

Notre-Dame-des-Landes (France): La ZAD scores major victory: airport plans are cancelled!

Saturday 20 January 2018, by [BALAMIR Selçuk](#) (Date first published: 18 January 2018).

As of yesterday [January 17, 2018], the airport project at Notre-Dame-des-Landes is buried forever, by the courage, love and determination of hundreds of occupants, thousands of allies and millions of sympathizers.

You don't have to visit la ZAD in Notre-Dame-des-Landes [\[1\]](#) to understand why the bocage — a terrain of mixed woodlands and pasture — is so alive, the airport project so wrong, and the resistance so strong.

But if you have the chance to visit it, you would also feel it in your bones — that no force, whether state or corporate, can destroy those 1,650 beautiful hectares of freedom. Even the most spineless, most post-political of all French kings or presidents must have felt it [\[2\]](#).

As of yesterday, the airport project is buried forever, supposedly by the decision of a single powerful man, but in fact by the courage, the love and the determination of hundreds of occupants, their thousands of allies and their millions of sympathizers.

Perhaps nobody would have cared to defend this place, had it already been transformed into a large monocultural exploitation like in so many other places across Europe and beyond.

Paradoxically, it was the declaration of the “special development area” that preserved the unique biodiversity of the region. While the airport project has been consistently failing at lift-off for fifty years, a rich tapestry of pastures, wetlands and woods had a chance to grow freely, to the wonder of citizen-naturalists who intricately documented this “re-wilding” over the last decade [\[3\]](#).

After decades of bureaucracy, and court cases, and expert reports, and petitions, henceforth only paper planes can take off from the Zone. The same fate awaits all new carbon infrastructure that aims to perpetuate the fossil age and its fanatical thirst for destruction [\[4\]](#). The fight for the future is not over, it is just starting — there are many more Zones to defend.

While the airport may be gone, its world has not fallen yet. The powerful cannot fix one thing without simultaneously breaking another; they now threaten to evict “the most radical elements” of the ZAD before spring [\[5\]](#) — uprooting the burgeoning resistance before it bears its fruits.

Defending the Zone has never been against one single project, though, but against the entire logic of imposing the “rule of law” onto any territory. Now vindicated, la ZAD is getting punished for its success; an exception to be violently eradicated, so that the Republic can pretend to go back to normal.

Instead, this “laboratory of commoning,” [\[6\]](#) uniting old and new occupants in all their diversity,

deserves to become the new norm of self-determination and collective management — here, there and everywhere.

During my last visit to la ZAD in October 2016, together with 40,000 people [7], I planted a stick in the ground and made a promise: if there would be an eviction attempt, I would come back to collect my stick and protect the Zone. I attached a little board to my stick and wrote down the names of some comrades, so that I'd bring them along to defend our shared dreams.

That day has now arrived [8]. On February 10, 2018, we will be tens of thousands to converge once again in la ZAD, demonstrating our commitment to safeguard and extend Europe's largest liberated territory and postcapitalist commune beyond the boundaries of the bocage. Because such freedom cannot be bound to one place alone; it is freedom only if spread in every direction.

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P.S.

* ROAR. January 18, 2018:

https://roarmag.org/2018/01/18/la-zad-scores-major-victory-airport-plans-cancelled/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+roarmag+%28ROAR+Magazine%29

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Footnotes

[1] ESSF (article 42914), [The ZAD: an autonomous zone in the heart of France - The fight against the construction of a new airport at Notre-Dame-des-Landes](#).

[2] http://www.huffingtonpost.fr/2018/01/17/je-fais-ce-que-jai-dit-sur-notre-dame-des-landes-macron-na-pas-tenu-sa-promesse_a_23335776/

[3] <https://naturalistesenlutte.wordpress.com>

[4] <http://priceofoil.org/2016/09/22/the-skys-limit-report/>

[5] http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/planete/article/2018/01/16/notre-dame-des-landes-la-zad-sera-evacuee-de-ses-elements-les-plus-radicaux_5242269_3244.html

[6] <https://zadforever.blog/about/>

[7] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mi4fyhnLpLk>

[8] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mi4fyhnLpLk>