



## GILLES PÉROLE - INTERVIEW

Deputy Mayor  
City of Mouans-Sartoux



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## INTERVIEW

I had the pleasure of interviewing Gilles in the form of a videoconference. If hundreds of kilometers separated us, a flat screen depriving us of the three-dimensional experience, it is the voice charged with a very real emotion that he confided in me:

"Today is a special day. I have just learned of the death of André Aschieri, former mayor of Mouans-Sartoux, who was at the origin of all the dynamics of Transition in our town. With the departure of Pierre Rhabi, it's a tough week for sustainable food."

### CAREER

I began as a teacher, I have also been a school director, a master trainer and then a pedagogical advisor. It was my job that brought me to Mouans-Sartoux in 1989. The town, which I only knew from having passed through it, was opening a pilot school with a particular project on the environment and cooperative education.

I moved there in 1992 with my family and never left. In 1995, André Aschieri asked me to join the municipal team. Having always been involved in the associative world, I accepted the proposal more as a citizen than as a politician. I have been elected since then.

### ANDRÉ ASCHIERI

He was a humanist environmentalist with a vision. Mayor since 1977, he is at the origin of the Mouans-Sartoux Transition project. Everything we can do today regarding food comes from what he did before. He is notably a precursor on the precautionary principle (regarding the risks of certain products on health) set up thanks to the work of scientists consulted since 1997 on environmental issues. I would like to emphasize the importance of scientists. If Mouans-Sartoux has taken such a lead over the rest of the world, it is because we have listened to them. And this is what I encourage every elected official to do when I meet them in the framework of the BioCanteens project.

Aschieri's vision goes far beyond the food sector. It is above all an atypical in-depth project on human beings, health, education, and culture. He wanted to make Mouans-Sartoux a piece of true humanity.



**"André Aschieri wanted to make Mouans-Sartoux a piece of true humanity."**

## PROJECT'S ORIGINS

In 1974, Aschieri opposed the mayor on a project to build hundreds of housing units in Mouans-Sartoux, which at the time had some 1,500 inhabitants. Validating this project would have precipitated the town into a dormitory city of Cannes, making the number of residents explode to 80 000 or more.

In 1997, when he was elected deputy and in charge of parliamentary missions on health and the environment, he committed the city to a more resilient direction, which he quickly set in motion following the mad cow crisis. The scandal highlighted the aberration of a model that feeds herbivores with animal meal, thereby transmitting diseases to human beings.

It was in the wake of this crisis and as part of his parliamentary mission that he began auditing a large number of scientists and it was under his impetus that the French Agency for Environmental Health at Work was created.



## A MAINLY EUROPEAN PROBLEM

François Collard, one of the researchers (a lawyer) with whom we work regularly, pointed out the central issue : the food sector is attached to the World Trade Organization, unlike the education and health sectors, for example, which are both attached to the UN.

Moving food from the economy to the UN would however engage a completely different dynamic. At present, the food system is controlled by 4 or 5 multinationals that pull the strings. Health and the environment are not a priority but a way to do business. This is very different.

And examples pointing to this priority made to money abound; if some beet fields are suffering in the north of France, neonicotinoids that were banned are being re-planted. In Martinique and Guadeloupe, bananas are treated with chlordecone, an insecticide that has been banned in the United States and Europe.

It is a real progressive poisoning that is at work, demonstrated by a wealth of scientific documentation that has been converging for so many years that it is scandalous - to put it mildly - that no change was initiated earlier.

On the radio, I heard someone defending the chemical treatment of apples, arguing that he never got sick. But it's much more perverse than that. The way we poison ourselves is by accumulating day after day molecules that make us sick. It can take decades for diabetes or cancer to develop.



## TOWARDS FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

It is to fight this system that it is essential to build one's own food sovereignty. This means deciding for oneself the criteria that affect food from farm to fork: what food do we want, where does it come from, how is it produced and according to what economic model, and what remuneration for the farmers.

Depending on the region, it is even possible to reach food autonomy for some foodstuffs but never for all. In Mouans-Sartoux, autonomy is possible for vegetables, for example, but not for meat. The region is not known for its livestock farming, so we turn to other areas that supply us with meat proteins. And that's fine. What is important is that we choose these territories according to our criteria of excellence. That's what sovereignty is all about! And each region, each city, each department, each household should be able to define its own.

**"Every region, every city, every department, every household should be able to define its own food sovereignty."**

## THE FOOD TRANSITION IN MOUANS-SARTOUX

We decided to start with the canteens by formulating the following objective: "we want a canteen that respects health and the environment". The idea sounds simple, but its realization is more ambitious.

To achieve this, all current practices in the canteens were first scrutinized: purchasing, cooking, serving, cleaning and waste management. The analysis of these micro-practices then generated a multiplication of micro-changes which, put together, end up forming a system and allow for a profound change. This is how we decided to clean with eco-labelled products and steam machines, how we sorted and weighed our waste, how we went organic, how we balanced our menus or how we removed plastic from our dishes. Many small things that, when put into a system, become an extremely powerful in-depth project.

And now we are there. We have reached 100% organic, and 80% of the supply is regional. A few small efforts could still be made on the remuneration of farmers and on the reduction of the share of meat proteins in the menus.



### THE CHALLENGES AHEAD...

- To transfer the practices of the canteens to the rest of the population. To reach 100% organic and 80% regional. To achieve this, we have set up the Territorial Food Project ("PAT") which works on 5 axes: agricultural resettlement, sustainable food as an economic driver, education on sustainable food, research (researchers) / actions, dissemination.
- Housing on the Côte d'Azur is a real challenge. We would like to free up land and build an agricultural hamlet to house farmers at a modest cost.
- Make landowners (often heirs of farmers) aware of the nourishing potential of their land so that they make it available.
- Classify agricultural areas as ZAP protected agricultural zone.
- At the legislative level, create a fund for the purchase of agricultural land by communities, a fund that would be financed by an increase in the tax on the sale of secondary residences.
- Multiply the educational projects to better disseminate: "family challenge and positive food", "company challenge and positive food". We are also working with senior citizens and the underprivileged to show how it is possible to have affordable but healthy food that respects people and the environment.
- For the most precarious, there is the social grocery store ("CCAS") in which we try to improve the food quality, the place being initially supplied by the unsold goods of the supermarkets. Before our action, organic food was not even part of the equation. Today, 30% of the products we find there are organic and the objective is to reach 100%. The dream would be to use the place to make social security of food: everyone could enter and pay according to their income, like the differentiated prices we apply in school canteens.