



THE TRANSFO AND HIS THOUSAND WIND TURBINES

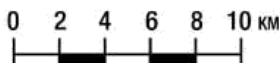
Extract from an intervention-discussion with Robert Citton at
the Amassada de Saint-Victor (12), Saturday, May 2, 2015

We have chosen to publish here some excerpts of an intervention of Robert Citton, which we put in the form of interview.

*For more information on the fight against the Saint-Victor-et-Melvieu transformer, visit **douze.noblogs.org***

The owners refuse to sell the 6 hectares coveted by RTE for its mega-transformator. The young farmers who cultivate these good lands of causses within the AOC Roquefort want to stay there. That's why, since the beginning of the year, the Amassada, a solid Aveyron woodhouse, has been built collectively to materialize the refusal to let these agricultural lands be concreted and industrialized.

There is already a transformer on the town, in Planol, it is accompanied by 14 lines High Voltage and Very High Voltage; Impossible to miss. Last year, the former municipality favoring the mega-project of RTE was beaten in favor of a new council which opposed it. Faced with this setback in the polls, RTE and the prefecture are now trying to make a strong move: they announce, even before having consulted the population, obtaining a Declaration of Public Utility for the end of 2015. This one would give them the power to override the views of locals, elected officials, landowners and farmers, and begin to downgrade and expropriate land. In our department, but also in the east of Tarn and the north of the Hérault, promoters of renewable energies become impatient. Indeed, the mega-transformator of Saint-Victor - paid with public money - would open new business opportunities. Their power plants do not respond to local needs, their production has only one purpose: to be sent and sold via lines THT on European and global markets. For this, electricity needs to be concentrated and transformed. So it's not just a transformator we're talking about for our region, but a real Industrial Energy Zone that would be organized all around.



TRANSFORMATEURS



LIGNES TRÈS HAUTE TENSION



EN FONCTION



PERMIS ACCORDÉ



PERMIS DEMANDÉ

CENTRALES EOLIENNES

How did you hear about the mega-transformator project in Saint-Victor ?

We were alerted in 2010 by residents that there was this transformator project in Saint-Victor, out like that of a hat. It appeared on a document of the town hall, one day, by chance. But in fact it was already in project since 2 or 3 years. I had the honor and the advantage of being a member of the Federation for the Life and Safeguard of the Grands Causses which is a federation of associations approved with the Prefecture. And as such, whenever there was a public inquiry or a consultation meeting where the environmental protection associations were called, we went there. So when the project came out of the ground, there was the consultation period, it's in the procedure. We missed the first meeting. In the report, Alain Marc [Senator UMP of Aveyron] says :

"I am very supportive of the transformator and the people of Saint-Victor will get used to it". And all the people present agreed. At the second meeting, I went with my argument, I spoke, and when there was the vote, we were 50/50, half for, and the other half against. Then there was the third meeting at the Rodez préfecture. And at that meeting, nobody said anything for the transformator, nobody wanted to vote. People began to understand. Except that in legislation, the Sub-Prefect has the right to decide. So he said, "Since no one is pronouncing, I will make the decision," and he chose the place from several possibilities.

Well, the consultation meeting, you are all happy, you hear "consultation" and you say to yourself: "we will consult us on the need to make a transformator, on the merits of the project". But not at all, the consultation is to analyze the place where there will be the least impact, they give you the choice among two or three places that are all on the commune of Saint-Victor, and we discuss only the

location. They give you a map, you do not even know where it is, and they explain to you: "there we will put a large hedge to hide the transformer ..." But it's not a consultation, it gives a bone to gnaw at saying "we have concerted people", but ultimately it has no real effect.

What is the transformator project and the infrastructure that would accompany it?

In 2005, it was found with my wife that the Prefecture of Aveyron had published a book entitled Reflection framework for the development of wind turbines in Aveyron. On page 23 of this book, they said that the big problem of Aveyron wind turbine is that the electricity grid is saturated and can not be evacuated. And they even said that in 2005 it could only evacuate 70 megawatts [an industrial wind turbine produces between 2 and 3 MW] and then we could not evacuate anything anymore. So they are obliged to circulate electricity by other lines 225.000 V: it is a dispatch of Toulouse which distributes the electricity, when there is a line which is put in overload one uses another line, then a another line and another line, etc. It has been ten years since the Préfecture knows that there is a network overload. But it has continued to issue permits for wind turbine construction for another 2-3 years, putting the network deliberately overloaded. This is where we arrived at 94 wind turbines in Aveyron, and there was in particular a project of 29 wind turbines at Salles-Curan, which could not be connected to the conventional network. So they erected their 29 wind turbines and they built a private transformer of 20,000 volts which is under a line that leaves Saint-Victor and goes to Rodez and Onet-le-Château. Their substation is a cutoff position, so when there is place on the network they send electricity, but if the network is overloaded, they stop. Like that they earn money anyway, because they get to work their wind turbines without selling all the electricity they produce.

We are now at 128 wind turbines that have the building permit, that's about 280 megawatts. But all these wind turbines will only work if they make the transformer of 400,000 volts at Saint-Victor. The only way to evacuate is to reorganize the entire electrical system.

How will they manage this?

They will start by modifying all the small transformers around Saint-Victor. They have already begun: those of Sévérac-le-Château and Millau have been enlarged. Then they plan to enlarge those of Luras, Onet-le-Château, and the old transformer of Saint-Victor-et-Melieu (that of Planol). It is currently 100 MW, and they want to add 170 MW. Then, they want to build big transformers, one in Fondamente and one in Brusque, for the south-Aveyron. That of Fondamente must cost 3,900,000 euros, that of Brusque around 6,000,000, and to evacuate electricity, they will build us an airline of 225,000 V, which will be about 20 km long between Brusque and Couffrau and will cost 15,000,000 euros, a nice investment ...

All that to evacuate the electricity of the 80 wind turbines for which they already have the permits in the south-Aveyron. At Melagues, there is a permit for 19 wind turbines and a second for 14 more. Then, on the other side, you have Brusque, where the permit was recently given: there are 7 wind turbines. A little further you have the Merdelou, they already had 12 and there is a new license for 7. If we calculate just that, it's 47. After you go back slightly along the limit with the Hérault, you have Tauriac-de-Camarès where there are 8, Montagnol where there are 8 and Fondamente where there are 6. All this is the southern edge of the department. And all these lines that go from the wind turbines will go to the transformer Brusque and from there, by the line of 225 000 V, until Couffrau. The transformer of Fondamente, meanwhile, is on the line Luras-Bédarieux, it is a 63 000 which goes back to Saint-Victor.

And from there, thanks to their new mega-transformator of 400,000 volts (and 2100 MW) project, they could send electricity to Spain and Morocco by connecting to the 400 000 V line that goes to Saint-Victor. It leaves the Massif Central to go to the side of Perpignan. It does not stop anywhere, it's a highway. And there they will make a stop in the middle, in Saint-Victor. And they want to double it in the coming years ... So you see that everything is connected in these construction projects: they can only make the transformator of Brusque if they increase the capacity of the Couffrau, and Couffrau they can do it only if they make the 400 000 V post in Saint -Victor. This is the node of the problem.

The next phase of the project is the public inquiry, have there ever been any about wind turbines?

I went to retirement in 2003 in Belmont-sur-Rance. There was a project of 33 wind turbines on Mounès, Belmont and Murasson. When we saw that, we were immediately saddened, we asked ourselves: "But what are they going to do to us? We started to take an interest in the problem, we fought for a few years, we held public meetings, we tried to get people moving. At the same time that there was this project in Belmont, there was another one in Barre, it's in the department of Tarn, on the other side of the hill, and there we participated in our first investigation public. I have an engineering background, so when I went to the public inquiry, I took the file, I studied it well and I found many arguments that went against this project: the owners landowners had not given their agreement, they borrowed private rural roads to bring the material, finally I mounted a file and I was happy saying to me: «With a file as solid, me engineer bac +5 , the investigating commissioner will refuse the project. " Well no. Not at all. All the arguments I gave were swept aside and he gave a favorable opinion. And then, with my wife, we participated in a lot of public inquiries. Each time we have developed a lot of arguments,

but there has never been any investigating commissioner who took them into account, they always ended up saying "favorable opinion". So we said, "there is something else to do", because the legal way is not used for nothing. You may develop all the arguments, at some point you are in front of an administrative block.

One of the first aberrations that I found in all these projects is that to put the wind turbines together there is a public inquiry with all the elements of the project and a very detailed impact study, and sometimes 150-page books. where we count the smallest bird, the least flower to protect. When there is a rare orchid, it is noted, etc ... But it is only on the territory of wind turbines, and then when the wind turbines are in place, to connect them they sometimes make 20 km of trench with a cable of 20,000 volts and there is no more public inquiry. It is EDF or RTE who is the king. It is based on a law dating from 1906, it is the general engineer of the roads and bridges which gives the authorization. So the project proponents hide behind this law saying, "go around, there is nothing to see", and they can do what they want from the moment they got the permit, where they built their wind turbine.



