



A Review of Media Coverage of Climate Change in France

A STUDY BY



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MédiasClimat by Reporters d'Espoirs



Dealing journalistically with ecological issues, and in particular climate change, is all the more difficult as the subject calls for multidimensional analysis and skills:

- scientific data on the physical processes, the sources of greenhouse gas emissions, the consequences observed or expected, the risks to be anticipated ...
- A variety of sectors involved: industry, health, safety, transport, food, agriculture...
- a multiplicity of points of view on what to do and how to organize (treaties, taxation, regulations, planning, voluntary or constrained systems, etc.)
- answers that already exist or do not yet exist; which emanate from several actors, with distinct ideologies and interests; whose effectiveness is assessed in the light of multiple considerations, ranging from ecology to the economy, including social and health; and which call for transversal or even systemic "solutions".

Climate change is all the more interesting to tackle from the angle of "constructive" journalism as it is:

- a process that takes place over time
- a problem of general interest which engages the responsibility and the future of individuals and society
- a subject particularly exposed to resignation, given the scale of the issues raised
- an area that gives rise to reflections, initiatives and innovations, which it is important to highlight, in order to demonstrate the possibility of taking action and obtaining results.

In addition, the desire to publicize climate issues from a "solutions" angle is expressed in a growing number of editorial staff.

This is why Reporters d'Espoirs, an NGO gathering journalists, is interested in it and is carrying the MédiasClimat initiative, which covers:

- A study which examines "How the media deal with climate issues" from cores on specific media and time periods.
- An interactive guide for journalists wishing to benefit from good practices shared by their peers, recommendations, case studies to deal with these questions of which they are not always specialists. www.reportersdespoirs.org/climat

In short. The main results of the study

on the periods examined, specified media by media in the full study

GENERAL TREND: THE ENVIRONMENTAL THEME IS SIGNIFICANTLY PROGRESSING

The **share dedicated to the environment** in the most visible news segments of the mainstream media has increased markedly over the past 10 years: it has notably been **multiplied by almost 3 in the evening television news** of TF1 and France 2.

As for media coverage of the climate more specifically, over the past decade, **the COP21 established in Paris marked a turning point.**

In the written press, after an exceptional peak observed during the COP21 period, climate coverage declined in 2016, before resuming its forward march, exceeding in 2018 the level of 2015 and increasing steadily since.

BUT ENVIRONMENTAL SUBJECTS REMAIN LITTLE CONTEXTUALIZED IN THE CLIMATE PROBLEM whether on TV, radio, or in the written press, among the generalist news media examined: **the proportion of subjects that evoke the climate, on the perimeter studied, is less than 1% on average, with peaks of 2% on news channels and nearly 5% for some national dailies.**

However, **30 to 43% of French people place climate change as their No. 1 concern in the long term - and in the short term No. 3 behind covid19 and healthcare.**

THE NATIONAL DAILY PRESS IS THE MOST INVOLVED OF GENERALIST CLIMATE NEWS MEDIA, among those examined: **in 2019, Le Monde reached the top with 5% of its editorial production referring to the climate... when Sud-Ouest was the leader of the Regional Daily Press (PQR) with 0.87% of its editorial production.**

TV NEWS AND THE REGIONAL DAILY PRESS (PQR) ARE THE MOST "CONSTRUCTIVE" MEDIA WHEN THEY DEAL WITH THE CLIMATE in the sense that their subjects on the climate, beyond the observation of a problem, set out concrete initiatives.

Indeed,

- **1 in 4 subjects is "constructive" in the evening news broadcasts of TF1; 1 in 5 subjects on France 2;**
- **28% of subjects are "constructive" in the regional press (17% in the national).**

RADIO: THE CLIMATE REMAINS LARGELY CONTAINED OUT OF THE NEWS

The climate is missing from the morning 'express' information segment on RMC, and only rarely appears on RTL and France Inter (0.9 and 1.3% of subjects): the subject, however transversal, seems confined to interviews and specialized chronicles. And none of the radio newspaper climate topics studied in this study can be called constructive.

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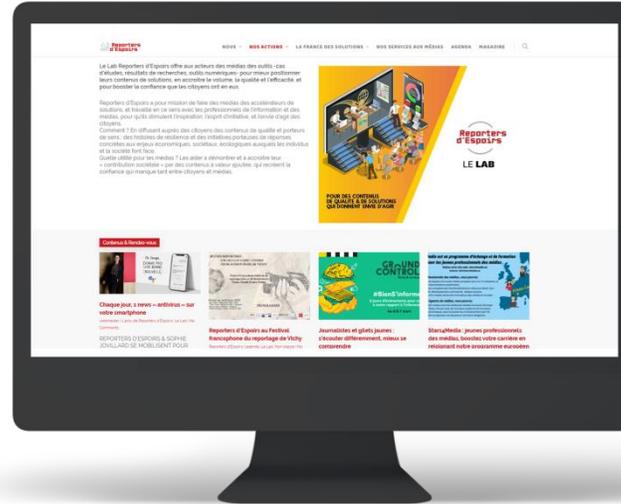
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The events that generated the most media coverage over a day, in 2019:

1. July 23: Speech by Greta Thunberg to the National Assembly
2. September 24: Greta Thunberg sues several governments on the sidelines of the UN Climate Action Summit. Publication of the IPCC report on the oceans.
3. September 21: School strike and Global Climate March
4. March 15: School strikes for the climate, international mobilization
5. December 14: closing of COP25 - Madrid Conference

Therefore:

- youth engagement - with Greta Thunberg as a muse, and climate strikes as the flagship event - has emerged as the main topic that "pulls" climate media coverage;
- then come major institutional events - UN Climate Action Summit, COP25 - and more in the background, scientific publications - namely the special IPCC reports on oceans and land use.



**Find the full study and interviews (in French)
on www.reportersdespoirs.org/climat**



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