



10 Minutes For The Planet

Zoom on Energy and the Presidential Candidates©

by Valentine Rinner

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

Last week we analysed the first presidential TV debate from an environmental perspective. Today we'll dive right into our presidential candidates' environmental programs. We'll start with the most debated issue: nuclear energy and prospects for energy transition.

75% of all energy produced in France comes from one of our 19 nuclear plants and over 50 reactors. Behind the United States and ahead of Russia, France is the second most nuclear energy producing country worldwide. France is ranked first in terms of the nuclear energy percentage of our total energy production. France also ranks first worldwide in terms of electricity exported, which amounts to 15% of our national production. We also have the lowest prices in Europe.

Our electricity exports add up to 2 billion euros per year. However, our global energy import/export balance drops way down to the negatives, due to the annual 50 billion euros from fossil fuels import: made up mainly of petrol, gas and coal.

Candidate François Fillon believes it would be economical suicide to get out of nuclear and clearly against public interest. Instead he would like to modernise the French nuclear systems and increase their life span. This investment would represent 100 billion euros in the next five years.

Fillon's proposal aligns with Marine Le Pen's. However, Le Pen also supports massive investments in all renewables, except in wind; while Fillon only promises "favourable conditions" and a 30€ per ton carbon tax.

For Benoît Hamon and Jean-Luc Mélenchon, a 100 billion euro nuclear renovation could go instead towards the renewable energies and create more innovative jobs. Both candidates are set on closing the entirety of French nuclear plants. Like candidate Philippe Poutou, Hamon has a nuclear-free objective for 2050. Before 2025 he would like renewables to represent 50% of our energy consumption, and he also believes in encouraging a strong decrease in our energy consumption.

Mélenchon has called on government to stop fossil fuel subsidies and to be more transparent when it comes to nuclear waste management, which is a very opaque

subject today. He is concerned about the health aspect of transitioning to a transparent renewable energy production, as well as consumption.

Candidate Emmanuel Macron insists on closing the much discussed Fessenheim power plant but only when the new Flamanville nuclear waste management plant opens. Macron has chosen to focus his discourse on decreasing carbon emitting energy sources. As nuclear power has low carbon emissions, it is not a priority. He is set to close coal factories and also to forbid shale gas exploration. With Macron, the carbon tax would rise to 100€ per ton before 2050. He also favours a 30-billion private investment plan in sustainable energy sources before 2022. Mélenchon doesn't agree here, as he believes in opposing the privatisation of energy production.

Candidate Jean Lasalle also opposes privatisation, as he believes in decentralisation and giving back power and autonomy to local municipalities. In that respect, he aligns with Hamon and Mélenchon on actively transitioning towards more local and sustainable energy productions.

Some candidates such as Jacques Cheminade, François Asselineau and Nicolas Dupont-Aignan are completely against transitioning out of nuclear power and support large investment in nuclear research and candidate Nathalie Arthaud has yet to express strong opinions on environmental issues.

That's the end of our first episode examining our presidential candidates' environmental programs! See you next week with another look at the candidates.