



ENVIRONMENT

So-called Green Housing ©

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Retrouvez la traduction de certains mots à droite du texte

Les syllabes accentuées sont en gras et soulignées*

Hello everyone and welcome to this week's **episode** of 10 Minutes for the Planet, today we'll take a closer look at eco-construction.

In **urban** and peri-urban France a large **majority** of new construction **projects** may have "eco" or "green" **labels** or certifications. It's rare to find new **residences** or **apartment complexes** without at least **patches of** grass or a few trees. Green housing seems like a **positive** marketing message today.

Being a resident in one of these new constructions, it's **obvious** that for the promoter, the "eco" trend is little more than marketing, as they have managed to make a **reasonably**-sized garden **unappealing**. It's not **ugly**, but it's not **welcoming** for a sunny **hang-out** with a book or an **impromptu** discussion with a neighbour. And I **suspect** they did that **on purpose** maybe to perhaps **keep down** the noise or keep **maintenance** as low as possible.

My **point**, **however**, is that today you can build so-called "green" **certified** buildings just by checking a few **arbitrary** boxes on a list: mainly green patches and lower **energy consumption**. **Granted**, this is already an **improvement** on the **terrible** buildings we **inherited** from the 1970s, however it's **essentially** "**green washing**": meaning it's something being sold at a much higher price because of a feigned **environmental** friendliness. The clear majority of "green" buildings today are built with **materials** that are highly **polluting** and non-**recyclable** and the **industry** itself **generates** tens of millions of kilograms of **waste** each year. These

patch of (n.) carré de

obvious (adj.) évident

unappealing (adj.) peu attrayant

ugly (adj.) laid

hang-out (n.) moment de détente

on purpose (exp.) exprès, volontairement

to keep down (kept-kept) (vb.) maintenir à un bas niveau

point (n.) ce qu'on veut dire

consumption (n.) consommation

granted (adv.) d'accord

green washing (n.) écoblanchiment, mascarade écologique

waste (n.) déchets

materials and the logic behind most “green” construction projects are very far from **actual** environmental **concerns**.

However, in the **recent** years in France, we have **noticed** a growing trend in a **different** type of eco-construction. **Individuals**, **cooperatives** and small local **companies** are bringing back long forgotten building **techniques**. These techniques **consist** in using local materials, mainly **straw**, **mud** and wood. It might not sound 100% appealing at first but in fact, these materials have many surprising **advantages** that **industrial means** are far from **achieving**.

Straw **bales** packed inside walls serve as an **ideal** thermal and **humidity insulator**. Mud and wood serve to build **solid** multi-level **structures**, floors, walls and **ceilings**. These materials are so much more **efficient** that it is said you only need to **maintain** an inside heat of around 14 or 15 degrees to feel **comfortable**, compared to the 20 or 21 degrees **required** for a **concrete** house. This difference is due mainly to the natural regulation of humidity by porous walls and the heat they **absorb**. Low humidity also has the advantage of keeping the materials from **rotting**, which is a **recurrent** problem with **cement** for example.

These natural materials are also cheaper, locally **available**, and 100% non-polluting and recyclable. So why aren't they more **commonly** used? Mainly because these sort of construction projects require more **manpower**. That's why cooperative construction projects are becoming so **popular**, as an **exchange process** between individual **constructors** or organisations are set in place, allowing **seekers** to receive help, teaching and learning new techniques. If you hear about one of these projects, go spend a sunny Spring day: they're loads of fun and very **empowering** in terms of **skills**.

Bye everyone and see you next week for a new episode of 10 Minutes for the Planet.

actual (adj.) réel, véritable

concern (n.) souci, préoccupation

straw (n.) paille

mud (n.) boue

means (n.) moyens

to achieve (vb.) accomplir, atteindre

bale (n.) ballot, balle

insulator (n.) isolant

ceiling (n.) plafond

concrete (n.) béton

to rot (vb.) pourrir

seeker (n.) celui qui le demande

empowering (adj.) valorisant

skill (n.) compétence

* Aide à la prononciation

Les noms se terminant par **-ity** sont accentués sur l'antépénultième, c'est-à-dire la troisième syllabe en partant de la fin du mot :

diversity, humidity, majority