



10 Minutes For The Planet The Presidential Debate... so Little About Environmental Issues! ©

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Les syllabes accentuées sont en gras et soulignées*

Hello everyone and welcome to this week's **episode** of 10 Minutes for the Planet.

The five most **popular candidates** for May's **presidential** elections met for a **televised debate** together, for the first time on March 20th. The debate saw François Fillon **representing** The **Republicans**, the **Socialist** Benoît Hamon, Marine Le Pen from the **National** Front, Emmanuel Macron and Jean-Luc Mélenchon. What is **astounding** **however**, is that during those three and a half hours for the debate, less than ten minutes were **dedicated** to **environmental** issues.

Three of the candidates did **mention** environmental issues in their introduction. They were Mélenchon, Hamon and Macron. Macron simply **alluded** to **climate** and environmental change as one of the **current threats** faced by our country. Mélenchon **referred** to himself as the **ecologist** candidate needed to **meet the challenge** of our current environmental issues; and Hamon invited our nation to take more care of the world we are leaving to our children.

Only Hamon and Mélenchon spoke briefly about the matter of climate **refugees**, when the discussion moved into the larger issue of refugees. Hamon referred to the threat of an **exponential increase** of climate refugees, saying they could reach a full **billion**. Mélenchon wanted to act fast and take a **collective approach** in dealing with **consequences** of climate change: and his new 6th Constitution would **include** a "green law" that would **forbid** taking more from nature than it can **provide**.

astounding (adj.) stupéfiant

current (adj.) actuel

threat (n.) menace

**to meet the challenge (met-
met)** (exp .) relever le défi

**to forbid (forbade-
forbidden)** (vb.) interdire,
empêcher

to provide (vb.) fournir

In other words, if you are a **regular** here at Ten Minutes for the Planet, he would like to push back **Earth Overshoot Day** to December 31st. He also **declared** that he would like to **transition** away from **chemical**-led **agriculture** towards smaller and more **sustainable** systems.

Hamon, for his part, **accused** Macron of **potentially catering to** his rich **supporters** from the **pharmaceutical**, chemical and **oil industries**, who are **usually** the last **defenders** of the **environment**. He mentioned the pressing issue of **endocrine disruptors**, as well as **diesel** legislations, that kill tens of thousands each year. Hamon made clear he would **advocate** strong state actions to fight against **atmospheric** pollution and other health factors linked to the way industry is currently **run**.

One of the main **historical political** disagreements in France is where **nuclear energy** is **concerned**. Are you for it? Against it? It is quite a **dividing** factor in the French **opinion** and a **deal-breaker** for a **considerable** number of voters. The question made up most of the ten short minutes **relegated** to environmental issues. Hamon and Mélenchon are **set on** closing all **nuclear power plants** at the end of their life cycle, which represents almost half of all French nuclear power plants, **requiring** an **estimated** 100 billion euros to **extend** their life-cycle. However, this kind of **investment** could go **instead** towards a **renewable** energy transition, according to both left-wing candidates, and would be an investment that would also **create** more jobs.

In Fillon's opinion, transitioning out of nuclear energy is clearly against public and **economic interest**, while Macron was very careful on the issue, supporting a low-**carbon footprint** nuclear plan, while **reducing** our **dependence**.

A couple of other environmental issues were very briefly **introduced** from the **liberal** candidate Macron and the **protectionist** candidate Le Pen, such as diesel legislation, but this was **discussed** from an economic point of view. Macron would like to stop regulating prices **differently** between diesel and **petrol**, while Le Pen **castigated** him for **disadvantaging** the middle class and asking for more state regulation.

Earth Overshoot Day (n.)
jour du dépassement de la Terre, jour où nous commençons à vivre au-dessus de nos moyens écologiques

to transition (vb.) passer

sustainable (adj.) durable

to cater to (vb.) satisfaire

oil (adj.) pétrolière

endocrine disruptor (n.)
perturbateur endocrinien

to advocate (vb.) prôner,
être partisan de

to run (ran-run) (vb.) diriger

deal-breaker (n.) obstacle,
élément rédhibitoire

set on doing (adj.) résolu à
faire

nuclear power plant (n.)
centrale nucléaire

to require (vb.) exiger,
réclamer

carbon footprint (n.)
empreinte carbone

petrol (n.) essence

to castigate (vb.) blâmer,
reprocher

In the end, there were no surprises. In French **politics**, the environment has always largely been a left-wing concern. The right would like to continue as we've always done, looking towards **fostering** growth. It looks like Emmanuel Macron also follows this option. And finally, for the extreme-right, these are yet **further arguments** to support the need to run the country with a **nationalistic** approach.

to foster (vb.) promouvoir, encourager

further (adj.) supplémentaire

In the next episode of 10 Minutes for the Planet we'll start looking a bit deeper into the candidates' approach to environmental issues. Have a good week!

* Aide à la prononciation

Les adjectifs dont la dernière syllabe est – **tial**
ou les adverbes qui se terminent par – **tially**
sont accentués sur la syllabe qui précède – **tial(ly)**:

exponential, **potentially**, **presidential**