

Sustainable tourism in the Seine Estuary

Le Havre and the Seine Estuary, between land and sea

At the outset : a port

The Estuary of the Seine represents a territory of 3929 km² situated in the middle of the West coast. It is a concentration of about 600 000 inhabitants, of which 255 000 in the Le Havre agglomeration. The City of Le Havre is a Normandy city situated at the mouth of the Seine, built around a port open to the English Channel. The relationships that it has made throughout the world are closely connected with its maritime and port history and more than ever the ocean and international trade are at the heart of the destiny of Le Havre.

A locality in the Upper Normandy region, it is one of the two sub-prefectures of the department of the Seine Maritime.

Le Havre and the plateau de Caux

The region of Le Havre is characterised by a plateau bounded to the West by cliffs looking out over the English Channel and to the South by a steep hillside dropping down to the estuary. The surface of the plateau de Caux, the altitude of which varies between 70 and 140 metres, is crossed by the hydrographical network. Numerous dry valleys and gullies are cut into it to join steeper valleys, dry and narrow at their start, which then widen downhill with the appearance of drainage. At the foot of the plateau, in its southern part, Le Havre was built on the site of a former sea-marsh, limited by a ribbon of pebbles between the Cap de la Hève and the mouth of the River Lézarde.

To the South-West, the Auge and Lieuvin countries can be found with an average height of 140 m, which appear as a table zone.

The climate of the territory is characterised by a maritime milieu : warm and humid with slightly cold winters and summers tempered by a frequent sea breeze. Average sunshine is less than 100 hours between November and February and over 200 hours from May to August. The average annual rainfall is 738.9 mm with stronger downfalls from October to December, but a not very extensive monthly range.

Boating, nature and architecture at the centre of tourism

From the cliffs of Fécamp to the bocage of the Auge country, the territory of the Seine Estuary provides a mosaic of landscapes. Coast, Normandy countryside or urban townscapes make the tourists happy and they have the choice between rambling and promenades, visits of the Estuary's heritage or nautical activities.

PAYS LE HAVRE POINTE DE CAUX ESTUAIRE



The city centre of Le Havre rebuilt by Auguste Perret

In 1944, the centre of Le Havre, as well as the port, was destroyed. Auguste Perret was in charge of the reconstruction. The exceptional character of his work associating the existing structures of the city to new concepts in matters of urban planning and construction technology was recognised by the Committee of World Heritage in 2005..



Abbey of Montivilliers

Montivilliers owes its name to this 11th century abbey. Throughout the Middle Ages, the abbey had a considerable prestige and gave prosperity to the town.



The Seine Estuary nature reserve

The reserve is a wide wet zone situated at the mouth of the Seine. It is composed of a collection of exceptional natural milieus : wet prairies, mudflats and reed-beds. The reserve possesses the second biggest reed-bed area after the Carmargue. It provides shelter for numerous protected species of birds and fishes.



The yacht harbour of Le Havre

Le Havre, where nautical activities have been practised for over 165 years was recognised as a yachting resort in 1999. The City has a water area of quality which enables all types of water-sports connected with the sea to be practised. Its yacht harbour with 1300 moorings has a great number of advantages, notably being accessible 24h/24

HIGH CLIFFS COUNTRY



Etretat

A seaside resort with a romantic charm, Etretat is reputed for its chalk cliffs and notably the downstream cliff with a 51 metre needle. The landscape has inspired numerous painters and authors such as Maurice Leblanc, creator of Arsene Lupin the famous gentleman thief.



The Palais Bénédicte

Designed in the 19th century, this Palace houses both a museum of religious art and the production site of Benedictine, a liqueur composed from 27 plants and spices. Temporary exhibitions of paintings or sculptures, alternating prestigious signatures and young artists are also offered throughout the year.



Water sports activities offshore in Fecamp

The High-Cliffs country offers a wide range of water-sport activities: underwater diving, sailing, sea trips and fishing, sea canoeing



A "clos-masure" (farmyard enclosure)

Typical heritage of the Caux Country, this square farmyard planted with apple trees under which the young cattle are pastured, surrounds the farmhouse and agricultural buildings. The farm yard is surrounded by several lines of beech or oak trees planted on high embankments. Real windbreaks, they provide a micro-climate favourable for bio-diversity.

CAUX SEINE VALLEY COUNTRY



Lillebonne

To the South of the town, this huge hemicycle cut into the natural slope is a gallo-roman theatre of the 2nd and 3rd centuries after Christ.



The Eana Park, land of possibilities in Gruchet-le-Valasse

In the shadow of the thousand year old abbey of Valasse, the Eana Park is the first discovery park in Normandy dedicated to sustainable development. Its 60 hectares plunge one into the fabulous history of the Earth : an extraordinary voyage from the Big Bang to 2050.



The regional nature park of the Normandy bends in the Seine (boucles de la Seine normande)

The park covers an area of 81 000 hectares. It includes seven nature reserves, a great number of bicycle circuits, footpaths and tourist routes such as that of the Abbeys.



The Abbeys Route : the Abbey of Saint Wandrille

From the Cherbourg peninsular in the West to the Caux Country, Normandy is full of abbeys. A route connects them all and encourages one to pay them a visit. On the way, do not miss out Montivilliers, Saint Wandrille, Jumièges...

AUGE COUNTRY



Honfleur

Honfleur is a little maritime town composed of picturesque lanes and ancient traditional houses. The town has been able to preserve and put into value a rich historic and artistic heritage. The 17th century yacht basin is surrounded by the Saint Catherine church dating from the 15th century, by timber-faced houses and the ancient Capitainerie (harbour master's house).



Deauville

Deauville, a seaside resort of international renown, is the symbol of elegance and the art of living. Organiser of the Festival of American Cinema, it is also famous for its "Promenade des Planches" on the beach, several casinos, a golf course, two racecourses and beautiful holiday villas.



Beuvron en Auge

Beuvron en Auge is classed amongst the most beautiful villages in France.

The covered markets, restored with old materials, the half-timbered houses dating from the 17th century, its 15th century manor house, the ancient Boule d'Or hostelry of the 18th century, the Saint Marin church make up an architectural heritage in the purest Normandy style.



Bicycling and rambling in the Auge Country

The countryside of the Auge Country provides an ideal environment for walks and long excursions. In the Autumn, the forests take on sumptuous colours, in the Spring it is the flowers that blossom in the gardens and hedgerows, not forgetting the apple-trees in flower. Passing through the woods of oak and beech trees, past the gardens, sighting a manor or a thatched cottage from a bend in the path: the Auge Country offers about ten circuits from 2 to 12 km length, practicable on foot, by bicycle or on horseback.

RISLE ESTUARY COUNTRY



Pont-Audemer

Pont-Audemer will seduce you with its Middle ages lanes, its timber-faced houses, its canals (the Risle river) and its wash-houses of the last century.



Le Marais Vernier (the Vernier marshlands)

A former bend in the Seine, the Marais Vernier is a huge 4500 hectare humid zone. A real natural amphitheatre, this micro-region is recognised on a European level for the richness of its flora and fauna.



Calvados from Cormeilles

The town of Cormeilles is home to the largest distillery for the Normandy liqueur : the " Grande Distillerie Busnel ", an establishment founded at the beginning of the 20th century.



Kayak on the Risle

The Country offers 80 pedestrian itineraries, bicycle circuits but also canoe-kayak outings on the rapids which criss-cross the Risle Valley.

Ramblers paths run through contrasting countryside : from the traditional bocage to the State-owned forest of Montfort and including the marshlands of the Risle closer to the sea.

Nature and architecture are truly at the centre of Le Havre tourism. In 2005, the World Heritage Committee recognised the exceptional character of the work of the architect Auguste Perret during the reconstruction, which associated the existing historic structures of the City with new concepts in matters of urbanism and construction technology. The Saint Joseph church with a 110 metre tower, which pays homage to the victims of the bombardments, figures amongst the notable monuments of Le Havre. It is, besides, the emblem of the World Heritage reconstructed city centre.

The City also has an animal park, two arboretums, and 770 hectares of woods, parks, gardens and squares. With 41 m² of green spaces per inhabitant, Le Havre is one of the most "nature" cities of France. The City has besides been awarded the label "Villes et Villages Fleuris" (Flowered cities and villages).

In 1999, Le Havre obtained the labels "Seaside resort" and "nautical station". Its deepwater yacht harbour is ranked first in the continental Channel and the closest to Paris. With 1300 moorings, it attracts every year more nautical tourism. Moreover, the quality of the water on the beach and coast has been certified every year since 1996 with the "blue flag".

Since the trans-Atlantic liner period, the maritime history of Le Havre is linked with luxury cruise liners. In 2009, 50 ocean cruise liners are expected to call at Le Havre. The Pointe de Floride will then receive nearly 90 000 passengers and 40 000 crew members. Since 2005, certain river cruise companies are sailing new itineraries on the Seine. Thus, two of them regularly call at Le Havre.

A history attached to maritime development

At the beginning of the 16th century, François 1st looked for a favourable site to establish a naval military port in the mouth of the Seine. Indeed he had to ensure safety against enemy attacks, when the estuary ports of Honfleur and Harfleur were silting up.

The alluvial and marshy site at the foot of the cliffs of the Pointe de Caux was proposed. A port was built there, designed above all as an instrument of defence. Then, faced with an influx of population, and still by regal decision, one of the first plans of urbanism was decreed, the Bellarmato plan of 1541.

Numerous explorers and botanists sailed from Le Havre to discover new lands and new plants. Thus in July 1555, an expedition of 600 men, led by Villegagnon, sailed from Le Havre to found a colony in Brazil (Fort-Coligny).

If at the outset, the port of Le Havre essentially had a naval character, its commercial function rapidly imposed itself. The development of colonial traffic, the movement of the bourgeoisie towards the "coast", the development of suburbs, the need for space to receive vessels and to store goods breached the belt of fortifications which had become militarily useless. At the beginning of the 19th century, Le Havre imposed itself as the top French port for commerce and trading of tropical produce. Bolstered by this renown, the Le Havre traders called for its enlargement. Numerous docks were then created such as the "Bassin Vauban" (Vauban dock-basin). In 1846, with the creation of these dock-basins, the Le Havre people were the first Frenchmen to discover this type of construction. For a century and a half, the docks sheltered the goods that gave a reputation to the commerce of Le Havre. In 1937, Le Havre imposed itself definitely as the turntable of the coffee trade, with 80% of French imports transiting through it.

In 1944, the centre of Le Havre as well as the port was destroyed. The Ministry of Reconstruction and Urbanism called on the architect Auguste Perret. The size of the site and the processes of technical experiments with concrete make it one of the most significant achievements of the 20th century. As from the Sixties and Seventies, the State organised the industrial development of France around major sectors, including petrochemicals and

automobile construction in the Lower Seine. A maritime canal was built and serves a 10 000 hectare port industrial zone stretching from Le Havre to Tancarville.

As from 1995, Le Havre has put its coast into value and become a seaside and nautical resort. The City also takes care in improving its attractiveness with new installations such as the "Espace Coty" Commercial Centre, the "Docks Océane" sports and performing arts hall, and also the "Docks Café" exhibition park.

Since 2001, Le Havre the 13th biggest city of France, has joined the circle of Cities and Countries of Art and History. In 2005, its reconstructed centre was listed amongst the UNESCO World Heritage sites to render homage to the work of Auguste Perret and to the heritage policy of the City.

A priority, education

The city has 113 schools, 16 colleges, 7 lycées and a university, which translates into about 40 000 children and students in the public sector establishments.

38 schools are equipped with child-minding services. Besides, Le Havre encourages the integration of handicapped children in the life of the city. An accessibility plan has been launched in this objective.

The city also runs the "educative success" scheme, destined to fight as early as possible against poor school performance.

Since the 19th century, there exists a tradition for higher education open on the international world with the Ecole Supérieure de Commerce (Higher Education School of Commerce) one of the oldest in France, and the Ecole Nationale des Officiers de la Marine Marchande (National School for Merchant Navy Officers). The present panorama of higher education in Le Havre is diversified with the university, engineering schools, an Art school, a port institute of learning and research, or again, the "Europe-Asia" cycle of the prestigious Institut d'Etudes Politiques (Institute of Political Studies) of Paris, decentralised in Le Havre.

Politics

The political regime in France is the 5th Republic. Its founding text is the Constitution which entered into force on 4th October 1958. It is a semi-Presidential regime.

The President is elected by direct universal suffrage.

The people hold sovereignty but power is exercised by their representatives elected by universal suffrage. The legislative power is invested in the Assemblée Nationale and the Senate and the executive power exercised by the President and his Government.

The representative regime is accompanied by semi-direct measures of democracy such as the referendum. This instrument enables the people to directly intervene in the national or local policy. The French can be consulted for the adoption of a law, to authorise the ratification of a treaty and to revise the Constitution.

As in the other localities, Le Havre has a deliberating assembly, called the Municipal Council, and an executive formed by the Mayor and his Deputies.

The members of the Municipal Council are elected for 6 years by the citizens by direct universal suffrage.

The referendum also exists on the local level. By petition, the electors can demand the insertion on the agenda of the Municipal Council of a question falling under its competence.

The other partners engaged in the "Sustainable Tourism in the Seine Estuary" project have various statuses. Some of them are territorial bodies : regional councils and communities of localities.

Others are "Countries" comprised of several communities of localities of a territory having a geographical, economic or cultural coherency.

Le Havre has a vibrant and very dynamic associative network. The city supports over 3500 associations, including a large number mobilised in favour of the environment. The sporting sector is also well represented with a double medal holder at the 2008 Peking Olympic Games as well as a good forty high-level sportsmen coming from 17 sporting disciplines.

Besides this, an ambitious project, the "Grenelle de l'Estuaire" (Estuary Forum) was launched in November 2008. Its objective is to arouse new forms of territorial cooperation, by associating qualified stakeholders and the public. Objectives : to draw up a Charter for progress, a programme of actions and to make the estuary into a model of sustainable development. This project has taken the form of plenary meetings, workshops and public conferences on sustainable economic development, energy or transport movements.

Cultural crossroads

The estuary of the Seine constitutes a part of Normandy, a territory with a very rich culture. The oldest text in French literature, the Chanson de Roland (the Song of Roland) an epic poem of the 11th century is besides written in Norman language.

This intense literary activity which is unending has made Normandy the cradle of several of the greatest French authors like Guy de Maupassant ("Bel Ami"), Gustave Flaubert ("Madame Bovary").

Normandy has also been the birthplace of numerous artists amongst which can be found Nicolas Poussin, Eugène Boudin, Raoul Dufy, and Jean-François Millet.

From 1830 to 1880, Normandy inspired artists. Already popular with numerous authors (Stendhal, Georges Sand, Alexander Dumas, Emile Zola) it became the rendez-vous of painters and the cradle of the impressionist movement (Claude Monet, Gustave Courbet, Eugène Boudin, Camille Pissaro).

The estuary of the Seine possesses a typical architectural heritage notably comprised of dovecots, half timbered houses or with thatched roofs.

The apple is not the emblem of Normandy and yet it could be ! Just like the Normandy cattle, the apple is indissociable from the region and offers a multitude of varieties, derived products and recipes, each more savoury than the next : the Normandy tarts, cider or even more calvados, an apple-based liqueur. Another typical product of Normandy is camembert cheese, which owes its name to the village where it was created.

A cultural crossroads, Le Havre possesses today numerous performance halls and theatres or practice rooms amongst which the Arthur Honnegger Conservatory with the label of "National School of Music, Dance and Dramatic Art" since 1981, the Malraux Museum, which houses the second largest collection of impressionist paintings in France, and the Volcan, a municipal theatre which receives national as well as regional touring shows.

The cultural programme of the City is also marked by big events like the Biennale of Contemporary Art organised by the casino, or "Z'estivales" a festival of street performances which give animation to the beach and seafront and which attract a growing number of the Le Havre population and tourists at the end of each week in the summer.

The Natural History Museum also provides diverse exhibitions amongst which the exhibition "Lesueur and Le Havre" presenting the work of Charles-Alexandre Lesueur through various topical themes with a quarterly rotation.

Le Havre is also the departure city for the Transat Jacques Vabre, a prestigious trans-Atlantic two crew yacht race which follows the coffee route and which, this year, will sail towards Puerto Limon in Costa Rica.

Another notable event on the coast : the Festival of American Films in Deauville. As every year, it will be held in the International Conference Centre of Deauville in early September. For over a week, more than a hundred American films are shown to the public and put in competition. The festival is also the occasion to render homage to the big stars of American cinema and to put into value independent film producers through various prizes.

A diversified economic activity

Nearly 70% of the business establishments of the estuary belong to the tertiary sector, a little over 16% to the primary sector (agriculture, forestry and fishing) and 14% to the secondary sector (7% for industry and the same for building and public works).

A port, logistics and industrial centre of European scale, the Le Havre region benefits from its privileged situation in the centre of the Western maritime façade of Europe and in close proximity to the Paris area. The City is also a real motorway crossroads connected directly with the Paris region, to the East of France, to the ports of the Nordic Hanse and to the South of Europe.

Fifth European port and second French port for overall tonnage, the port of Le Havre is the top French port for foreign trade, where the bulk of traffic is seaborne. It is in particular the principal maritime gateway of the Paris basin which concentrates 41% of the French GDP. Its nautical qualities – deepwater port, receiving 24/24, 7/7 the biggest vessels, containerships, tankers, bulk carriers... - have enabled it to develop a major industrial area. Le Havre is connected with 500 ports throughout the world with 250 regular shipping lines.

Top French port for containers, Le Havre saw its traffic grow by an average annual rate of 10% between 2000 and 2007.

Inbound, Le Havre is the first port of call where the first containers are discharged; outwards they arrive by road and complete trains, coming from Germany, Spain, Italy, Portugal and Switzerland ... before being loaded to the container vessels.

In volume petroleum products are the main component of the Le Havre port traffic. The crude oil received in Le Havre itself and at the Antifer terminal represents nearly 40% of the total quantities imported into France.

Road traffic (export and import cars, lorries, awkward loads on road trailers) and the Cross-Channel freight (carried by car ferries to England) constitute a large part of the port activity.

The second sector which characterises the local economy is that of transport, the only one to have a management staff ratio higher than the national average. There is a good representation of metropolitan functions (head offices of Groups, services with a high cognitive or technological content) which places the Le Havre agglomeration in the second place behind Marseille in this domain.

Numerous local business establishments are dependant on head offices situated in other French regions. This situation poses the question of an autonomous local development.

Nevertheless, the zone of Le Havre attracts big foreign investments: 3.5% of the businesses with head offices outside the employment zone are foreign, mainly in the trade and transport sectors.

Le Havre is also a developing commercial centre. Its customer catchment zone covers a potential of 440 000 consumers and the city centre has an exceptional 25 000 parking places. Access to the shops is also facilitated by a highly developed urban transport network in the agglomeration.

Elsewhere, an ambitious project of urban, economic and tourist revitalisation is under way. The Vauban Docks, former port warehouses and a Le Havre site emblematic by its history, its connection with the sea and its architecture are being transformed into a new commercial, leisure and cultural centre.

The employment zone of Le Havre is the second in the Upper Normandy region in size and, globally employment has increased since 1990. Active people represent about 50% of the Le Havre population and 53% on the scale of the estuary. The local economy remains dominated by industry which represents nearly 20% of the employment in the globalised sectors (chemicals, petrochemicals and automobile) extremely sensitive to international competition.

The local market stays less open to women because of the sectorial structure of the activity. Administered services have constituted the principal source of job creations since 1990 and tertiary commercial activities have developed over the recent period.

The working of the local job-market is organised in a dual mode with, on the one hand a masculine labour force rather older and well remunerated, notably in industry and transport but with diminishing numbers and, on the other hand, women and young people where access to employment remains more difficult.

The Le Havre region is marked by a higher unemployment rate than the national average (11%). However the gap with the regional average is closing.

The City of Le Havre is multiplying information and accompaniment services to job-seekers: creation of an urban free zone in 1997, development of assisted work contracts, organisation of skills and job forums, deployment of discovery days in industries.

An employment centre, created in 2005, acts for 33 localities in the "Le Havre Pointe de Caux Estuary" country. Its vocation is triple : to draw up a local diagnostic of the employment and training market, to put in evidence a socio-economic prospective of the territory and to encourage the development of employment. Other original initiatives complete these arrangements, such as the "Café de l'Emploi" (Employment Café) an informal meeting between employers and persons offering their competences.

The Seine, the axis of development of the French capital

The President of the French Republic, Nicolas SARKOZY, gave a speech on the 29th April 2009 on the Grand Paris (Greater Paris) project. This has the objective of presenting the future of the French capital region : improvement and development of means of transport, plantation of a new forest, development of centres of excellence, increase in the number of lodgings constructed, development of a more sustainable metropolis.

Grand Paris has also the vocation of creating a community of projects for the whole of the Seine Valley. The objective is to open out the French capital towards the sea coast, to understand the big Rouen-Le Havre port complex in terms of complementarity, and to link all this to the big consumer markets of the Paris agglomeration.

For the President, Le Havre must become the port of Grand Paris and the Seine Valley the axis around which the metropolis must structure itself.

Works should start in 2012 and the opening up of the Seine Basin by 2015 with a high-speed train line which will place Le Havre one hour away from Paris.

Le Havre, city of solidarity

Le Havre is developing numerous actions in favour of the most destitute persons. Thus a network of ten food shops and two social grocers provide assistance to people whose only source of income is the solidarity benefit grants.

The city also launched in 2004 an operation of auto-rehabilitation of the accommodation of the families receiving only the minimum social grants. The objective is to assist these people to improve their life style by making them the actors in the transformation of their lodgings.

Le Havre is also carrying out specific actions in favour of the aged whilst encouraging inter-generational links with the city's children. The municipal "Handicap in the city" department accompanies families, federates associations, awakens awareness in the population and encourages the creation of services in favour of handicapped persons.

The environment : a fundamental challenge for the Estuary

The Le Havre region possesses large natural assets and ecological advantages which it is essential to protect.

A wet zone of over 10 000 hectares, at the interface of river, sea and land, the Seine Estuary presents a remarkable biological and ecological wealth. It is constituted by a mosaic of milieus, different from each other but complementary in ecological terms. Its large biological productivity is the basis of food chains, both terrestrial and marine, which make it a site of European importance (included in the Natura 2000 network) for birds and for the renewal of marine resources. The estuary also contributes in filtering the waters of the Seine before they reach the sea. Its ecological interest justified its classification as a special protection zone by the European Community and the creation of a nature reserve on part of the North bank land.

Taking into account the high industrial density, the quality of the air has been, for a long time, one of the top environmental preoccupations of the local governments of the region.

The law imposes setting up air quality measurement stations in all the agglomerations of over 100 000 inhabitants. This mission is carried out by an association licensed by the Ministry for Ecology.

Over the last few years, Le Havre has been concerned by peaks of pollution. However these episodes are infrequent (in 2006, 300 days of a very good quality of the air) and localised around the big industrial sites.

The city possesses exceptional natural spaces and large green assets. Amongst these spaces are the cliffs of Dollemard. This territory, also included in the Natura 2000 network, is the subject of an enhancement programme which consists in the creation of a marine and agricultural park suitable for the conservation and the discovery of its exceptional flora. The Montgeon forest constitutes another green lung of 270 hectares, not forgetting the numerous city parks and gardens for a total of 770 hectares of green areas.

This advantage favours the maintenance of an animal and vegetal bio-diversity with spaces suitable as the natural habitats looked for by rare or threatened species.

The fragility of the territory of the estuary and the desire to correct a rather negative image associated with the industrial port activities, have led the municipality to engage in an environmental policy associating their partners and the population.

Agenda 21 and sustainable development

This engagement in favour of sustainable development has been formalised in an Agenda 21, officially launched on 14 December 2005. Le Havre has taken care to draw up an action plan through a wide participative approach. This first programme of 96 actions is declined in 9 themes (good living in the city, moving around, accompanying employment, enhancing the maritime advantages, preserving natural milieus, prevention of natural and industrial risks, information and awareness, acting and encouraging initiatives, expression and engagement). In 2006, Le Havre was rewarded by the "Ribbons of sustainable development" from the Association of the Mayors of France and the Committee 21 for the implementation of their Agenda 21. The City also won the 16th Eco-actions trophy.

In June 2009, Le Havre will be organising an exhibition on climate warming. A second action programme for Agenda 21 will be presented during 2009.

The municipality pays a special attention to the steering of the Agenda 21. A committee chaired by the Mayor thus meets every four to six months, completed by a partnership committee which is composed of about fifteen organisations and local stakeholders.

The City is confirming their engagement with a project of international scale : The Centre for the Sea and Sustainable Development "Odyssey 21". This public installation with a tourist and fun vocation will be dedicated to the oceans, to port activities and to maritime trade. Dominating the entrance to the port, this edifice with a height of 120 metres designed by the renowned architect Jean Nouvel will offer a didactic, fun and interactive circuit. The visitor will be invited to discover and understand the big international trade flows as well as the economic and environmental stakes of a territory opening onto the sea.

Besides this, Le Havre is one of the 12 pilot cities in France for a new label "energies of the future" which has the objective of making local governments, economic decision makers and the wider public aware of the importance of renewable energies and economies of energy. Thus the local government is going to install thermic solar panels on an indoor swimming pool in the centre of the city and install photovoltaic panels on the City Hall during the summer of 2009.

The city has also been awarded an A++ mark following the evaluation of their policy of sustainable development by an independent consultant. The marks go from AAA to D. The + or – associated to the letters indicates the capacity to make their performance evolve in the long term.

Carbon state report

In June 2008 Le Havre undertook a carbon state report on its assets and services. It is aimed at evaluating the greenhouse gas emission and thus to determine the priorities in actions to fight against climate warming.

The report for the year 2007 revealed that half the greenhouse gases produced by the municipal services and buildings came from energy consumption and 17% from travel movements. The city has decided to concentrate its efforts on energy expenditures with the objective of reducing them by 3% a year.

The use of public transport is facilitated by a financial participation in season tickets. The approach of car-pooling is also encouraged and an Enterprise Movements Plan is under study.

The Hanging Gardens

Situated on the heights of Le Havre, offering a remarkable view over the city and its estuary, the Hanging Gardens were created in a former 19th century military fort. These gardens pay

homage to the long tradition of discovery of the Normans and the botanists who explored the whole world and who, as early as the 17th century, sailed to all the continents in search of unknown lands and plants.

These gardens are remarkable on a sustainable development level. Ideally placed, the gardens are perfectly integrated in the urban cityscape. The materials and construction processes are respectful of the environment. The masonry of the fort has been conserved and the products from demolitions re-employed. All the equipment installed privileges autonomy and economies of energy : recuperation of rain-water, geothermic heating, thermic insulation and production of electricity by solar panels. The worksite for these gardens was a job reinsertion scheme.

The Eco-district of Grand Hameau

An eco-district is emerging on the North-West plateau of the city. This new district respects the standards of a high quality environment.. The objective to be reached is that of the passive house, practically self-sufficient in matters of energy consumption. The utilisation of geo-thermal, wind turbine, and solar power, the resort to very efficient insulation modes and the choice of orienting the houses towards the south should limit the energy consumption of the 2500 future inhabitants of the district. A first estate of 300 housing units will be delivered in September 2009 : urban houses and patio houses neighbour small blocks of flats. At term, about 1000 housing units will be built (social or privately owned, first acquisition or for rent).

For their movements within the district, the inhabitants will have at their disposal a network of green routes developed and connected to the cycling network of the agglomeration as well as a controlled and safe traffic circulation.

Mid-way between city and countryside, the Grand Hameau is fully playing the environment card to become a show-window for sustainable development and will provide the future 2500 inhabitants with a unique quality of living.

Utilisation of soft modes of transport

In a perspective of sustainable development and improvement in the quality of urban life, the Community of the Le Havre agglomeration have put the accent on public transport and soft modes.

The first tram line, a project led by the Community of the Le Havre Agglomeration (CODAH), should be inaugurated on the Le Havre territory by end 2012. The project is designed to optimise intermodality and encourage social links. The line will have; amongst other things, the advantage of connecting the surrounding working class districts situated in the upper city to the city centre.

Besides this, in less than 15 years, the city of Le Havre has doubled the length of cycle lanes with 46 km of lines and pathways. A 22 km extension project is currently envisaged by 2014, in the context of an objective to double the present size of the network to attain 90 km within the next 10 years. This extension will enable the East-West route to be improved, to cover better the zones of the future tramline and, at term, to re-qualify the South network. This policy should place Le Havre amongst the 10 French cities with the greatest number of kilometres of cycle paths.

The Le Havre city cycle paths should also soon be connected with all the other cycle paths in the department of the Seine Maritime.

Besides this, the municipality has developed a pool of 20 bicycles at the Town Hall at the disposal of the councillors and the staff. This arrangement will soon be completed with the installation of a new park of 10 bicycles on a second municipal site.

For pedestrian movements, the municipality has inaugurated an operation called "pedibus" in several pilot schools. Accompanied by parents and guided by the school staff, the children use several routes to get to their school. The objective is to make the children aware of

safety on the way to school when they go on foot. It is also the occasion to call on the parents and to encourage them to leave their cars behind and not drive them to school.

Control and storage of CO²

The territory wants to assert its ambitions in matters of sustainable development by controlling greenhouse gas emissions and especially emission of CO². In parallel to a think-tank on a mutualised management of CO² in the port industrial zone, the territory is organising itself to create a "Chair of industrial catchment, transport and storage of CO²" at the University of Le Havre, in association with other academic partners and the industrials. The development of these activities should provide answers to the citizens, in particular in matters of training and dissemination of knowledge.

Aerial thermography and the control of energy

The Community of the Le Havre Agglomeration (CODAH) is a strategic player with regard to an overall and coherent policy of sustainable development. CODAH already carries out actions of sustainable development on the scale of the whole agglomeration and will officially launch an overall programme in June 2009.

Already the CODAH has carried out an operation of aerial thermography during the winter of 2008. This operation enabled the level of heat loss of habitations to be measured and thus to know the quality of the insulation of buildings.

The objective of this operation is to make the inhabitants of the localities aware of energy control, a capital environmental and economic challenge for the coming years. Thus the entire territory of the 17 localities within the CODAH was "photographed". Therefore the 260 000 inhabitants of the CODAH spread over 20 200 hectares were able to know the state of their roof insulation.

Each inhabitant has the possibility of consulting the results on the Website of the CODAH and to meet the advisors in the Info-energy space in order to find solutions.