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## French shale gas

As many other "old Europe" countries, opposition to shale gas exploration (exploration, exploitation is not even insight for the moment) becomes hysterical in France. The single source of "information" seems to be the "Gasland" movie, especially the moment where a guy holds a cigarette lighter below the tap, and a flame burst out of it. Nobody seems to make a single look to the arguments of the other side, as for instance [Energy in Depth](#), the website of the small US gaz producers.

The french newspaper "Le Figaro" has a welcome editorial titled "Lâcheté" (cowardice). The original French text is [here](#); I made a quick translation which follows:

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### Cowardice

Yves Thréard

Le Figaro, 23-24 April 2011 (translation: Francis Massen)

There may be good reasons to fear the pollution of the atmosphere, but certainly one should equally be afraid of the pollution of the brains. The explosive polemics kindled by the opponents to shale gaz are telling of this state of affairs.

"France has no oil, but she has ideas" was the slogan of the 70's. At least at that time there was hope, even if tempered by some insouciance. Today, this is not the case anymore. Ecologism, the fundamentalist deviation of ecology, has fouled ambient air. Fear reigns everywhere: from taking risk, to innovation and progress. One should not be astonished to see the French depressed, pessimists and defeatists!

Our country's underground seems to hold billions of cubic meters of shale gaz. A quantity corresponding to one century of gas consumption, and as such representing potential considerable economies for the public finances. The gigantic energy needs make this manna so appreciable.

These are in summary the conclusions of a report delivered this week to the government. The authors show both the advantages and the inconveniences of this new energy resource, and they stress that it would be silly not to use it. Their statement makes heavy riddles in the ecology-correct waters. But it is not sure at all that the report will have any effect. France being the country of the holy grail of the precautionary principle, irrationality pairs up with pusillanimity. The debate over shale gaz, similar to that on photovoltaic's, has been made in opposition to common sense, in an incoherent way and without really informing the public. This was enough to wake up the bigots of negative growth and the adepts of the oil lamp. The media reported in a benevolent manner, and didn't stop to repeat the catastrophic example of the USA with plenty of shock images.

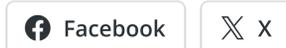
The next election being in one year, the whole shale gaz case seems to become closed. With the blessing of the government, a proposition of law seeking to forbid any exploration and exploitation will be examined as an urgent matter the coming 10<sup>th</sup> May.

GMO's, shale gas .... France does not stop to yield to the obscurantism of the merchants of ecologism.. This is regrettable and cowardly.

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The official website presenting the shale gas/oil problem is [here](#) , the preliminary abstract of the report is [here](#) (in French).

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