

TRENDS SHAKER

Newsletter #59

The monthly newsletter for socio-cultural trends

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IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Stopping plastic pollution

It's everywhere. In the soil, in the air, and in the oceans. But also in our mouths and airways: **each week we ingest five grammes of plastic, the equivalent of a bank card. Over the past 50 years, eight billion tonnes of plastic waste have been created on the Earth's surface. Each year, humans generate 350 million tonnes and this figure should triple by 2060, driven by growth in emerging economies.** In light of these observations, on 2 June **175 countries** met in Paris to commence negotiations on the signature of an **international treaty to combat plastic pollution in 2025**. After five days of long talks, the summit ended on a **compromise on the necessity to implement restrictive obligations**.

It also highlighted a clear opposition between two groups: **on one side, countries simply seeking solutions to manage plastic waste, and on the other, countries seeking to reduce both the production and consumption of plastic, develop a circular economy and speed up recycling opportunities.**

In the first group, we find oil producing countries (such as Saudi Arabia), large plastic producers (China) and large consumers (USA). In the second group, we find France alongside many European countries and Japan, who aim to put an end to plastic pollution by 2040.

Sources:

www.lemonde.fr/podcasts - www.usinenouvelle.com - www.lesechos.fr - www.maddyness.com - www.lesechos.fr/weekend - <https://la1ere.francetvinfo.fr> - <https://plasticodyssey.org>

Pending the signature of the treaty, the combat against plastic pollution is active on all fronts. **In France, since 1st January, the Agec act on combating waste for a circular economy) requires commercial food and beverage outlets - which consumed 28 billion single-use wrappers each year - to distribute recyclable cutlery.**

- This is exactly what is proposed by **French start-up Bibak, who invented packaging 2.0 by incorporating RFID chips into its packaging products.** After winning over fast food providers alongside corporate food services providers to CAC 40 companies, **the start-up has just raised six million euros** to introduce its reusable cutlery solution to international markets.
- Elsewhere, **the start-up Novoloop has developed a chemical recycling process which transforms plastic waste into building blocks, sports shoe soles or headphone cables.**
- The transformation of plastic waste is also the focal point of the approach for **Plastic Odyssey. This laboratory ship transforms plastic waste into diesel or chips that can be used to manufacture tiles, furniture or pipelines.** As it travels round the world to the regions worst affected by plastic pollution, **the Plastic Odyssey expedition shares its solutions with local entrepreneurs, organises exhibitions at each stopover and raises the awareness of young people to the search for solutions to enable a plastic-free ocean.**



The cosmetics industry adopts virtual agricultural practices

Sources

www.femina.fr
www.premiumbeautynews.com

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Top French cosmetics brands are increasingly taking action to create production channels that are sustainable and respect biodiversity. For example, **Chanel and the Pierre Fabre group have opted to grow their plants themselves on certified organic plantations offering high environmental value (HEV)**. Other brands such as **Ulé** have opted for **vertical agriculture and ultra-local sources**. The exotic plants used by this firm created by Shiseido are grown at **Tower Farm, a vertical farm located very near to Paris**.

The principle of indoor growing enables the production of plants all year round, but also reduces water consumption by 95% thanks to a closed-loop watering system.

Even if some major brands do not grow their own plants, they still closely monitor their **supply channels**, as is the case with L'Oréal. Others such as Pierre Fabre go as far as **supporting growers in their transition to eco-agriculture**.

According to a study published by Goldman Sachs, **generative AI such as Bard and ChatGPT could automate 25% of all jobs currently existing around the world**. Economists at the US investment bank predict that **AI could replace humans in 46% of administrative tasks, 44% of legal jobs and 37% of architectural and engineering occupations. In total, 300 million jobs could be eliminated by AI in coming years**. The report specified that the effects should be felt more in advanced economies (where there are more white collar personnel than manual workers) than in emerging markets. It nonetheless indicates that **AI could stimulate increased productivity at work and raise global GDP by 7% over a ten-year period**.

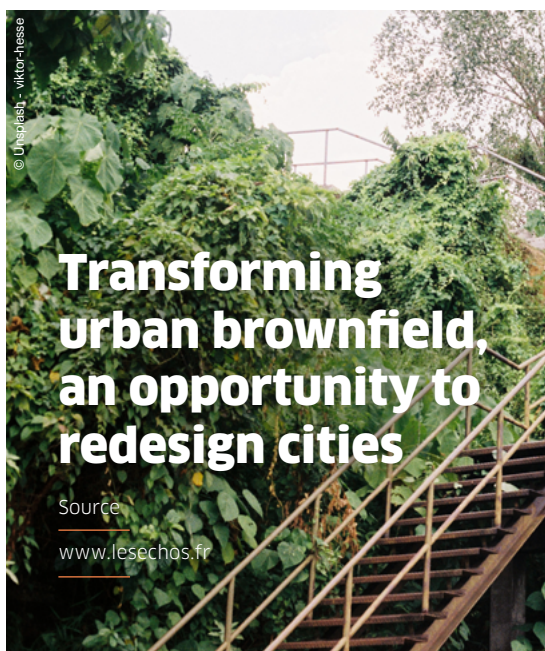


AI is threatening 300 million jobs in the world

Source

<https://intelligence-artificielle.developpez.com>

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Transforming urban brownfield, an opportunity to redesign cities

Source

www.lesechos.fr

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There are 2,675 such places just in the Greater Paris region. **Brownfields are often abandoned and degraded, but they can become places of enjoyment, social relations, cultural or festive events**.

They can also play a role in fighting climate change, by limiting the artificial appropriation of land and by creating genuine havens of biodiversity.

At a time when the French climate and resilience law has set a target of "zero net soil sealing" by 2050, the reconversion of wastelands could make towns and cities more sustainable. But things are not that easy since rehabilitating land can often require costly pollution removal as well as complex legal and administrative formalities. Nonetheless, certain innovative projects have been successful, such as the **Epinau-sur-Seine eco-reserve**, previously a 14,000 m² land reserve that was transformed into a park. **The space is dedicated to preserving and raising awareness on urban biodiversity, and now welcomes 5,000 visitors every year**.

Ending imports of products of deforestation: a challenge for European businesses

Source

<https://www.novethic.fr/>

© Unsplash - NASA

Starting in 2024, the European Union will ban the importation of products grown through deforestation such as cacao, coffee or rubber.

Importers will have to **prove traceability of their products** using crop geolocation data and satellite imagery. This is precisely what **Sourcemap proposes, as it can map sites and regularly monitor that no deforestation occurs using satellite images.** Amongst its customers who have made clear progress in terms of traceability, we can cite **Ferrero which claims that 98% of the palm oil it sources is "certified zero deforestation with 2% remaining under investigation" or Carrefour which is committed to ensuring that 100% of its soya products involve zero deforestation by 2025.** This being said, according to a report by Global Canopy, **40% of the 500 businesses considered the most likely to risk accelerating deforestation have not yet made the required commitments.**

21-year-old Féris Barkat informs youngsters in working-class districts about the climate emergency

Sources

www.novethic.fr
www.planetgrandesecoles.com

© Christoph de Barry / Reporterre

Strasbourg-born Féris Barkat is only 21 but has taken on the mission of **informing suburban youngsters about the issues of the environmental transition.** Instead of pursuing his studies at the London School of Economics (LSE), he decided to co-found the **association Banlieues Climat which organises training courses of 8-10 hours for 16-25 year-olds living in suburban or rural areas.** **Féris Barkat also uses social media to inform his generation about ecology and to combat climate ignorance.** This young man who has successfully gained a following of 50,000 subscribers on TikTok by speaking about the climate emergency tackles a number of assumptions. *"The prevailing view is that the definition of an environmental action forcibly involves reducing consumption, not travelling by plane, etc. But you can't tell someone who has nothing about sobriety, you can't ask them to reduce what they don't have"*, says the young militant, aptly reminding us that **the suburbs are the hardest hit by climate change and heat waves.**

PROFILE OF THE MONTH

Agathe Monpays, chief executive of Leroy Merlin at just 28

Source

<https://start.lesechos.fr>



© Leroy Merlin

An astonishing rise to the top. **At just 28, Agathe Monpays will take the helm of France's largest DIY chain Leroy Merlin.** With a Master II degree in management, marketing and distribution from **IESEG School of Management**, Agathe Monpays owes her rise to her own talent and not to any form of relationship with the Mulliez family (owners of the DIY chain), as has been claimed on social media. On obtaining her degree in September 2016, Agathe joined the Leroy Merlin store in Valenciennes. At the time she was **head of department and for four years supervised the operation of several sections.** In September 2020 she was appointed **manager of the Tourcoing store. Under her leadership, it became "a pioneer of omnichannel transformation"** (namely both the physical and digital presence of the brand). In September 2022, the group dispatched the young mother to **Greece to manage the eight Leroy Merlin stores in the country,** a challenge enabling her to demonstrate all her skills. According to the CEO of Adeo, parent company of Leroy Merlin, Agathe Monpays displays excellent strengths, such as **a sense for business and management, a strength of conviction, a capacity for adaptation and interpersonal qualities.**



Suez, Danone and 30 other companies encourage the voluntary commitment of their employees

Sources

<https://start.lesechos.fr>
<https://www.carenews.com>

At Suez, Danone and 30 other companies, employees can do volunteer activities during their working hours and still get paid. To encourage other businesses to adopt the same, on 7 June these companies launched the **"Mouvement pour des jours d'engagement au travail"** (Movement for volunteer days at work). The movement was initiated by the **start-up Vendredi which developed a platform for employees to find volunteer activities in associations of their choice. Its aim is to get 1,500 businesses on board.** "The urgent need to act to resolve major social environmental issues requires that we **break down the barriers between the world of work and that of the public interest**", insists Felix de Monts, co-founder of Vendredi. The benefits for participant companies are multiple, because **the system improved employee engagement, attracts new talent and gives substance to our CSR commitments.**

BNP Paribas is committed to promoting a more environmentally sound economic growth model, and **has allocated four billion euros to the protection of land and marine biodiversity.** The bank's actions include, **supporting the start-up UGI (Underwater Gardens International), which has developed a solution that can help restore the oceans.** Through an international network of marine scientists, the start-up has **created smart artificial reefs which enable marine life to regenerate and increase local biodiversity.** Approved by UNESCO as a priority project for the **United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030)**, this project will enable UGI to **monetise high-quality carbon credits** in accordance with the **"Carbon Removal Certification Framework"** which should enter into force in the EU by 2025.

BNP Paribas supports ocean regeneration

Source

<https://cib.bnpparibas/>

HR x YOUNG PEOPLE



The Saclay campus, France's Silicon Valley

Source

<https://www.challenges.fr>

It is home to **15% of French public and private sector research, nine "grande écoles", around twenty universities and national research centres, 360 research laboratories, around 70,000 students** as well as **11,000 teachers and research scientists.** Located to the south of Paris, **the Saclay campus is the largest science and technology cluster in France.** Firms present there include **start-ups on the cutting edge of quantum computers, such as Pasqal or Quandela** alongside **large industrial groups such as EDF, Danone and Servier, which have set up their research labs and advertise their expertise to draw the best talent.**

As a driver of technology innovation, **the Saclay campus depends on the proximity of stakeholders to encourage interaction between businesses, students and researchers.**

By encouraging innovation and business growth, the campus aims to compete with California's Silicon Valley, the MIT ecosystem in Boston or Tech City in London.

Two new schools to retrain for the energy and construction sectors

Sources

www.lesechos.fr
<https://madame.lefigaro.fr>



Co-founded in 2021 by **Ariane Komorn**, **La Solive** retrain people seeking new careers in the challenges of energy renovation. The school already operates on three campus locations (Nanterre, Lyon and Nantes), and plans to open another ten sites over the next three years. Aware of the lack of skills in the sector, **the school aims to train 5,000 people a year while expanding its range of courses.** In addition to existing courses **to train as a project manager in energy renovation and heat pump installer**, La Solive will add courses for people to re-train as **maintenance technicians and solar panel installers.**



To offer training in construction, in 2021, **Marie Blaise** established the **École Gustave school**, also intended to offer re-training. The school is located in Saint-Denis and **offers free work/study programmes to train as a plumbing/heating engineer, electrician or roofer.** It intends to open three new sites in Lille, Lyon and Marseille.

As the leading international Chair devoted to the circular economy, the **Global Circular Economy Chair** has introduced its first MOOC to support the deployment of the circular economy across organisations. **This thirty-hour online training course is free to enrol on and available to all, enabling those taking it to have a better grasp of the issues of climate disruption and to apply the principles of a circular economy across businesses and other organisations.** The MOOC was designed by thirty experts from the ESSEC business school and other founding companies of the Chair. It is divided into four modules: **introduction to the circular economy** (and links with biodiversity and climate), **the current state of the circular economy in enterprise value chains**, **the circular economy of the future** (disruptive innovations and new business models), **the circular economy in society** (role of consumers, associations and local authorities).

A new MOOC dedicated to the circular economy

Source

<https://www.acuite.fr>

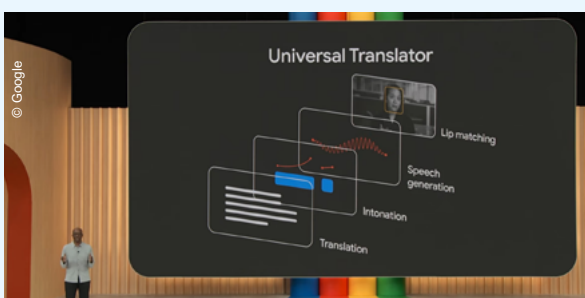
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<https://www.frandroid.com>

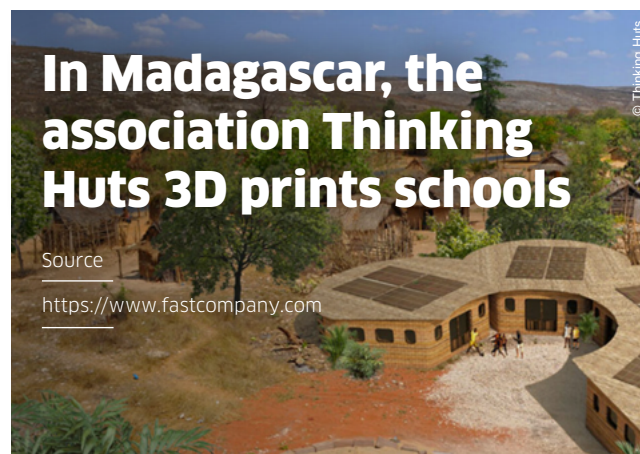
TECH & INNOVATIONS

Google launches Universal Translator, a video dubbing tool



At the I/O convention which brings together developers each year, Google presented a **new system that supposedly revolutionises video dubbing.** **Universal Translator not only translates the audio of a video but can also imitate the voice, tone and facial expressions of the speaker.** It can even synchronise the speaker's lip movements depending on the expressions used in the target language. This **automatic dubbing tool**, which could also be called a **lip sync translator**, is for the time being reserved for a few privileged partners to avoid any malicious use.

The association was created in 2015 by American Maggie Grout. It builds schools using 3D printing to improve access to education. After building its first school in Fianarantsoa last year, **Thinking Huts is preparing to 3D-print another school for 200 children** living in three villages in the south-west part of the island. In time, the **"Honeycomb" school will feature eight huts equipped with solar panels, drinking water, Wifi and toilets. Using 3D printing, the construction of a hut only takes 18 hours and costs around 50,000 dollars** (the aim is to bring it down to 20,000). To rationalise logistics, the association uses **local materials and has introduced training programmes for 3D technicians, thereby creating more local jobs.** The association founder intends to go further and develop 3D-printed schools all over the world.



INTERNATIONAL



Deserted shops, vacant offices, real estate in crisis... the cradle of Silicon Valley has lost its shine.

During 2022 alone, ten or so large tech companies such as Meta or Twitter either left the city or vastly reduced their presence. Why? Job cuts and the expansion of home working: **in 2021, 46% of employees in San Francisco worked from home, compared to just 7% in 2019.** The result is a cascade of secondary effects on commercial business in the city centre, which has severely declined. Moreover, the presence of homeless people, which worsened during the rise of tech and soaring real estate prices, is now pushing major brands such as Gap, Uniqlo or H&M to close their stores. **This situation has a direct impact on the city's finances, as its budget is now facing a 780 million dollar deficit.**

In Saudi Arabia, 12,000 young people take part in ISS astronaut experiments

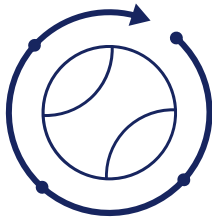
Source
www.futura-sciences.com

How to encourage young people to take an interest in science? And how to encourage young women to pursue careers in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics)? To answer these questions, the **Saudi Space Commission created educational experiments for 12,000 students aged 9 to 18.** They were able to **take part in real time in three scientific experiments performed by two Saudi astronauts - Rayyanah Barnawi and Ali AlQarni - on board the International Space Station (ISS).** The experiments concerned **liquid fireworks, space kites and heat transfer, corresponding respectively to fluid mechanics, aerodynamics and heat transmission.**

The aim was to enrich the students with knowledge of space science and to show how such science can improve the quality of life on Earth.



DID YOU KNOW?



A second life for tennis balls

www.francetvinfo.fr

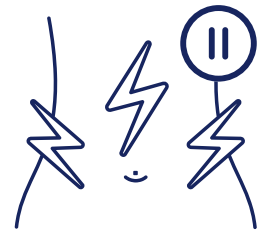
When the Roland-Garros tennis tournament consumes 50,000 tennis balls each year, and France itself consumes 17 million, Tennis needs to become more environmentally responsible. Every year, the **Yellow Ball operation transforms 1.3 million tennis balls into multi-sport surfaces, Spectat recycles balls into dance studio flooring, Bounce extends the life of balls threefold using an ingenious box that keep the balls under pressure.**



Learning to smile again in Japan

<https://positivr.fr>

After three years of wearing masks, people seem to have lost their ability to smile in Japan. **Classes are now organised to re-learn how move their cheek muscles upwards again.** An hour-long class costs 55 dollars, or around 51 euros.



Carrefour takes innovative measures for employee health

www.lesechos.fr

The mass retail chain is committed to women's health. **Carrefour grants twelve days of annual leave to women who suffer from endometriosis** (a condition affecting one in ten menstruating women), **three days after a miscarriage and one day for IVF procedures.** These measures are taken alongside an informative campaign to encourage managers to adopt appropriate behaviours.