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French Council of State rules against government for inaction on climate

Climate Justice

The French Council of State has just ruled against the French government for climate inaction in a landmark legal case, initiated by Greens/EFA MEP Damien Carême. This historic ruling forces the French state to take, within a period of nine months, "all useful measures to curb the curve of greenhouse gas emissions produced on the national territory in order to ensure its compatibility with the objectives" of the country. The French State has not managed to prove that its trajectory of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 40% by 2030 can be reached.

In November 2018, Greens/EFA Group MEP Damien Carême, as then mayor of Grande-Synthe, filed a lawsuit against the French state for climate inaction. The town of 23,000 inhabitants is directly threatened by climate change and risks being submerged by the sea within 30 years. A few months later, the Affaire du Siècle (composed of four NGOs: Notre affaire à tous, the Nicolas Hulot Foundation, Greenpeace France and Oxfam France), the city of Grenoble and the city of Paris joined Carême in this action.

Damien Carême, Greens/EFA MEP and former Mayor of Grande-Synthe, comments:

"This ruling by the Council of State is historic: For the first time in France, the judiciary forces the state to act for climate. This ruling should sound the death knell for political cynicism and inaction on climate change. No one is fooled any more and we welcome similar legal actions in other EU countries. France is behind on its climate objectives. We are paying the price for the government's wait-and-see attitude. This criminal behaviour has finally been recognized in court."

"The courts have ruled in favour of all those who stand up to the inaction of governments in the face of the climate challenge. At a time when the European Commission is about to propose a revision of the legislation related to climate action in its fit for 2030 package, this ruling should give the Commission pause to think on how it must come out with proposals that are fit for the challenges ahead. Time is of the essence. After having wasted the opportunity for real action on CAP reform and the Climate Law, the EU institutions will have to catch up in the race against time to slow down climate change."

More:

The latest annual report of the High Council for the Climate shows once again that France is behind in its objectives. According to the HCC, France must double the rate of reduction of its greenhouse gas emissions, to reach at least a 3% decrease by 2021. In early 2020, the French government chose to lower

its reduction target from 2.3% per year to just 1.5%, although knowing that this is insufficient to comply with the Paris Agreement. The French government's Climate and Resilience Law has also been highlighted for its lack of ambition.

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