



Oil shock: a bit of water in the gaz?

A Regional War with Global Consequences!

The energy crisis is settling in. The war between the United States of America and Israel on one side and Iran on the other side, ongoing for over a month is already having tangible global effects, an inevitable consequence of an interconnected global economy.

Beyond the emotional impact of the humanitarian tragedy and the civilian casualties on both sides of the Persian Gulf, in the Levant and more broadly across the Middle East, **public attention is increasingly focused on the economic consequences.**

For SOLIDAIRES Douanes, a representative union within the Directorate-General of Customs and Indirect Duties (DGDDI), **national state authorities are, up to now, not rising to the challenge.**



Government archive image? Reality goes beyond fiction...

A partial government assessment...

The government first fails in its economic evaluation, especially in its analysis of the current oil shock. The oil crises of 1973 and 1979 were caused by political decisions, including turning of the tap.

Now, in 2026, this is a physical reality: refineries, storage tanks, and storage and distribution centers are being targeted and destroyed by military strikes. Production and supply will be disrupted for a long time, even if a political agreement is reached to stop the fighting.

In terms of products, the following are affected:

- not only fuels exported to Asia, but all hydrocarbon derivatives used in the chemical industry...
- ... fertilizers,
- plastics,
- synthetic clothing,
- medicines...



Hens partial government measures!

Furthermore, the government is inconsistent in the measures it takes.

For now, the government is adopting a reassuring tone, minimizing the extent of the shock and providing limited support:

- qualitatively to certain professions,
- quantitatively amounting to only a few tens of millions of euros.

These measures are inappropriate.

- First, they push the economic actors concerned to seek out non-automatic, insufficient aid, requiring them to go through additional administrative formalities, even though the stressful context calls for far more substantial measures.
- Furthermore, these measures are being financed through budget cuts elsewhere. In other words, the government is robbing Peter to pay Paul! Moreover, fiscal austerity in a recessionary context further weakens economic activity.



Reducing taxes on energy.

Acting on fuel taxation is being considered as an alternative in the public debate.

Several options have been proposed:

- lowering the VAT rate on fuel from 20% to 5.5%;
- reintroducing a variable component in the former Domestic Tax on Petroleum Products (TIPP), now known as the Internal Consumption Tax on Energy Products (TICPE).

For SOLIDAIRES Douanes, lowering VAT on fuel or the TICPE is a false good idea, for several reasons:

- it would further reduce fiscal revenues, after many tax reforms that have already undermined the funding of public services;
- without price control, reductions in taxation are not transmitted to consumers, which further increases the margins of 'crisis profiteers'.



... or strengthen it through a revision of the transfer/abandonment of tax missions (TMF)?

SOLIDAIRES Douanes points out that responsibility for energy taxation, in all its aspects, was historically managed by the DGDDI, until the transfer/abandonment of tax missions from the DGDDI to the Directorate General of Public Finances (DGFIP).

This transfer is a fiscal scandal.

Decided in 2019 under Édouard Philippe's government and implemented progressively over several years, it will be fully completed by 2027, with a negative impact on tax revenues.

Indeed, giving new tax missions to an authority like the DGFIP, which is losing thousands of jobs each year over the period, is damaging.

With fewer resources available, it had to reorganize its audit process, mainly relying on document-based checks instead of on-site inspections in companies, where the goods are located. As a result, there were massive losses in tax revenues, offset by an increase, sometimes sharp, in the rates of certain transferred taxes. From a trade-union perspective, this had been anticipated and criticized within both the DGDDI and the DGFIP¹.



Our proposals regarding the standard of living.

From an economic perspective, SOLIDAIRES Douanes calls for alternative measures, both in terms of public spending and income.



2. Price freezing, particularly on fuel.

Reducing the margins of large companies in this sector is a measure that is perfectly feasible, as shown by the successful price caps² on hand sanitiser and surgical masks during the Covid crisis!

It is even a legitimate measure, since the fuel being sold up to now was bought before the conflict at lower prices. The price increases seen since are purely speculative!



2. Massive wage increases.

- First, by linking the public-sector index point to inflation. Since the early 2000s, living standards have decreased by almost 30% for most people earning between one and two times the minimum wage (SMIC).
- Then by opening discussions on allowances, in recognition of technical expertise and commitment (new and higher index-linked bonuses for new functions, hardship and retention allowances, etc...).

¹ At the DGDDI, a trade-union coalition was formed against the TMF until the support agreement signed on April 04, 2022 by CFDT, CGT, USD-FO, UNSA, CFTC, and CGC. Only SOLIDAIRES Douanes refused to sign it. At the DGFIP, the alliance formed against the TMF continued to express its opposition despite the agreement at the DGDDI. For further information: <https://solidaires-douanes.org/destruction-missions-fiscales>

² Article L410-2 of the French Commercial Code. See Appendix, page 4 for details.



Our other proposals on working conditions!

SOLIDAIRES Douanes, a union for social transformation, doesn't just address pay issues, it also proposes additional measures on working conditions.



1. The use of teleworking, on a voluntary basis, with different options depending on the characteristics of each sector:

- One day of telework every two weeks, with a minimum of one day per month, for operational personnel in Customs Surveillance units.

The aim is to allow staff to go through the different administrative notes and directives, and properly prepare for the new Customs Code, which comes into force on May 1, in just three weeks from now!

- A four-day working week (four days on-site and one day of telework), or even a three-day week (four days on-site and two days of telework) for services and work units currently on a five-day office schedule.



2. Development of longer shifts (12 hours, or even 10 hours per shift), instead of the current 7 or 6-hour shifts!



3. Promoting moderation in the use of private transport

- Free public transport, especially for first and second line essential workers identified during the Covid crisis.

The State doesn't always set an example as an employer. Indeed, the DGDDI's top administration sometimes even refuses to cover transport passes, even when approved by local authorities.

- Promotion of carpooling through the re-establishment of a driver allowance, and possibly the use of service vehicles for commuting between home and work for volunteer personnel.



In conclusion: decolonising the imagination.

For SOLIDAIRES Douanes, in light of the current crisis, the measures must be multidimensional and significant.

A just-in-time economy, aiming at optimizing costs as much as possible, shows its fragility even at the slightest environmental, health-related, or geopolitical incident. Resilience requires a massive relocation of economic activities!

The French government could also promote an international initiative to condemn this conflict, invoking the necessary respect of the United Nations Charter³. There is a solid diplomatic basis for such a move: no European Union (EU) or North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) country is part of the military coalition, which involves only the United States of America and Israel.

Measures could include targeted trade sanctions against companies or individuals actively involved in the ongoing conflict. Far from being unrealistic, such actions have recently been taken at national and international levels:

- against South Africa in 1986 during the apartheid period, first by individual countries (France, Federal Republic of Germany, etc...), then at the European Economic Community (EEC) level);
- at the European Union (EU) level against Russia, following its intervention in Crimea in 2014 and its invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

In all these areas, the customs administration could play a key role in international regulation, particularly in times of crisis, on the condition that it is properly considered and given significant resources.

Paris, Thursday, April 9, 2026

³ For example, Article 2, paragraph 4: "All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations."

Available here: <https://www.un.org/fr/about-us/un-charter/full-text>



Appendix: price freezing, a measure provided for by legislation!

French Commercial Code

Legislative section (Articles L110-1 to L960-5)

Book IV: Freedom of prices and competition. (Articles L410-1 to L490-14)

Title I: General provisions. (Articles L410-1 to L410-6)

Article L410-2

Unless otherwise provided by law, the prices of goods, products, and services which, prior to 1 January 1987, fell within the scope of Ordinance No. 45-1483 of 30 June 1945 shall be freely determined by market competition.

However, in sectors or areas where price competition is limited, either due to monopoly situations or persistent supply difficulties, or as a result of legislative or regulatory provisions, a decree issued by the Conseil d'État may regulate prices, following consultation with the Competition Authority.

The provisions of the first two paragraphs shall not prevent the Government from adopting, by decree issued by the Conseil d'État, temporary measures to counter excessive increases or decreases in prices, where justified by a crisis situation, exceptional circumstances, a public calamity, or a manifestly abnormal market situation in a given sector. Such decree shall be adopted after consultation with the National Consumer Council. It shall specify its period of validity, which may not exceed six months.

Source : https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/codes/article_lc/LEGIARTI000019798129



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Clear and sincere unionism!