

2005-2008 METROPOLIS ACTION PLAN

Commission Eco-Regions

Presidency: Île-de-France, Regional Council
Michel VAMPOUILLE - Vice-chairman with responsibility for
the environment, sustainable development and the Eco-Region

Secretariat: ARENE (to be validated)
Île-de-France Regional Agency for the Environment and New
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Vice-Presidency:

Since the 1992 Earth Summit, international organisations have called on local authorities .to implement forward-looking sustainable development plans in the context of Agendas 21.

But it has to be said that although Agendas 21 are of value in redirecting public policy for the region concerned they are insufficient for taking account of the region's interactions with zones located beyond administrative boundaries, particularly in the case .of metropolitan regions.

Certain indicators enable broader consideration of the issue: this is true of the " ecological footprint" which enables calculation of the "footprint" of the region's inhabitants rather than that of the region itself. Such indicators make it possible to more clearly understand the consequences of a given lifestyle including for outlying regions.

Moreover, administrative divisions can hinder implementation of a policy aimed at taking full account of sustainable development. This is particularly the case for the Paris metropolis which is divided into 100 municipalities and 4 departments in the most densely populated part of the agglomeration, and 8 departments in total, grouped within a region which has minimal control over environmental matters, economic development or social policy, etc. The problem is compounded by the French tradition of centralisation which means that most major infrastructures are designed in accordance with the notion of convergence towards the capital. By way of example, the Île-de-France region imports 95% of its electricity from other French regions while 95% of medium-and long-haul outgoing flights from France leave from Île-de-France.

This scenario of a metropolitan region which causes imbalance within its own economic basin and even beyond due to its methods of development, consumption, and production

can be observed in all metropolitan regions albeit on different scales. This finding lies behind the lie de France regional council's concept of the eco-region, which might be defined as a package of policies which a metropolitan region implements to promote sustainable development policies within the limits of its own economic basin together with interregional or decentralised cooperation initiatives beyond these boundaries to counter an existing imbalance and open up the way to a new kind of equilibrium. This approach can be summed up as an attempt to create a pleasant living environment for all residents but with minimal impact on the planet.

Faced with the growing urban sprawl, public policy must therefore endeavour to use land in a way which protects the diversity of open spaces, limits the artificialisation of environments and maintains biodiversity. Moreover, in order to meet public health requirements, public policy must also preserve high quality natural resources, particularly water and air, to the benefit of all residents, wherever they live and whatever their social condition. In addition, the environmental requirement is, in the case of an urban system, also a requirement for a certain global solidarity. City dwellers cannot use up the planet's resources unchecked and must reduce their uptake and cut emissions, particularly with regard to energy and greenhouse gases.

Work programme for 2005-2008

We propose to work on the basis of a wide-ranging examination of the issue by seeking a partnership with UNESCO (MAS programme and University of Columbia / CUBES), on the notion of **urban biosphere reserves** and **eco-regions**.

We propose to illustrate this eco-region concept by means of two concrete projects

- practical work on the interregional tourism policy (**sustainable tourism in** metropolises)
secretariat: lie de France tourist information centre / Carrousel du Louvre
- practical work on the maintenance and development of **peri-urban agriculture** (problems concerning food supplies to metropolises)
secretariat: department of the environment (DECV) - 35, boulevard des Invalides - 75007 Paris - (0) 1 53 85 56 20

Diary

- May 2005: Approval of the creation of the "eco-region" commission
- October 2005: first meeting of the commission - proposal of a concrete action programme for the next three years
- March 2006: first meetings on the theme of sustainable development
- April 2006: first meetings on the theme of peri-urban agriculture
- March 2007: second meeting of the commission
- 2008: presentation of conclusions and proposals to the 9th world congress