



INTERNATIONAL
RIGHTS OF NATURE
TRIBUNAL



GARN
EUROPE



NATURE
RIGHTS



NOTRE
AFFAIRE
À TOUS



Earth Thrive
www.earth-thrive.org



mountainwilderness

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**EUROPEAN RIGHTS OF NATURE TRIBUNAL
"IN DEFENSE OF AQUATIC ECOSYSTEMS"
Mer de Glace Case**

-Saturday, January 30th, 2021-

The first hearing of the European Tribunal for Aquatic Ecosystems took place on January 30th, 2021 at 5 pm (Paris time). The Tribunal was integrated by the President Cormac Cullinan, and the judges: Valerie Cabanes, Tom Goldtooth, Lisa Mead and Richard Falk. The Prosecutor for the Earth was: Rebecka Le Moine and the Secretariat co-chairs were: Natalia Greene, Camille Bouko-levy and Olivia Gervais. This Tribunal was held, thanks to the support of the European Hub of the Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature (GARN)¹, the International Rights of Nature Tribunal, Wild Legal, Nature Rights, Notre Affaire à Tous, Earth Thrive and Mountain Wilderness France.

Tom Goldtooth conducted a meaningful water ceremony to bring water, the main actor of the Tribunal, into this first hearing. The renowned anthropologist, Phillipe Descola, opened with an inspirational talk about the intrinsic relationship of humans with nature.

This case dealt with the climate crisis that is threatening the existence of France's largest glacier and the inaction that will cause its volume to decrease by 90% by the end of the century. The Mer de Glace must be defended in order to guarantee its survival. This is why GARN Europe opened this Tribunal by presenting this emblematic case.

As President Cormac Cullinan said, "Water is life. We are addressing one of the most central issues facing humanity and the nature community. We are trying to start a wiser path for the future"

The lawyer and glacier representative, Marine Yzquierdo, stated that "glaciers are important reservoirs of water. Mer de Glace is the greatest glacier in France and it's losing its surface every year due to global warming. If this continues, it won't be able to keep up with its natural process." Yzquierdo denounced that the first responsible for this situation is the French state: "It's up to the government to protect nature and humans by complying to the national and international laws and norms". She also identified the company Total Group as another perpetrator for the case. "They are not respecting their responsibility to reduce greenhouse gases, key to fighting against global warming. They are one of the 20 top companies contributing to climate change in the world via fracking and extracting oil."

The judge Valerie Cabanes accurately stated that "the Mer de Glace is part of Mother Earth, and as part of nature, it's a subject of rights. Certain countries have understood the notion and have enacted laws. Nature has the right to exist, prosper and evolve. Citizens have the duty to defend and preserve it".



INTERNATIONAL
RIGHTS OF NATURE
TRIBUNAL



GARN
EUROPE



Jean-Baptiste Bosson, glaciologist and first scientific expert, reflected: “Mer de Glace can no longer play its role. There are two extreme climate scenarios: we have a scenario of low emission close to the Paris Agreement, where this can become stable. This would be the optimal scenario. The ‘business as usual’ scenario, on the other hand, would see several degrees of warming in the following decades.”

The Earth Prosecutor, Rebecka Le Moine, cleverly pointed out: “Mer de Glace represents hope and great motivation that our actions today matter and will make a difference for tomorrow. It's not too late to save this glacier. Le Moine insisted, as part of her final arguments, that “it's time to listen. I ask for the rights of Mer de Glace to exist, regenerate and have natural cycles. We must uphold the rights of Mother Earth, and the natural elements forming it.”

There is still time to act. The next case of the European Tribunal for the Rights of Aquatic Ecosystems will take place on February 27th for the rivers of French Guiana, followed by the case Lake Vättern in Sweden on March 27th, the rivers of the Balkans on April 24th and the Mediterranean Sea threatened by red mud on May 29th.

This Tribunal aims to recognise the rights of Nature means recognising the interdependence between humans and Nature and accepting that humans can no longer dispose of it with impunity. Thus, it is a necessity to establish the legal personality of Nature in order to systematically take it into account in our political and societal choices. This legal evolution is necessary for the preservation of life.

To view the entire hearing in French, please click on the following link:
bit.ly/MerdeGlaceTribunalFR

To view the entire hearing in English, please click on the following link:
bit.ly/MerdeGlaceTribunalEN

For more information about the International Rights of Nature Tribunal, please visit:
<https://www.rightsofnaturetribunal.org/europe-tribunal-2021/>

Press contact:

- Zoe Lujic, Communication Officer for the Tribunal, zoelujic@earth-thrive.org, +447841635310 and Nina Salaün, nina.salaunhelgoualch@gmail.com, +33607045547
- Marine Yzquierdo, lawyer in the Mer de Glace case, marine.yzquierdo@gmail.com, +33650270578
- Olivia Gervais, co-secretary of the Tribunal, referent Mer de Glace, tribunal@therightsofnature.org +33770353801