

*The Socialist, Ecologist, and Republican Group in the Senate  
in the face of the crisis :*

**New tools to ecologically reconvert our modes of production and consumption, revitalize democracy and promote well-being together.**

**A crisis that calls for profound changes to respond to social and ecological emergencies**

The health crisis of 2020 and the related social and economic crises are one of the most serious peacetime crises we have experienced since the inter-war period.

They highlight the shortcomings of our growth model, and call for a break with the illusion that regulation is left to the laws of the market alone. The economic consequences, particularly on employment, are already forcing governments to break with budgetary orthodoxy and in Europe to relax the convergence criteria of the Maastricht Treaty and the Stability and Growth Pact. This situation is reminiscent of the financial crisis of 2007-2008, which necessitated vigorous economic stimulus plans.

**Greening finance and reorienting it towards the financing of the real economy are prerequisites for the ecological conversion of our economy.**

Money, like other basic necessities, is a common good.

This Covid 19 crisis is in fact a much deeper and more global crisis than a simple sanitary crisis, which should invite us to rethink globally our way of production. **Its roots are ecological** (endangerment of biodiversity, disappearance of animal and plant species...) and reveal the loss of resilience of our economy and society. It would be illusory to believe that a few green stimulus plans alone can be sufficient to ecologically reconvert our production and consumption patterns. Just as it would be illusory to expect recovery plans to succeed in building dikes against massive job losses. This is already being measured by the numerous social plans that are multiplying. Some companies that have been violently affected by the crisis are trying by all means to reduce their costs and rationalize their production tools. In this context of economic crisis, the ecological reconversion of their mode of production is not the priority, and this can be easily understood. However, it is necessary to avoid employment becoming the adjustment variable.

**We consider that it is the responsibility of public authorities to respond to ecological and social emergencies through public aid conditionality mechanisms (eco-conditionality, preventive employment management, social reconversion and training policies...) and public macro-decisions giving impetus to green investments and social emergency measures (which includes a low-wage grenelle, particularly for professions whose great social utility has been highlighted by the crisis).**

It seems equally important to us to reexamine the income gaps in the distribution of the wealth created. On the one hand, the income gaps are therefore constantly widening, and on the other hand, a

part of the profits feed the shareholders' dividends. Against a backdrop of financial globalization and the domination of shareholder capitalism, dividends paid are reaching record levels: in 2019, more than 60 billion euros were redistributed by the major CAC 40 groups to shareholders, including 49.2 billion in the form of dividends.

*In the end*, social inequalities have deepened against a backdrop of the weakening of our public services and the calling into question of the social or "welfare" state.

**However, the poorest populations are also the most exposed to the effects of this health crisis and also the most vulnerable to climate change .**

**The ecological response can only be socially inclusive.**

## Rethinking the social and ecological in the same movement

**We believe that the economic, social and ecological must be thought of in the same movement; it means first of all that the social impact of ecological measures must be taken into account and compensated for the modest people.**

**We consider it urgent to put an end to the increasing autonomization of the economy from society.**

Economic interests are at stake. Power and power relations are at stake. They pre-existed the health crisis of the Covid-19.

It can be a question of market power, a power of domination, a power of predation (on nature for example), a power to which one must therefore be able to set limits, to regulate in order to limit its capacity to cause harm. It is necessary to be able to identify those actors whose power is such that they are responsible for the destruction of ecosystems, the erosion of biodiversity, etc. And this undoubtedly amounts to limiting the right to property and the freedom of enterprise in order to preserve the general interest.

**Pointing to the failings of our globalized modes of production and consumption, this global crisis requires much more radical solutions to rethink and ecologically reconvert our economy and society...**

**If we do not measure the extent to which economic and social inequalities have increased in recent years, we would not be equal to the challenges that the safeguarding of our democracy imposes.**

## Responding concretely to the ecological and social emergency

It is a major plan for ecological, socially inclusive reconversion, i.e. one that is also based on a proactive training policy and encourages the emergence of new professions (in the fields of ecology, digital technology, construction, etc.) that we need to develop today.

**We must succeed in this ecological conversion of our modes of production and consumption in order to avoid that the next world returns to its productivist values, its emissions of pollution (greenhouse gases, in particular), an ever-increasing sense of well-being and loss of meaning at work.**

**This approach implies a break with a purely quantitative conception of the wealth of nations evaluated solely in terms of GDP growth, in favor of a qualitative evaluation focused on well-being and collective and individual development.**

Measuring and taking into account the well-being of populations is becoming a "burning obligation".

Indicators of the state of cohesion or decohesion of our society (education, health, safety, housing, in particular) and of environmental sustainability must be particularly mobilized today. They must also allow an evaluation of public policies, which is why we propose to integrate alternative indicators in the impact studies of draft laws.

**We have proposed a more qualitative evaluation of bills by integrating new wealth indicators into impact studies.**

We also propose that the impact study - in its economic, financial, social and environmental aspects - of bills be **carried out by independent and plural public bodies in order to ensure its objectivity.**

We are pleased to note that the Citizens' Climate Convention, set up by the President of the Republic in 2019, is along the same lines.

Among the proposals made public at the end of June 2020, it calls for this type of evaluation: "the very effectiveness of the laws and regulations in force must be open to question, be subject to corrective measures and thus make it possible to achieve the objectives set. We believe that this evaluation is an essential condition for success. **It must be carried out independently of the State but also of all the lobbies and with sufficient means to carry out these missions.**

The Citizens' Convention also favours the implementation of public policy evaluation, but gives priority to environmental assessment. The evaluation of public policies is widely used in some European countries. But it is still not a common practice in France.

However, especially in environmental matters, we believe it is absolutely fundamental to carry out an assessment in order to quantify the impact of the measures taken to meet the objectives set by the Paris Agreement and, failing that, to make them evolve or implement corrective measures".

It thus recommends "the creation of a new body from scratch or building on the existing one in order to evaluate, coordinate the evaluation and monitor the application of public environmental policies at the national and territorial levels".

We believe that the evaluation should also focus on social inequalities; their reduction being the guarantor of our democracy. Their reflection is based on the issue of sustainable development formalized by the report of the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development, a report with the evocative name, if there is one, *Our Common Future*.

The development model must be ecologically and socially inclusive, it must meet the needs of the people *and "especially the basic needs of the poorest"* and guarantee the well-being of present and future generations.

## Directly involve the population in the definition of the good-to be, to live together

In this perspective, we wish to create an independent body for the evaluation of public policies and well-being with the mission of informing Parliament on the consequences of public policies on the well-being of populations and their sustainability.

**The mission of this organization would be to set up a digital participatory platform for new wealth indicators so that citizens can take ownership of alternative indicators to GDP and keep the democratic debate alive.**

To this end, it is still proposed that a citizens' conference on the state of inequality in France be organized every year.

The populations must be, indeed, directly associated to build in a republican way a measure of the wishes concerning well-being in society.

## Evaluate recovery plans

**In this sense, the "green recovery" plans currently being developed and implemented in most European countries should be assessed according to the qualitative changes they are supposed to bring about and not according to the level of economic growth in GDP points they would imply.**

The government has launched several plans to support sectors particularly affected by the crisis (aeronautics, auto-mobile, etc.). It is also in these sectors that the plans to cut jobs are massive.

Taking into account the seriousness of the crisis that these industries are going through, it is necessary to condition aid to ecological reconversion and to maintain employment. Stimulus plans must include these social and ecological dimensions, draw on the potential of new professions, and provide for training and retraining plans for employees.

The government decided on the recovery plans without consulting the French people on their nature or local elected officials. This would undoubtedly have raised questions. For example, should the recovery plan for the automobile sector include support measures for the purchase of internal combustion vehicles?

Can the elimination of certain small airlines be done without rethinking land use planning, reinforcing decentralization, encouraging local employment, reviving territories far from metropolitan areas, deploying clean modes of transport?

Shouldn't the support plans be conditional on the maintenance of jobs, via a plan for the conversion of jobs that have become obsolete or surplus due to the crisis? Similarly, should they not be made conditional on consistent ecological reconversion measures?

## Favouring the next world by subordinating the defence of freedom of enterprise and private property to the defence of the general interest.

In order to build a more ecologically and socially just "next world," we propose that the Constitution be amended to subordinate the defense of entrepreneurial freedom and private property to the defense of the general interest.

The current systems (CSR, SDOs, national commitments of States within the framework of the Paris Agreements, etc.), while they allow for an ecological reorientation of production and consumption patterns, are not enough on their own to ecologically reconvert our society at a time when climate change requires a more radical response. Incentive schemes must be complemented by binding provisions to accelerate the ecological reconversion of our society.

As we point out in our proposal for a constitutional law, various advances have been made, driven in particular by the United Nations - within the framework of the 17 sustainable development objectives, and by the Conferences of the Parties (COPs), or by the implementation of corporate social and environmental responsibility (CSR / *reporting*).

We consider that there is still a lot of effort to be made to respond on a global scale to the needs of sustainable development, respectful of human populations.

In keeping with the very spirit of the proposals of the Citizen's Climate Convention, the draft constitutional law recommends amending Article 1 of the Constitution so that France guarantees the preservation of the environment, biological diversity, climate and other global common goods.

Faced with the increasing artificialization of soils, the intensive use of pesticides that impoverish them and the risks of intensified land speculation that could challenge our national food sovereignty, she proposes to amend the Constitution **to establish a new balance that reconciles freedom of enterprise with soil protection, the sharing of agricultural land and food sovereignty. Finally, it proposes to amend Article 34 of the Constitution to ensure that the exercise of the right to property and the freedom to undertake business respects the general interest.**