

# GELD EN DEMOCRATIE

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9 nov 2020 Reporterre, onafhankelijke franse krant.

Gaat het goed in Frankrijk met de politieke uitvoering van de aanbevelingen van het klimaatburgerberaad. <https://reporterre.net/Face-a-Macron-les-citoyens-de-la-Convention-pour-le-climat-se-rebiffent> Hieronder de engelse vertaling

Anger is rising among the citizens of the Climate Convention. Only to "face the lobbies," disappointed that many of their proposals have been retooled or unraveled, some are getting tired, others are going to the front.

Promises only commit those who believe in them. The same is true of Emmanuel Macron's commitments. How far away the time seems to be when the President of the Republic was speaking, with enthusiasm, in the gardens of the Elysée Palace about the climate emergency and the "unfiltered" adoption of 146 of the 149 measures of the Citizens' Convention. "I want all your proposals to be implemented as quickly as possible. Let's go ! Let's take action!" he said to the loud applause of the citizens, who cheered him on, and at little cost, to restore his green credentials.

Four months later, however, the road traveled is limited and borders on immobility. The examination of the bill dedicated to the Citizens' Convention has been postponed to next year instead of this fall.

The idea of a referendum to change the constitution has disappeared from the agenda and many proposals have been retooled, unravelled or rejected.

Time is running out and opportunities are being lost. The recovery plan and the finance bill could have put the Convention's measures into practice, but that is not the case.

"The proposals of the Convention have been watered down to the maximum: only the packaging remains, without the content," Greenpeace said. "The majority has emptied the citizens' ambition of its substance," the Climate Action Network regrets. "Smoking", "blabla politics", "undermining work"... The associations compete with each other in formulas to criticize "the ecological resignation of the government. On Thursday, October 15, NVA-COP21 activists

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even plunged portraits of the President of the Republic into the Seine to show that "his promises were taking water. "**Macron is adrift. "His commitments are drowning.**

- A ban on advertising for polluting products? Drowned.
- The reduction of VAT for the train? Cast.
- The suppression of climatic tax niches ? Casting.
- Taxation on nitrogen fertilizers ? Casting.
- The obligation to renovate private housing by 2024 ? Casting.
- The moratorium on 5G ? Casting and citizens treated as "Amish". -
- The ecotax on air traffic ? Casting. "This would have deleterious impacts," said Jean-Baptiste Djebbari, Secretary of State for Transport and former business aviation pilot.
- The car weight malus, for its part, has been largely watered down. The vicissitudes surrounding this proposal give an idea of the government's approach. After initially refusing it, it reduced it to a communication element by opting for a cheap and dilatory measure. Originally, the Convention demanded a malus from 1,400 kg, the government pushed it back to 1,800 kg - or 2% of the cars concerned instead of 26%. Of the twenty best-selling SUVs, none weigh that much. Moreover, the measure will not be applied until 2022. Worse, to compensate for it, the government has also reduced the CO2 malus at the same time.

"The government is openly laughing in our face". In short, it never stops raining "jokers". Recently, Bercy implied having 25 of them, much more than the three initially mentioned by the President of the Republic in June. The government proudly announces that it has "totally or partially" implemented fifty of the Convention's proposals. In reality, this enumeration concerns few emblematic measures and most of them have been sanitized. For example, the moratorium on commercial zones has been transformed into a simple circular sent to prefects to recommend that they do not artificialize agricultural land. Nor does it take into account the e-commerce sheds, contrary to what Barbara Pompili had announced.

Another illustration: the government wants to ban air flights when there is an alternative by train of less than two and a half hours. The Convention proposed four hours. A nuance that is not at all

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anecdotal.

The car weight penalty has been largely watered down. Faced with this harmful climate, the citizens of the Convention decided to get out of the woods, torn between a feeling of anxiety and a form of mistrust. A wind of rebellion is rising. In recent weeks, the malaise has become more and more palpable. "We have lost the course, we don't know where we are going anymore. I feel like we're at a dead end," says Amandine Roggeman, a 26-year-old Parisian. "I'm suspicious and on my guard. It's my way of avoiding falling into a kind of emotional yo-yo where one day you're promised something and the next day the opposite," says Matthieu Sanchez, territorial agent in Seine-et-Marne. "We are not fooled, alert, finally, the Breton Yolande Bouin. We are not going to let the government unravel our measures in silence. "Exasperated by the prevarication of power, will the citizens of the Convention end up revolting? Will the creature escape its master?

There are some signals to that effect. On October 14, a dozen citizens from all over the country demonstrated in front of the National Assembly. They denounced nothing less than "treason. Yolande Bouin, who arrived early in the morning from Douarnenez (Brittany) was more angry than ever. In front of an audience of journalists and photographers, she declared:

The government is openly laughing at us. I have the feeling that I participated in a big scam to green the President of the Republic and save him time. There are still four to five million euros that have been spent in there! »

One of his acolytes, Isabelle Robichon, said she felt "taken for a stooge". Pierre Ruscassie, another citizen, regretted "this series of small steps in denial. A week earlier, the majority deputies had in fact voted in favor of the law that re-authorized the neonicotinoids and the Asap law, which violently attacked environmental law.

It's a mess," Matthieu Sanchez told Reporterre. Right now, it's like fireworks. We don't know where to put our heads. Between the little phrases of certain ministers and laws that go against the direction of ecology, we can no longer work serenely. »

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**In mid-October, the association of the 150, which brings together 130 citizens of the Convention, sent a letter to Emmanuel Macron asking him to reaffirm his commitment.**

"We feel that we lack a clear and definite support from the executive, whose positions sometimes seem contradictory," they wrote.

We cannot continue to defend our measures when we are struggling to find in the government's actions the general ambition of an effective ecological transition. »

The President of the Republic responded immediately. His letter did not reassure them. After congratulating them for their work, he warned them that "some of the measures needed adjustments [...] Sometimes they require a different timeframe. ...] Sometimes, for the same objective, different solutions may emerge. »

**"We're on the front line facing the lobbies."** The context is becoming complicated and our room for manoeuvre is quite narrow," admits Mélanie C. a member of the Convention. We're not politicians who are well versed in the exercise. A year ago, most citizens didn't even know what a finance bill was! And now we find ourselves in the front line, in the middle of the arena, talking with the government, facing the media and the lobbies, when that was not our original mandate. We just had to agree among ourselves, the 150 of us, to find consensual and transformative measures. »

**Since the work was handed over to the Head of State last June, the members of the Convention have a new mission. They continue to work - on a voluntary basis - to monitor the application of their measures and participate in the development of the future law.** "In the beginning, we were very proud. That rewarded our seriousness," says Amandine Roggeman. But, in fact, I was quickly overcome with anxiety. Sitting around the table is never neutral. We took some hits. »

During the debates, the association 40 million motorists, for example, mocked the "extremist ecological elucubrations" of the citizens. Christiane Lambert, president of the agricultural union FNSEA, also criticized "their lack of knowledge of agricultural problems. "I tell myself that they are not the ones who wrote their

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proposals because they have such difficulty answering our questions," she told the press after the National Council of Ecological Transition, September 1.

**"Our margin of maneuver is quite narrow,"** admits Mélanie C. a member of the Convention. The situation leaves citizens perplexed. We are being sent to the front, while it is up to the government to assume its responsibilities," sighs William Aucant. For us, it is out of the question to debate our measures again. We simply want to explain them to all the actors," he says. It's not an easy task. "La France en grand" is much more confrontational than "miniature France" drawn by lot...

"We're coming at a time when citizens are going to come to reassert themselves. The strategy deployed by the government is clever," analyzes Yolande Bouin. While the spotlight is on 150 Gugguses, the executive short-circuits the intermediate bodies. We find ourselves the only interlocutors on the subject and the environmental associations are completely marginalized. It's absurd! We would like the doors of the ministries to be reopened to the militants; they know much more about the climate than we do! »

The citizen regrets "the lack of counter-power and vigilance to monitor the actions of the executive. **The balance of power is unbalanced.**" The communication is first made by the government," she stressed. In the media, the small sentences of ministers are more often highlighted than the words of citizens. The tribunes of their guarantors, Cyril Dion or Laurence Tubiana, who are increasingly critical of the government, are struggling to restore the advantage. Their political backers, such as Matthew Orphan or Eric Piolle, are also struggling to regain their advantage.

We're tired," concedes Grégoire Fraty, the former president of the association of 150, "This experience, as enriching as it is, has been going on for more than a year. We all have jobs on the side, a family life, it's complicated to add in the evenings and weekends of meetings and readings," he says. It's nice to be in the gilded, but at the end of the month that's not what fills the fridge. »

**Citizens have no legal status**, no legal existence. A fragility that several jurists such as Arnaud Gossement had already pointed out.

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"It would be necessary to create a status of the engaged citizen", thinks Grégoire Fraty. In the meantime, citizens are waiting. "For the moment, we are not boycotting and we are not turning the table upside down, but we would like a speech of clarity, truth and frankness," admits the citizen.

Muriel Raulic, a member of the Citizens' Convention, supported the proposal for a law prohibiting low cuts. According to him, "we are coming to a time when citizens will come to assert themselves". Each one with its own sensitivity and its own relationship to power. Some have even gone into politics, such as William Aucant and Mélanie Cosnier, who for the regional elections joined the left and ecologists' rallying list in the Pays de Loire region, along with former LRM deputy Matthieu Orphelin. Others have decided to openly support environmental associations. On Thursday, October 22, Agnès Catoire came to testify at the trial of the Portrait Dropouts in Paris. This summer, Muriel Raulic also supported the bill banning clear-cutting, brought forward by the Canopée association and the unsubdued French deputy Mathilde Panot.

The future of the Convention will also be played out at the local level. Citizens are multiplying conferences in the territories. They have received financial support from several local authorities. The Convention is spreading. New municipalities want to try the experiment on the scale of their conurbation. We're moving out of the Elysée gardens and the hushed corridors of the ministries into concrete action, which is positive," says Matthieu Sanchez. It is positive," says Matthieu Sanchez. "We are making this democratic experience live outside the framework that was previously set for it. We see that society is mature and ready for change. »

The outcome of the Citizens' Convention is no less uncertain. "The stakes are still decisive," recalls William Aucant. "Our measures are the basis if we want to drive the ecological transition," he says. "If the government refuses to do so, we're heading for disaster. Not only will we not save the climate, but we will also discredit any new initiative of this type. After that, I don't see what will be left for us to make ourselves heard as citizens. It risks fuelling mistrust of politics. »