

Press release – **Embargoed until June 25, 00:01 CET**

Adaptation to climate change: an unprecedented legal appeal filed before the French Council of State by climate victims and the “Case of the Century” organizations

This Wednesday, June 25, a legal appeal was filed before the French Council of State. Brought by 14 co-applicants — climate change victims, their associations, and the Case of the Century organizations (Greenpeace France, Oxfam France, and Notre Affaire à Tous, which have already succeeded in having the State condemned for climate inaction) — the action seeks to compel the French government to strengthen its climate change adaptation policies.



© Case of the Century. 14 co-applicants of the legal appeal filed before the French Council of State: climate victims and the “Case of the Century” organizations (Greenpeace France, Oxfam France, Notre Affaire à Tous)

On April 8 — in what constituted the first stage of the legal proceedings — 14 citizens and civil society organizations called on the government to take urgent action to strengthen France’s adaptation strategies and implement concrete and effective measures to protect the population from climate-related risks. The government had two months to respond. With no reply or commitment to date, the collective of co-applicants is bringing the case before the Council of State, the highest administrative court in France. Together, they are demanding a revision of the National Climate Change Adaptation Plan (PNACC-3). In parallel, they are also calling for a meeting with the President of the Republic and the Prime Minister to initiate a political dialogue — one that is urgently needed in the face of the climate crisis.

The legal action is based on the State’s general obligation to adapt to climate change, as enshrined in the European Climate law and reinforced by constitutional law — particularly

the Environmental Charter — , as well as international law and the caselaw of the Council of Europe. The lawsuit provides a detailed account of the PNACC-3's shortcomings, as well as the failures of related sectoral policies.

Climate change victims at the heart of a first-of-its-kind legal action in the EU

For the first time in the European Union, citizens directly affected by climate change are taking their state to court for failing to adapt to it.

This groundbreaking lawsuit is led by climate victims from across France facing diverse consequences: homes damaged by the shrink-swell of clay soils, limited access to water, extreme heat, floods, and agricultural losses.

Their lived experiences point to serious violations of fundamental rights: the rights to life, health, well-being and quality of life. The co-applicants demand that the State be legally required to implement concrete and ambitious protection and prevention measures — measures that take into account the specific vulnerabilities of certain groups (such as people in precarious situations, those with illnesses or disabilities, and individuals marginalized due to their gender, origin, social class, or age) and certain territories — particularly the overseas territories — which are largely neglected in current climate adaptation policies.

Even as summer has only just begun, an unusual heatwave is already sweeping across much of France. These extreme temperatures are a stark reminder that climate disruption is a pressing reality — and they underscore the urgent need for ambitious and equitable adaptation measures.

Since the April 8 request to the government — which marked the first step in this legal process — three people have died in the Var region due to flash flooding. Meanwhile, the homes of Mohamed and Marie — two of the co-applicants — continue to crack due to the shrink-swell of clay soils. Yet political leaders have still not amended the PNACC-3, which remains non-binding and continues to overlook the social and regional inequalities that amplify the effects of climate change.

The co-applicants speak on behalf of all those suffering from the daily consequences of climate change. They assert their right to live in a country that protects the lives, health, and well-being of its people. As the climate emergency intensifies, this lawsuit serves as a powerful reminder: the State has a duty to act — and if it fails to do so, it must be held accountable in court.

An open letter to the President and the Prime Minister

France has already been found legally liable, under the Case of the Century legal campaign, for failing to meet its climate mitigation commitments. It now faces a new potential ruling for failing to fulfill its obligations on adaptation.

Unfortunately, the legal process does not pause the impacts of climate disruption. In the months and years ahead, droughts, floods, housing damage, coastal erosion, and water shortages will continue to intensify — disrupting lives across the country, even before the Council of State reaches its decision.

That is why the co-applicants are also addressing an open letter to the President and the Prime Minister, published Wednesday, June 25, in *Les Échos*. This initiative does not replace the legal process but highlights the urgent need for immediate political action alongside legal proceedings.

It is time for the executive to listen to the people, recognize the scale of the crisis, and make a decisive shift in climate adaptation policies.

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Notes to editors

Download the [full press kit in English](#) (co-petitioners' profiles, lawsuit details, background on the PNACC-3 and the risks considered).

List of the 14 co-petitioners (Individuals and Associations): Jean-Jacques Bartholome, Salma Chaoui, Marie Le Mélédo, Jean-Raoul Plaussu-Monteil, Jérôme Sergent, Association Nationale des Gens du Voyage Citoyens (represented by William Acker), Association Urgence Maisons Fissurées (represented by Mohamed Benyahia), Ghatt'up (represented by Rania Daki), Locataires Ensemble (represented by Salim Poussin), MIRAMAP (represented by Evelyne Boulongne and Florent Sebban), Mayotte A Soif (represented by Racha Mousdikoudine), Notre Affaire à Tous, Greenpeace France, Oxfam France.

The content of the legal appeal will be available for consultation, upon request, starting June 25.

The organizations behind The Case of the Century—Notre Affaire à Tous, Greenpeace France, and Oxfam France—are key stakeholders in this lawsuit, providing legal support, expertise, and critical visibility to the climate victims and their testimonies.