequences of this 5G deployment**, its possible benefits or its harmful disadvantages. While **the government has decided to rush ahead, ignoring the opinion of its own Citizens' Climate Commission**, which also favours the moratorium, this legitimate demand is calling for answers.

Because it is **not too late to slow down the pace and formulate a framework for the eventual deployment of this technology** that gives rise to such understandable apprehension, **the Socialist Party and its allies wish to contribute to citizen reflection**. We want to do this not only in the name of a **precautionary principle that the socialists have been calling for months and which the government and the President of the Republic seem to deny with caricatured postures**, but also because, as social democrats and social ecologists, **our vocation is to think about progress, to work to ensure that technological progress is a contribution for the human being and not a dehumanizing constraint**.

To launch this debate, which will take place over the next few months, the questions we will ask ourselves about 5G will be those of the **following 5 Guarantees: industrial competitiveness and its gains on growth, security and its corollary of sovereignty, health and assurances on the impact of electromagnetic waves and dependence on screens, defense of the environment and the reduction of energy consumption, quality of life and the treatment of social and territorial inequalities**.

1. Industrial competitiveness and its gains on growth

The government boasts the promise of an industrial revolution after the full implementation of 5G, projected over a decade from 2025. Thanks to this technology, a network of networks that will connect us with objects thanks to its ability to manage massive flows of information and process them almost in real time, the government expects to generate significant productivity gains that will generate dynamic growth. We will have to be careful not to fall into the blind faith of such a promise, especially in the name of a lag that France would otherwise fall behind its competitors. For it should be remembered that the last real period of growth following the development of the Internet dates back to the decade 1995-2005. Let's bear in mind that the appearance of 4G on the markets between 2009 and 2011 has above all transformed our lifestyles, consumption and transformation. It is therefore also a societal issue, just as much as 5G should evoke its impact on employment, especially (highly) qualified and non-relocatable, instead of suggesting growth and profits that are not necessarily redistributive.

2. Security and its corollary of sovereignty

The security of broadcast data is a challenge that is not new to 5G, but it is going to be even more of a challenge in the future, firstly because this technology will download and broadcast ten times faster than today. Secondly, and for the first time, the mastery of the whole spectrum of this technology will not be Western (meaning American), or even Japanese or South Korean as was the case with 4G, but Chinese domination. The Sino-American trade war is thus largely motivated by the technological distance that Beijing has taken over Washington in the decade that is coming to an end. In this context, aggravated by a state-owned and predatory industry, 5G puts China in a position of industrial power in cyber threat and cyber espionage, which the Europeans have already suffered from China, but also from Russia and the United States. The challenge facing Europeans is therefore that of its digital sovereignty. On the commercial level, in the face of the competitive aggressiveness of the GAFAMs and the exploitation they make of personal data, this sovereignty should first be applied through the implementation of net neutrality, enshrined in September by the Court of Justice of the European Union. Then, following the example of what is currently underway in the European defense industry, member states could launch an integrated European 5G infrastructure for the security of our institutions and businesses as well as for the protection of consumers, citizens and democracies. In the meantime, their divergent positions on China and 5G deployment illustrate the magnitude of the challenge for Brussels that our European political family faces.

3. Health and insurance on the impact of electromagnetic waves and dependence on screens

Health concerns are the main concerns of citizens, and these are twofold. Firstly, on the impact of electromagnetic waves, the government is trying to reassure by relying on the scientific consensus that there is no health effect from exposure to bandwidths between 3.4 and 3.8 gigahertz (GHz), which are initially assigned to 5G (and which make it primarily a 4G+). Exposure at this wave level is nevertheless still a matter of debate for pregnant women, children or chronic long-term exposure. But if the report of the National Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health Safety (Anses) is expected in early 2021 on these issues in particular, it is mainly to address concerns about exposure to frequencies in

the 26 GHz band expected in 2023, then beyond 60 GHz. Nevertheless, there are still many uncertainties, and the assertion of the International Agency for Research on Cancer, which classifies radio frequencies between 30 kilohertz and 300 GHz as "possible carcinogens for humans", maintains the anxiety. **The other potential danger, the impact of which is beginning to be observed, particularly in the United States, is that of the duration of exposure or even dependence on screens,** which could even increase with 5G. Not measurable at this stage, it is time to **think urgently about measures to prevent and encourage digital sobriety.**

4. Protecting the environment and reducing energy consumption

The ecological impact of the likely energy over-consumption of a network of connected objects is minimized by the government. However, despite efforts such as those of the still minority *Green IT* movement to decarbonize as much as possible, for example, the **consumption of data centers** (cf. recycling of emitted heat), the **energy performance of software**, the **production of equipment and its recycling** (including components made from rare earths) or **individual education in the ecological uses of the Internet**, the world is seeing that the **technology, information and communications sector (ICT) has now surpassed that of civil aviation in terms of greenhouse gas emissions.** This rate rose from 2.5% to 3.7% between 2013 and 2018 for ICTs, when it was 2.5% for civil aviation, and this year 2020 should naturally further unbalance this difference. Currently estimated at between 200 and 500 trillion dollars per year (3% of global production), **the electricity consumption of ICTs is expected to reach 200 to 3,000 billion kilowatt hours in 2030**, the imprecision of this estimate being the difficulty in obtaining official data from data centers. **Over-consumption of data via music and video streaming and Cloud computing storage are the biggest causes of this ever-increasing power consumption. So it's more a question of the development of digital uses rather than 4G or 5G.** However, the latter does run the risk of further electricity over-consumption through the connection of objects. **Nor can the environmental issue of digital technology avoid the extraction of rare earths**, which can no longer be separated from the bad governance and exploitation of human beings that often characterize it.

5. quality of life and the treatment of social and territorial inequalities

Finally, **the digital territorial divide is a reality that in many ways can make the rush to 5G futile.** There are still many territories where even making a call is difficult due to a lack of fiber network coverage, or those territories that have only just been equipped with 4G. **The relatively low price of 5G frequencies sold at auction in France** (compared to the astronomical sums of money in Italy, for example) can be **explained in part precisely by the need for operators to meet their investment obligations** in order to cover all territories. **But the "white zones" are a reality that contributes strongly to the social and economic downgrading of its inhabitants**, as we are told by the Yellow Vests, for example. **So let's imagine telemedicine accessible in medical deserts.** This should be one of the results of 4G or 5G networks effective everywhere. However, **operators have their investment requirements that meet profit expectations**, which are limited if the number of inhabitants is small. Faced with this observation and this fear that the digital divide is growing, we will have to **think about the deployment of 5G with our elected officials as a lever for regional planning.** But there is also an underestimated form of the digital divide, revealed in particular during this spring's confinement period. This is **illiteracy, which,**

according to INSEE, currently affects 17% of the French population, including many young people born with digital technology. While the dematerialization of all public services is scheduled for 2022, **the issue of illiteracy is not only a worrying problem for the elderly, but also for young people who have only experienced the recreational use of digital technology** without ever acquiring the skills for professional use or integration. **5G has therefore the potential to impose itself as a factor aggravating social inequalities.**

Conclusion

In conclusion, **this contribution aims to open the debate not only on whether or not 5G should be deployed, but also on the meaning of progress, on what digital technology does or does not bring to the emancipation of the individual, to society and to future prospects.** It is out of the question to accept a technological leap that would endanger the health of individuals, further deepen social, economic and territorial inequalities, weaken France or Europe by making them more dependent on another power, or accelerate global warming. Faced with a government and a president who seem to be betting only on hypothetical profits, **it is time for the social and ecological left to correct their project to put it at the service of a more secure and demanding future.**

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Hélène Conway-Mouret, Senator for French citizens living outside France, former Minister in charge of French citizens living abroad, former Vice-President of the Senate. National Secretary of the Socialist Party in charge of the protection of the French people and the Nation. Director of the international sector of the Jean Jaurès Foundation.

Jean-François Debat, National Secretary of the Socialist Party in charge of the ecological transition, Mayor of Bourg en Bresse.

Corinne Narassiguin, National Office, National Secretary in charge of Coordination and Party Resources

Christophe Clergeau, Regional Councillor for Pays de la Loire, National Secretary for Europe

Fatima Yadani, National Office, Deputy National Secretary in charge of Federations

Vincent Duchossoy, National Secretary for Labor and Social Dialogue. Municipal Councillor of Déville-lès-Rouen

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