

FRANCE'S 2015 ENERGY TRANSITION LAW:

SYNTHESIS

**Ambitious objectives,
disappointing implementation
to date**

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Eight months after the passing of the Act on energy transition for green growth on 17 August 2015 and leading up to the Environmental Congress at the end of April 2016, the working group of La Fabrique Ecologique, set up to follow the drafting and introduction of this law, published a new note which seeks to take stock, on the one hand and with hindsight, of the usefulness of this text and its key provisions and, on the other hand, of the difficulties involved in its application.

Although this law falls very short of covering the entire field of climate action, it still provides a major tool. Its implementation is all the more important in that it takes place several weeks after COP21, which was a global success, and in that France, which presided the event, should be setting an example by applying the measures which it itself proposed.

This text is also implemented in a context marked — in particular in economic terms — by a very sharp drop in the price of hydrocarbons. Although it may benefit economic agents in industrialised countries, this change reduces incentives to minimise the use of this energy source, thus further complicating the energy transition. In order to deal with this, a renewed determination is essential in order to take action as soon as possible. The balance drawn up in this note shows the following key points:

- 1) The scope of the text of law requires numerous implementing decrees. Some have been published and others will be announced in coming weeks. However, 77 % of them still have not been published, in particular those relating to the most organisational matters. In the current context, it is imperative to make up for lost time, in particular in order to avoid the risk of these important provisions actually being abandoned;
- 2) The absence of a decree relating to multiannual energy programming — the cornerstone of energy transition — is a major problem. Following several reports, it was announced for 1 July 2016, but under conditions (decision schedule, existence of scenarios) which cast doubt on the truly operational nature of its contents. We need to get past this situation, at the risk of leading to inefficient economic choices which are inconsistent with climate and environmental goals. It is important for the various players in energy transition — including members of parliament, who are first in line — to increase the number of initiatives to deal with this situation. Only an explicit and transparent view of the future will allow all players in the energy field, including the main operators, to schedule their activities and their decisions with satisfactory economic conditions;
- 3) The translation of the relatively consensual objectives of the law into concrete measures meets opposition in reality. The main one is the strategy to be implemented in order to reach the energy mix goals, in particular as regards electricity and the growth of the number of nuclear reactors. Multiannual energy programming should respect the targets set, for example by planning, at least for the first period from here to 2023, a simple mechanism for adapting the useful life of certain nuclear reactors in accordance with set targets for increasing power, energy savings and renewable energies.

