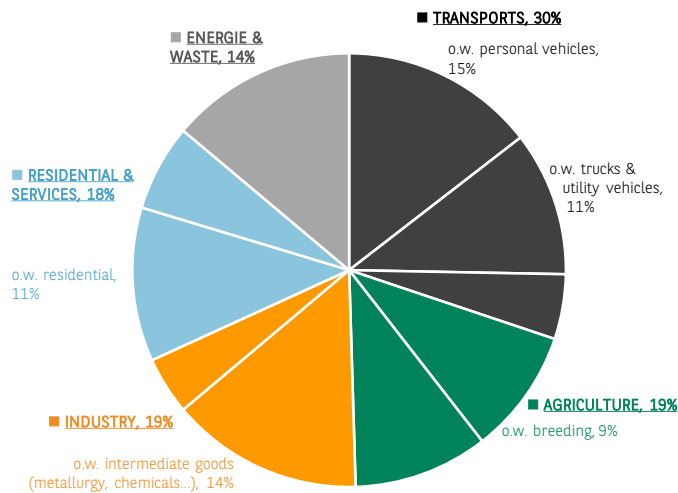


12 July 2023

## TRANSPORT, FRANCE'S MAIN SOURCE OF GREENHOUSE GASES EMISSIONS

Jean-Luc Proutat

France: distribution of CO2 emissions by sector (2021)



Source: CITEPA-SECTEN, France Stratégie, BNP Paribas

It's summertime, so, with mass departures coming during the holiday season, a good opportunity to look at ongoing transformations in transport. In France, this sector is by far the biggest source of greenhouse gases (GHGs) emissions: 126 million tons of CO2 equivalent or 30% of the total in 2021, i.e. three times as much as the housing sector (*see chart*). Contrary to what one might think, it's not trucks and even less planes (which account for around 10% of travel<sup>1</sup>) that are the biggest emitters, but rather the 38 million private vehicles circulating on France's roads.

This explains why public policy puts emphasis on the rapid "greening" of the fleet. As part of the French Low Carbon Strategy (Stratégie Nationale Bas Carbone - SNBC), a 2040 ban on the sale of combustion-powered cars is already enshrined in law; in fact, it should come into effect as early as 2035, the date set by the European Council last March<sup>2</sup>. As a result, sales of electric vehicles are taking off. In a market that contracted in 2022, they rose by 25%.

This is only the beginning. By 2035, provided the supply of low-carbon electricity and recharging infrastructure keep pace, the French electricity transmission network operator RTE anticipates a 25-fold increase in the number of electric vehicles on the road, to almost 16 million. By 2050, the conversion should be complete, and the carbon footprint of personal mobility reduced by almost 70% according to the "trend" scenario drawn up by the French Environment and Energy Management Agency (ADEME). By combining the technological leap with sober behavior (limiting demand for travel, particularly long-distance air travel, increasing rates of occupancy etc.), the goal of climate neutrality (95% reduction in emissions) becomes achievable<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Ecological Transition (2021), Enquête mobilité des personnes 2019, December.

<sup>2</sup> Following an agreement in which Germany obtains a derogation from the sale of vehicles using synthetic fuels beyond 2035.

<sup>3</sup> ADEME (2021) « Transition(s) 2050. Choisir maintenant. Agir pour le climat », Report, November.

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