

The Save the Climate Manifesto

*Updated version in 2022 of the original manifesto written by
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on the founding of Save the Climate in 2005*

The concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere of our planet has reached, at the outset of the 21st century, a level higher than at any time in the past million years and the upward trend is not abating. Observed at the beginning of the industrial era, in the 1760s, this increase is due mainly to the accumulation in the atmosphere of human-made carbon dioxide and methane. Repeated warnings and virtuous pledges not followed by action at the level of the ambition have, evidently, not reversed the trend. Despite annual COP conferences, the objectives set out in the Paris agreement are not being met. If nothing is done to stop man-made emissions, the consequences on our health, on biodiversity, agricultural production, sea levels... will be major.

Barring a catastrophic economic recession, global energy consumption will continue to increase. It is thus essential to implement, as often as possible, technologically and scientifically proven techniques that do not rely on fossil fuels (oil, coal, gas). These include solar thermal, geothermal, well-managed biomass and heat pumps for space heating and hot water production; electrification of all sectors where technically and economically achievable.

While it is desirable, and possible, to reduce energy consumption in the developed countries, it is inconceivable to require similar efforts on the part of less advanced countries. Coal, gas and oil are the mainstays of development in these countries, as they have been for us over the past two centuries. So, unless the research that has been ongoing for many years on carbon capture and storage is successful, which is very difficult to predict, these countries will see their carbon dioxide emissions increase. Consequently, developed countries must absolutely restrict their greenhouse gas emissions thanks to modern technologies. It is imperative also that they cut down avoidable consumption and resort in so far as possible to low carbon energy sources. Because of its ability to continuously generate carbon-free, abundant and dispatchable electricity, nuclear power is bound to have an important share in the electricity mix of a number of countries.

The question isn't whether or not to "phase out nuclear power"; the question is how to phase out the current climate-threatening massive use of fossil fuels. Save the Climate calls on leaders, decision-makers, men and women of good will, to support, right now, a resolutely proactive and rational policy to radically reduce human-made emissions of the various greenhouse gases. The main objective is the accelerated replacement of fossil fuels via massive electrification based on low carbon and dispatchable electricity, combined with a constant fight against the squandering to which we were unfortunately accustomed because fossil fuels were abundant and cheap. Only such a policy can reasonably preserve acceptable and predictable climate conditions for our, and future, generations.