

France - rising to the international climate challenge



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Because the climate and energy challenges are without precedent and in order to respond to the warnings issued by scientists, France gives priority support to climate policies and to the two legal instruments for climate action adopted by the international community (the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol).

France has made substantial cuts in its greenhouse gas emissions: **in 2010, with emissions 6.6% below 1990 levels** (for a **Kyoto target** of stabilisation over the 2008-2012 period compared to 1990), with emissions levels at 522.4 MtCO₂eq. France is thus contributing to the commitment made by the European Union and its Member States under the Kyoto Protocol (stabilisation of French emissions and -8% at the European level in 2008-2012 compared to 1990) but also under the EU Climate and Energy Package (-20% in 2020 compared to 1990). Implementing the Kyoto Protocol is only the first phase of a real national low-carbon transition policy, designed to achieve the longer term goal of meeting the climate challenge at the international level. A challenge which requires halving global greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 compared to 1990 in order to **keep global warming under 2°C** by the end of this century. For France, as a developed country, this means achieving a fourfold reduction in its own emissions by 2050, as outlined by law. That is why, following the road map for an ecological transition of September 2012, France will defend at European level **the intermediate reduction targets of -40% by 2030, then -60% by 2040.**

In line with ongoing international climate negotiations, and primarily the recent Durban Accords which determined the **continuity of the Kyoto Protocol in the context of preparing, by 2015, a binding international agreement for all parties as of 2020**, France is fully engaged in these negotiations and **declares itself ready to host the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Climate in late 2015 (COP21/CMP11)**. It wishes to see, ultimately, the signature of an ambitious and legally binding international agreement. In parallel, France has undertaken numerous policy and economic activities that strengthen the climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts, at international, European, national and local levels.



The climate challenge: a priority in France

Climate change action has been a priority for the French government since the early 1990s, and French climate change policy has been continually strengthened ever since. This priority was reaffirmed in the undertakings made at the Grenelle Environment Round Table and the ecological transition road map which resulted from the Environmental Conference of September 2012. Its policies and measures – the Climate Plan – are designed to enable France to comply with its undertakings on climate:

- ▶ stabilisation of its greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels over the 2008-2012 period under the Kyoto Protocol;
- ▶ at European Community level, implementation of the revised Directive on the European Emissions Trading Scheme (EU-ETS) and achievement of the French target of a 14% cut in emissions from sectors not covered by the Directive during the 2005-2020 period.

The adoption of the EU Climate and Energy Package was a priority for France during its European Union presidency (second half of 2008). The Package is designed to help achieve a 20% cut in greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 to 2020, a 20% share of renewable energies in final energy consumption in the EU by 2020 and a 20% improvement in energy efficiency.

France is also in favour of raising the EU target for emissions cuts to 30% if ambitious targets are put forward by the principal emissions producers. Regarding these objectives, it will propose, if necessary, at the European level to revive the idea of introducing a carbon inclusion mechanism for the sectors which are most exposed to international competition, with the aim of strengthening the prevention of carbon leakage.

France is already a low-carbon country

France is responsible for only one percent of worldwide greenhouse gas emissions although it accounts for 4% of global GDP (Gross Domestic Product). It is among the industrialised countries with the lowest greenhouse gas emissions, both per capita and in terms of emissions per GDP unit, particularly thanks to an energy mix that relies primarily on nuclear power and proactive policies to reduce emissions. From 1990 to 2010, the greenhouse gas emissions covered by the Kyoto protocol dropped by 6.6% to 522.4 MtCO₂e. To go further, the Government has undertaken to include sustainable development in all of its policies through the 5 projects of the Environmental Conference (14-15 September 2012).



Environmental Conference

Climate/energy and Energy Transition projects

- ▶ Mobilisation around energy transition based on the principle of energy efficiency and priority to renewable energies.
- ▶ Thermal renovation of housing (upgrading one million housing units per year to energy standards) thanks to new financing (doubling the maximum limit of two savings accounts and using the greenhouse gas emissions quota auctioning product); setting up one stop shops for the thermal renovation of housing; development of third-party investment.
- ▶ Diversification of energy production and supply sources (reducing the portion of nuclear energy in electricity production to 50% by 2050 (compared to 75% today) and increased use of renewable energies; call for tenders for the wind, solar, heating networks, biomass and geothermal energy; potentiality study of sea-based energy industries).
- ▶ Public investment bank: priority for action on ecological conversion of the production system.
- ▶ Strengthen awareness among students and communication campaign.
- ▶ Sustainable mobility: increase public transport and continue reducing the CO₂/km emission of vehicles (2 litres of petrol per 100 km).



A driving role in international negotiations

France engaged in the post-2012 negotiations at an early stage. The adoption of the Climate and Energy Package in 2008, under the French presidency of the European Union, provided proof by example that an entire geographical area, with different economic situations, energy mixes and potentials can set ambitious targets and policies to combat climate change.

As of 2009, France and the European Union had also taken up a strong position in favour of an ambitious and well-balanced agreement compatible with the +2 °C warming target, which would build on the main Kyoto Protocol achievements and include quantified and binding targets as well as targets for sectors not covered by the Protocol (such as forests, aviation and maritime transport).

The European Union's strong involvement in these multilateral negotiations enabled it in 2011, following the conferences of Copenhagen and Cancun, to play a pivotal role in Durban, and to be behind the main compromise obtained and the centre of a wide alliance for the collective ambition. Beyond the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol which was decided on, a negotiation process was launched towards a global agreement for 2015, which will include all the countries in the world. Milestones will have to be set in late 2012 in Doha in order for this process to be a success in 2015.

For 2012, France also believes it is essential to implement the decisions made at the conferences in Cancun and Durban. In particular so that the instruments provided for by these decisions are brought into effect (monitoring and review system, Green Fund, a mechanism on technologies, cooperation on adaptation, action

against deforestation, etc.) to promote practical action in developed and developing countries. The Doha Conference should also serve to formally adopt the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol. Raising funds through innovative financing mechanisms, to reach the target of US\$100 billion/year by 2020, is also a specific challenge to be addressed in connection with the work of the G20 on climate financing, which progressed under the French Presidency in 2011. Finally, France is maintaining the objective of raising, in the short-term, the overall level of ambition, which is presently too low to bring the international community on track to keep global warming below +2°C.

Solidarity-based support for project mechanisms

In order to contribute to sustainable development in the South, France encourages implementation of the Kyoto Protocol project mechanisms and facilitates financing for climate change mitigation projects in these countries. France has approved 107 projects under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and authorised participation in a further 14. These 121 projects represent about 17 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent avoided per year during the Kyoto accounting period. France has also approved 3 projects under Joint Implementation (JI) and authorisation to participate in a further 9, which together represent 2.4 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent avoided per year during the Kyoto period. In addition, the French government encourages businesses to participate in these mechanisms, since they in turn promote their adoption by developing and emerging countries through technology transfers in particular

A second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol

As the end of the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol was approaching, the Durban Conference in late 2011 helped maintain what has so far been the only legally binding multilateral framework to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The final compromise was inspired by the European Union, which linked the continuation of its commitment under Kyoto to the adoption of a road map for a global agreement.

France, together with the European Union, undertook to take part in the second commitment period of the Kyoto protocol as of 1 January 2013. In April 2012, the European Union, despite the low portion its emissions represent at the global level (barely more than 10%), was the first to communicate its reduction target (quantified emissions limitation and reduction objective of 20%) for the second commitment period.

During the Doha Conference, France and the European Union will work towards operational solutions so that the Parties might agree to make the amendments to the Protocol immediately applicable until they formally enter into effect, thereby ensuring the continuity of the commitments and mechanisms during this transition period towards a global framework for post-2020.



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Substantial financial means for partner countries

France's international action on climate change now absorbs a substantial share of its overall official development assistance effort, in terms of volume and exchanges of knowhow. Its bilateral commitments have steadily increased to a total of 7 million Euros in financing linked to combating climate change over the last three years. France has also strengthened its commitments to the major multilateral financing agencies, in particular through the 5th replenishment, in 2010, of the Global Environment Facility with €215 million, and its \$500 million contribution to the Clean Technology Fund.

Finally, France has undertaken to raise €1.26 billion in 2010-2012 (€420 million per year) for the "fast-start" financing mechanism agreed to in Copenhagen, in the context of the European Union's commitment of €7.2 billion. France will be achieving that commitment as it has raised €420 million per year in fast-start financing for the last three years, of which 78% is at the bilateral level. France also raised additional resources for action against deforestation, by earmarking €30 million from its contributions to the GEF (Global Environment Fund) for the REDD+/sustainable forest management programme and by increasing the resources of the FGEF (French Global Environment Facility) with the aim of supporting an initial objective of targeting 20% of fast-start financing to forests.

At the national level, as announced by the President of France at the UNGA in September 2012, France will allocate 10% of the revenue on its financial transaction tax to financing development aid, particularly in the areas health and climate change.

Adaptation to climate change

Action by the French State in this area began with the creation, in 2001, of a national observatory on climate change effects, with an explicit mission on adaptation to climate change, followed by the adoption in 2006 of a national adaptation strategy. Interministerial work between 2007 and 2009 then quantified the costs of climate change impacts in France. In 2010, national consultations were organised with a view to developing a national climate change adaptation plan, with 200 recommendations formulated. Based on these, the government presented the first national climate change adaptation plan in July 2011. It is made up of 84 activities for the 2011-2015 period. They are geared in particular to saving and optimising water use, developing knowledge and strengthening monitoring systems on emerging diseases, developing appropriate planning policies and preventing forest fires. Finally, on the strength of its geographical diversity and its commitments, France also backs the implementation of adaptation measures in developing countries, from creating reliable meteorological and climate databases to carrying out concrete projects.

For more information

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