

The Ecopol social contract

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At the end of the Ecopol profile, synthesized on two pages in the first of this chapter 5, nine criteria specific to Ecopol are listed. In fact, the exact number of success criteria adapts and evolves according to several parameters: local culture, progress social problems that make certain aspects become progressively normal and not more innovative, and of course, the profile of cohabitants, whose path to voluntary simplicity can take forms very varied. This article is a preview of Volume 2, which describes the details very practices of this social contract, and especially how to manage it at daily. Because it is in the details of governance, of taking decision, that the group dynamics reinforce or weaken. The following criteria provide a general basis.

1. Current management rules based on recognition uncertainty and moderation on demand.

Uncertainty is understood here by the acceptance that good relations do not do not fall from the sky, that it is a question of cultivating them, and of accepting the fact that there are personal transitions to manage in our relationship to us and to others. So to get back to a little bit of questioning is the most difficult criterion to apply, a symbol of living together. Moderation in all types of relationships: at all times, one-e cohabitant may ask any other cohabitant to adopt a more moderate behavior on aspects of life in common (noise, cleaning, care ...), in order to preserve the quality of life.

2. A trial period (6 to 24 months) for new inhabitants.

This is an element that comes up often in this book because it makes a real difference between frozen neighborhood and intentional community scalable. The trial period is, on the one hand, a way of letting his luck to all motivated candidates. This avoids projecting fears or excluding a person on the basis of signals too subjective before having a real practical experience on a period allowing a relatively objective evaluation. To facilitate this transition, the co-leads help the person to test to keep your previous home to be able to come back, to bounce back

elsewhere if needed, to move in and out, in good solidarity. Then can be signed a contract of indefinite duration, for life! The goal is that after 3 to 7 years of cohabitation, the vast majority cohabitants of an Ecopol (at least two-thirds) thus have an indefinite contract ("for life"). We are talking about a stabilized community, in which the cohabitants chosen with good knowledge. There is always a risk conflicts, nevertheless the modalities of application of the rules of cohabitation being clearly formalized in the Ecopol approach, this risk is lower than in a cohabitate with informal rules.

3. A common budget of about 300.- chf per month, for share spaces and services, completing the rent at a price affordable.

This budget also makes a big difference with eco-districts techniques without economic sharing or some ecovillages of GEN. Cohabitants choose which products and services to acquire with these funds. Some are obvious, like the internet connection that he makes little sense to pay everyone separately in their home, or the conciergerie of common areas. Other aspects are more specific, such as complementary arrangements, basic consumables (toilet paper, cleaning products, and coffee). Participating in a common budget is also a good reason to together to decide on the use of these funds together, hence point 4.

4. 4h/month routine management meeting, mandatory, with PV.

After more than 500 meetings in 20 years, we managed to codify the 3 essential aspects of a good meeting of cohabitants: - one meeting per month, dealing only with topics concerning all cohabitants, so as not to run out in meetings - no long talk about anything during this meeting but instead present the creation results

consensus during the past month, and have the decisions - few decisions but a lot of information, advice, coordination of diaries; for example for travel dates (if almost all cohabitants decide to leave for Christmas, an Ecopol can to be difficult to manage by the few remaining people). In parallel, one meal per month is organized, not compulsory, for the friendliness and emotional sharing. In addition, the various managers of the work groups (kitchen garden, household, machinery ...) are active all month to ensure the viability of the community according to the needs, using digital tools for surveys opinions and possible decisions by way of circulation.

5. 100 to 200 hours per year of voluntary contributions, for meal, garden, administration, home, promo ...

Examples of voluntary contributions:

A. Highly recommended contributions for all:

- participate in the annual home party weekend (2 days)
- participate in the annual EVC weekend (2 days)
- big storage day to do together in spring and autumn.

B. Different contributions from each, depending on skills, availability, motivations and appreciations of other cohabitants (some examples, many other options are possible):

- organize a meal between cohabitants every 2-3 months (4h)
- co-host an evening of first contact to cohabit and cooperate (4h to 6h)
- help to hold a presentation booth of the Ecopol approach (4h-8h)
- management of the Ecopol specific website, information to the sympathizers

- management of machines, tools and technical room (1h-2h per month)
- computer support (internet, printers) (1h-2h per month)
- maintenance of the interior, household, stock ... (1h to 8h per month)
- maintenance outside garden, hen house, terraces ... (1h to 8h per month)
- Co-responsible meetings to implement the regulation ...
- personal support to members (newcomers, patients ...)
- organization of special celebrations (Christmas, new year, summer ...)
- evaluation of new applications, management of renting leases
- purchase of consumables for all and maintenance of the common budget
- help in moving and moving cohabitants
- new interior and exterior technical fittings
- management of a common library

These services are provided by the co-owners already established who have already signed the contract of indefinite duration (potentially for life) after their trial period. So they joined to this social contract Ecopol. Essential services for all cohabitants of Ecopol, such as routine maintenance or verification of the payment of rents, are the subject of a service contract with a budget; this allows co-responsible for finding one or more providers and verifying that the benefit is well provided, with payment to the provider after delivery of the expected result, covered by the funds «art de vivre Ecopol "pooled each month. For example for the establishment of lease agreements, which may be subcontracted to the management of the owner cooperative. It is nevertheless advisable to avoid subcontractors, to do the most possible yourself by coordinating a group of contributors, especially if they are small activities where the quality control of the one-third is longer than providing one's own provision. The more the services are entirely realized by the co- responsible, the more it can be considered that Ecopol is autonomous. Other less essential activities are strongly encouraged, but only if the co-leaders have the strength, without guaranteed great results the first years. For example : vegetable garden, parties and training for the good dynamics of group, new developments ...

A progressive commitment, a state of mind from the beginning. Newcomers, during their probationary period, contribute to integrate well. They assist the co-sponsors in the best possible way these small working groups. They can go as far as unloading 95%, if they can afford it, which is often the case according to their talents in cooking, computer science, gardening ... When newcomers ask us the question of the degree of commitment, we answer them that the co-responsibles commit on average 200 hours of voluntary contributions, that these 200 hours include many moments of sharing (see point 5, voluntary contributions), and that the trial period will allow them to see if this formula suits them. A contribution day equals eight hours. 100 to 200 hours per year correspond to 12 to 24 days. By engaging in autonomous and positive for a minimum of 12 days a year, a new arriving party already gives a positive signal quite acceptable for a sustainable cohabitation. These hours of contributions are certainly not realized on an obligatory turn. Each activity is seen as a project. A project includes the preparation of an activity, its animation, the co-ordinating contributors, feedbacks, and closing with plan of renewal. Newcomers can choose their areas of contribution, in very diverse forms. it can be a very useful but brief contribution, of 10 minutes, for put the umbrellas on the terrace before a storm; or some less significant but longer contributions, such as participating actively participate in the annual cohabitat party

weekend, by managing the drinks stocks or storage. More broadly, these contributions lead us to realize activities that we would do anyway if we were co-owners of a housing with garden, living in stepfamily. We should cut the grass, tidy up the deposit, maintain the material technical, coordinate our efforts in family. The challenge is just a little different in an Ecopol, because the cohabitants must at the beginning to be tamed to succeed in accepting oneself as a family of hearts. It is also possible to make almost no contribution during a few months (for example if we have exams, a big charge professional or family, a disease), then engage more thoroughly at other times of the year. Some cohabitants can not provide contributions sufficient over a year, for example for people too to contribute, disabled or in transition. In this case, compensation can also be envisaged to restore the balance. It is negotiated on a case by case basis, as much as possible before and not after the past year in the form of a performance contract complementary (for meals, garden maintenance ...).

6. Two days per year of assessing the viability of the cohabitate

The co-leaders of each Ecopol undertake to move to less 16 to 20h to focus on past improvements, present and future. For more details, see the following articles on the EVC approach.

7. An incubation service for socio-professional projects (cultural, social, environmental, etc.), fostering cooperation between cohabitants and allowing them to generate income.

Support services for project promoters are also described in Act 4, in the article on the socio-economic vision of the Smala. If we imagine that the incubation method consists of pushing the project leader to let go of all his other income to devote himself to his project, difficult to really help him start his business with success. Conversely, if incubating means diversifying your activities a little, reduce his working time as an employee, and benefit from the support cohabitants to make a smooth transition, this may well work better. This formula may be suitable for people and very diverse projects. The criterion of income generation on the spot is inspired by the movements described in Act 3 of this book. An incubator "well oiled" is one of the main novelties brought by Ecopol, and which is lacking in co-operatives or eco-villages. Even a ecoville like Masdar, providing for 50 000 inhabitants, with its billion planned for its launch, has not provided for a fund of assistance to the creation of economic activities for networked craftsmen, preferring to favor the establishment of large companies with employee-employer culture rather than micro-entrepreneurs partners. Ecopol stimulates the creation of structured self-help groups and offers experienced social entrepreneurs to become mentors for novices. To reduce the difficulty, the administration can be outsourced at the beginning. We also offer network services suppliers for both legal and shared computer maintenance. Finally, an office hosting confirmed social entrepreneurs allow cohabitants to be the first customers of already active micro-enterprises. This incubator approach of social micro-enterprises is not unprecedented. In Zurich, for example, the network of cooperatives *Mehr als Whonen* (which means "more than living") supports companies craftsmen for bike rentals, a nursery and services to seniors, all made by particularly motivated service providers by the fact that they live on the spot. This is also the

case for places adopting the Ecopol approach, since includes a participatory budget of the place (for the garden, the maintenance, the repairs, administrative follow-up) and a regional office with a handsome portfolio of innovation projects in progress; the first mandated service providers are the cohabitants of the place, who have the priority over the fulfillment of all mandates: meals, maintenance administration, scientific research, training, day mom services, janitorial services, international conferences. These income opportunities between cohabitants also allow more diversified cooperation between them, a stronger link, based on the practices in common. Ecopols are therefore real social poles economic, in addition to the ecological aspect.

8. A planned mix between generations, cultures, skills, to avoid ghettos and valuing businesses general social services.

Common point of all candidates: persons having confirmed their intention to cohabit on the way to the EVC. For the more the profiles are different, the more the community will be enriched. Also, the co-leads have the task of stimulating various applications. Social enterprises are here to understand as initiatives, activities undertaken. Generalist means "non-specific", as are the skills of ecological know-how. What account, for example, is that most people are well awareness of non-violent modes of communication, modes of selective sorting of waste, to the uses of nutraceuticals which preserve us in good health naturally, tips for repairing machines, web sharing systems (housing on Airbnb, car on blablacar, works on Wikimedia commons), to object purchases of second hand, etc. They will be able to better value the practices they apply on a daily basis, to learn and to draw inspiration from mutually.

9. Deserving experts empowered progressive.

By deserving experts, we mean people who have made the choice to coexist and cooperate, and whose social, professional background demonstrates a strong capacity for results in the service of the common good. People who have already given work to many people, combine social and technical skills. They are the ones who start an Ecopol, in a small group of 2-3 to welcome new co-directors and to empower the community in 3 to 7 years. Many other criteria apply for Ecopol, but they are less central. They are all described in the EVC.