

Behold Your Green Future in Detail

France describes what it would take to meet its net-zero climate targets. It will be painful.

By [The Editorial Board](#)



French President Emmanuel Macron Photo: ludovic marin/Agence France-Presse/Getty Images

Europe's leaders can't resist touching the hot (electric) stove again and again. Expensive and invasive policies to tackle climate change scramble one election after another, yet French President Emmanuel Macron thinks his country's latest climate "roadmap" will be more popular?

Maybe or maybe not, but his administration published it anyway. France is subject to the European Union's goal of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, and the government periodically issues plans explaining how the country will get there. The theme this year is that net zero is going to touch every corner of life and then some—and will it ever.

Paris contemplates regulating delivery and return services for e-commerce to ensure carbon compliance, urging consumers instead to repair defective products rather than replacing them. Fancy a *steak frites* or a duck *à l'orange*? Not anymore: Paris will insist you switch to vegetarian *ratatouille* to limit the carbon footprint of your diet.

How the French travel and where they go will have to change too. The roadmap envisions more electric vehicles, stiff penalties for driving older cars, promotion of remote work to cut down on commutes, fewer business trips and vacations abroad, and denser housing.

The French won't be able to escape climate policy even in those denser homes. The net-zero roadmap warns of restrictions on screen sizes and resolutions to limit the energy consumption for televisions and smartphones.

Paris even envisions regulating personal climates. The dream (or nightmare) is for "intelligent building control systems" that limit winter heating to 66 degrees Fahrenheit and summer air conditioning to 78 degrees.

All of this is to be achieved via regulations, subsidies, penalties and taxes, and are these people nuts? The economic and fiscal costs of such policies are proving ruinous wherever they're attempted, and this month the strain crashed Germany's governing coalition. France, with its chronic economic anemia and fiscal bloat, is especially ill-suited to try.

At least the plan is honest. The conceit of the climate left for years has been that cutting carbon emissions is something someone else—preferably a big corporation far away—would do. As Western economies become more carbon-efficient, all the low-hanging fruit of emissions reduction has been plucked. What's left are disruptive and unpleasant intrusions on citizens' standard of living, with no discernible effect on global climate.

It's especially strange that France feels a need to do this. Non-carbon nuclear power is a significant portion of France's electricity production. Why not build more nuclear plants and then let the French watch soccer clips or TikTok videos in peace? You'd almost think the misery is the point for the eco-millennarians.

Voters are rejecting climate asceticism whenever it's tried, most notably in the U.S., where [Donald Trump](#) promised to brush away climate mandates, and perhaps soon in Germany. Mr. Macron is barely managing to govern France as it is after his party got drubbed in legislative elections this summer, and it's hard to think he'd enforce any of the ideas in this roadmap. Good luck if he does.