

Yes
breizh

Da vont war raog ...

Foreword

France is currently experiencing a moral, social, and political crisis harming its functioning, its cohesion, and the trust its stakeholders should have in it.

Its past and present governments are marked by a culture of ultra-centralism inherited from the 19th and 20th centuries.

From the right-wing to the left-wing, a French conservatism, sometimes reactionary, exists in the majority of parties represented in Paris, at the National Assembly, and at the Senate. This conservatism stifles any new impetus emerging from taking into account profound social, cultural, economic, climatic, and political changes in our societies.

Yet, abstentions during electoral consultations, radicalism of all kinds, and popular revolts such as the Red Hats in Brittany (les Bonnets rouges) or the Yellow Vests in France (les Gilets jaunes), are all signs of a system on its last legs.

Furthermore, international and financial crises, the management of public budgets and of pensions give the impression of erratic and inapprehensible functioning. This operation is linked to a centralising, distrustful, and ultimately damaging concept of what should rather unite, generate, bring together.

Why this book ?

This short book asks questions supported by facts, but it also offers solutions.

Should we continue to be absorbed by a reactionary and declining French system, or should we affirm Brittany as a positive, ambitious project, meaningful for current and, above all, future generations?

All the questions addressed here are well known to supporters of decentralisation, autonomy, or independence, but Yes Breizh aims to move beyond reflexes to engage skeptics as well as those who are open-minded but hesitant.

This short book, therefore, addresses these questions as invitations to a rational and responsible debate.

Furthermore, do not be surprised to note some redundancies: they are all demonstrations of closely related topics.

We hope that this work will help to offer readers the necessary knowledge to challenge the weak and uninspiring arguments of defenders of the status quo or of radicalism. We also hope it will restore the confidence we need to build an open, dynamic, and proud Brittany, and to chart a concrete, time-bound future.

This little book will be regularly republished and enriched with data collected through Yes Breizh's research.

The approach followed by Yes Breizh

In the following pages, Yes Breizh explores key questions about what Brittany could be like tomorrow.

We drew inspiration from what already exists in other nearby countries, such as Scotland, Wales, Catalonia, but also Denmark, the Baltic States, etc.

On a methodological level, we are grateful to the Welsh movement Yes Cymru for allowing us to draw inspiration from their approach.

Our approach is therefore to begin to develop answers to the following questions:

- How can a small nation like Brittany succeed in today's world?
- What resources do we have at our disposal?
- How could a strong decentralisation of powers to Brittany reshape our economy and society?
- What would be our place in the French and international community?

Brittany today

In the past, Brittany was considered by France as refractory, backward, or ... as a source of disciplined and reliable workers and soldiers. Still, Brittany emerged economically in the 1960s.

Thanks to the CELIB (*Committee for the Study and Liaison of Breton Interests*) and some Breton lobbies, Brittany developed, among other things, a successful agri-food sector (at least from a contemporary perspective), a telecommunications industry, while relying on its maritime economy.

At the same time, a strong cultural revival fostered a sense of pride in belonging to Brittany.

But the emigration of Bretons to France has continued. A widespread feeling of "*we could do better*" persists in a-Brittany, lacking trustworthy political offerings in the full and noble sense of the term. Certainly, Breton parties exist, but despite their goodwill, they have never succeeded in exercising power in a decisive manner in Brittany or in sending deputies or senators to Paris.¹

We must move forward.

The foundations of our identity

Brittany is not a state, but everyone will recognise that it remains, by definition, a nation.²

¹ If Paul Molac is a member of parliament who speaks for us, he is an individual, a special case. He does not belong or comes from any established Breton party.

² The dictionary of the French Academy defines 'nation' as (in French): *A community whose members are united by a sense of the same origin, belonging, and destiny.* The Larousse dictionary defines 'nation' as (in French) : *A group of human beings living in the same territory, with a common origin, history, culture, traditions, and sometimes language, and constituting a political community.* The Petit Robert dictionary defines 'nation' as (in French) : *A fairly large human group characterised by an awareness of its unity and the desire to live together.* The Collins English Dictionary defines 'nation' as (in English): *A community of persons not constituting a state*

A Breton patriotism is deeply rooted within us. We see it at every sporting or cultural event at home or abroad. This Breton patriotism or pride is passionate, diverse, and inclusive.

But Breton identity is not limited to cultural, sporting, or festive events; it is part of our daily lives, within our communities, our workplaces, and our families.³

We also know that pride in being Breton does not always mean supporting autonomy or independence. This brochure is therefore not only aimed at committed activists, but also at those who are undecided.

Those whose hearts may be convinced, but whose minds are not yet convinced.

Breton Identity

Yes Breizh believes in a strong and inclusive identity.

What does this mean?

Yes Breizh considers that anyone settling in Brittany - regardless of age, disability, gender, marital status, ethnic origin, religion, etc. - is a full citizen of Brittany as long as they claim it and share its values.

This also implies rights (housing assistance, for example) and duties to defend Brittany in all matters affecting its future.

Devolution, autonomy, independence, what are we talking about?

Through these different terms, we are talking about a political process in which Brittany will govern itself.

Yes Breizh calls this process : **devolution**, as inspired by the 1997 "Devolution of Power" laws in the United Kingdom. These laws allowed Scotland and Wales to gain broad powers in areas such as health, the economy, the environment, agriculture, fisheries, housing, etc. They grant these countries true national recognition, their own parliament and government, while remaining within the United Kingdom.

In the case of **autonomy**, Brittany would decide on all matters relevant to its own concern, with the exception of what are known as sovereign functions, i.e., the police, justice, diplomacy, and the army, which would remain the responsibility of the central government.

Independence could be the final step in this process if the Breton people so wish. In the case of independence, Brittany would then be a sovereign state like any other state in the world.

but bound by common descent, language, history, etc., i.e., the French-Canadian nation.

³ 2014 <https://bcd.bzh/DOC/DIGEST-sondage.pdf>

2024 <https://www.ifop.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/COMMUNIQUE-DE-PRESSE-Quest-ce-qui-fait-le-bonheur-de-vivre-et-travailler-en-Bretagne.pdf>

<https://hal.science/hal-03713437/document>

Devolution

Yes Breizh therefore proposes a new word to unite all sensitivities, all Bretons who wish to see Brittany decide for itself.

What does this word imply?

The idea of devolution embodies a political project for Brittany, a project whose forms and limits will be determined by the Breton people.

Its aim is not to oppose or force a choice between autonomy or independence but to bring together all those who believe in a Brittany able to master its own destiny.

The impasse of French centralisation, a widely shared observation

More and more people are becoming aware of the profound injustices of the current situation. We see this in the billions of euros squandered by the French state on projects not always democratically approved. We also see it in the disproportionate share of cultural budgets allocated to Paris and the Paris region or in the way the French state controls some of our most precious natural resources.

The devolution of powers to Brittany is a necessity for Brittany of course but also for the central government. The latter already has a lot on its plate regarding external security and public debt management.

Given the rapidly changing political landscape, we work for the issue of devolution of powers to Brittany to become a structuring and ongoing topical issue.

Why devolution?

We wish to be clear and factual.

It should provide you with the information you need to consider with greater confidence why this devolution of powers is essential, and also provide you with the necessary information to support your own communication.

We must be pragmatic, identify the issues that affect the daily lives of Bretons and then gather the necessary analytical elements before providing answers.

We believe it is time to open a serious debate on our society and its challenges, while also initiating a reflection on Brittany's place in Europe and the world.

Why?

Why not?

Some would say that Brittany is too small to benefit from devolution of powers and move towards greater control over its present and future.

Yet, some of the most prosperous, egalitarian, and happiest countries in the world are small. What differentiates Bretons from the Slovaks, the Danes, or the Irish?

We have many assets in Brittany. Yet, Brittany faces a large number of problems to solve (we will list them later).

Would not it be easier to solve them if we could find Breton solutions in Brittany for our people rather than expecting them from a central government that is currently paralysed?

Furthermore, Paris currently considers Brittany as a secondary region within France and makes decisions that do not take Brittany's needs into account, but rather respond to the priorities of other regions.

Brittany is different

One might ask: "Brittany? Is it not part of France? How is it different?"

Certainly, Brittany shares many similarities with other French and even European regions, but it also has its own unique challenges, contexts, values, culture, history and language.

It should be remembered that Brittany was an independent state for several centuries and then enjoyed a very broad degree of autonomy until the French Revolution.

Of course, some of you may think that devolving powers to control our issues and our destiny conceals a desire for separatism.

We understand this, but the issue of devolution is simply to recognise our unique identity, to progress together and to guarantee our place as a full member of a community of nations in Europe.

Obtaining the government we vote for

Breton MPs represent only 37 out of 577, or **6.4%** of the National Assembly, while its population represents 7.4% of the French population.⁴

In terms of political representation, Brittany systematically distinguishes itself from France by the **resilience of the parliamentary left** and its **resistance to the establishment of the right-wing Rassemblement National**, and this even in elections where the latter makes strong gains in France (2022, 2024). The presidential right (LR or LREM/Ensemble) often performs less well in Brittany than in France, and regionalists sometimes hold significant influence (particularly in 2022).

⁴ It is remarkable to note that in Brittany, a deputy is elected by 100,000 voters when in the Paris region, 75,000 are needed... <https://www.nhu.bzh/la-bretagne-sous-representee/>

Thus, following the last legislative elections, the French National Assembly is composed of:

- 33% "Ensemble" MPs (Presidential centre)
- 28% "NFP" MPs (left and extreme left)
- 25% "RN" MPs (extreme right)
- 14% "Non-attached" MPs

While, for Brittany, the distribution of its deputies is:

- 41% "Ensemble" MPs
- 24% "NFP" MPs
- **0% "RN" MPs**
- 35% "Non-attached" MPs

As we can see, regardless of Brittany's vote in general elections, and especially in the last elections, we experience the often damaging consequences of election results that do not reflect our interests (**1/4** of French deputies belong to the extreme right, compared to **0** in Brittany).

Brittany thus suffers regrettable consequences when French opportunistic political alliances lead to decisions that are not in its best interests.

Certainly, it could be argued that we have a "Regional Council" in Rennes to handle our affairs. But everyone knows that the Regional Council has very limited powers and budgets. Furthermore, this council cannot easily interact with the missing part of Brittany, Nantes and Loire-Atlantique, which is governed by the Pays de la Loire region.⁵

Finally, Yes Breizh considers that the centralised political system imposed on Brittany is not democratic.

The beginning of a diagnosis

A few figures to begin with:

In 2024, French government spending will be around € 443.4 billion, ultimately creating a deficit of 5.8% of GDP (Gross Domestic Product), or € 168.6 billion.⁶

The budget of the Brittany Region managed by the Regional Council (with only 4 out of 5 "départements")⁷ amounts to € 1.9 billion, or 0.4% of the French state budget.

It is clear that the Regional Council lacks the means to truly implement a policy for Brittany.

Without resources, how can we meet our needs?

⁵ Loire-Atlantique was detached from Brittany by the collaborationist Vichy regime to prevent Brittany from becoming too powerful in a France then in serious existential crisis. But, "strangely," Loire-Atlantique has never been reintegrated into Brittany since...

⁶ [Budget GouvernementalInsee](#)

⁷ Equivalent to counties in Ireland and in the UK.

This observation is even more evident when we compare the Regional Council's budget to that of other regions, such as Bavaria and Catalonia, which, respectively, have budgets 25 times and 11 times larger than the Brittany Region.⁸

We will return to these points later in the document, but as we can see, the Regional Council lacks the capacity to act due to a lack of devolved powers and budgets.

Furthermore, the funding of the Regional Council is determined by Paris based on its vision of needs and priorities, priorities often centred on the Paris region and a few so-called advanced regions. All of this is unfortunately consistent with a decentralisation led by Paris not as an honest desire to transfer powers, but only as the transfer of underfunded mission responsibilities.

The Regional Executive and the Regional Council

Although some progress -though timid- has been made through decentralisation, real change can only occur if a new Breton Assembly (with our five “départements”) and a resulting Breton executive fully control Brittany's socioeconomic and political spheres. They must also ensure meaningful representation in Paris at the Palais Bourbon and the Palais du Luxembourg.⁹

For example, how can we properly integrate health and social services with the needs of Bretons when social spending and taxation remain under the less-than-transparent control of Paris? A Breton executive and a Breton Assembly - and not just a weakly decentralised administration - could be far more effective and ambitious.

Devolution would allow Brittany to build its economy and society, while ensuring our political leaders are fully accountable to us.

The Breton people has so far lacked the ability to influence policies to address the difficulties and challenges they face on a daily basis.

This is not irreversible.

Think “opportunities” instead of “risks”

Many say that devolving more powers to Brittany to better control its current situation and its destiny is a good idea, but that Brittany could never afford it.

But, in fact, why not afford it?

What would be the risks? Do we harbour irrational fears of a population rendered infantile?

Yes Breizh believes that we must and can foster confidence in the future. A future that we, Bretons, from Brittany and elsewhere, have the responsibility to prepare for today, but also for future generations.

Together, we can all regain faith and the desire to make Brittany a positive, enterprising, and bold country.

⁸ <https://www.nhu.bzh/budgets-regionaux-europeens-indigence-region-bretagne-administrative/>

⁹ These two ‘Royal Palaces’ host the French National Assembly (l’Assemblée Nationale) and the French Senate (le Sénat).

Yes Breizh notes that more and more Bretons are slowly becoming aware of this: it's inspiring.

Yes, Brittany is rich in resources and could lead the way in the fight against climate change. Yet we cannot fully benefit from assets such as offshore wind energy, among other issues, because they are controlled by Paris.

Furthermore, France's efforts to attract foreign investment almost systematically overlook Brittany.¹⁰ The "Choose France" summits held annually for the past eight years beneath the gilded walls of the Palace of Versailles have had no real impact on Brittany. However, they do allow foreign investors to "get their hands" (the expression is from the regional press) on Breton companies, such as the chemical company BCF Life Sciences or digital companies acquired by Americans, such as Klaxoon or Secure-IC.

To add to this picture, who among Bretons knows that Brittany ranks second to last in France in terms of foreign investment, with only 3% of projects and job creation? On the other hand, the Paris region benefits from 25% of these investments, while the four regions traditionally favoured by Paris for economic and political reasons (Hauts-de-France, Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, Grand Est, and PACA) benefit from 40%.¹¹

A devolution of powers would allow Brittany to rebuild an economy shaped by Breton priorities, rather than the eminently centralising French ones.

If we doubt our ability to fit into the economic landscape, how can we explain that countries like Ireland, Switzerland, Belgium, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, and Latvia, which a priori have no greater economic assets than Brittany, have developed their economies, businesses, and innovations to the point of having "unicorns," that is, startups worth more than a billion dollars? ¹²

Brittany has none.

Economy and reduction of inequalities and poverty

Yes Breizh believes that devolution of powers would also allow us to build a fairer society by addressing the injustices suffered by people of foreign origin, LGBTQIA+ communities, people with disabilities, and the 11.2% of Breton families living in poverty. Even though a large proportion of Bretons believe they are "privileged," due to a lack of information, Yes Breizh points out that INSEE¹³ statistics identify nearly 60,000 Breton households receiving RSA¹⁴ by the end of 2023, nearly a third of which are single-parent families.¹⁵

¹⁰ <https://www.letelegramme.fr/economie/investissements-etranagers-la-bretagne-fait-quasi-chou-blanc-au-sommet-choose-france-6820784.php>

¹¹ <https://www.ey.com/content/dam/ey-unified-site/ey-com/fr-fr/campaigns/foreign-direct-investment-surveys/documents/ey-barometre-ey-attractivite-france-2025.pdf>

¹² <https://data.ladn.eu/archives/dans-quels-pays-plus-licornes-startup/>

¹³ The French National Statistics Institute.

¹⁴ The "Active Solidarity Income" (RSA) ensures that people without resources have a minimum level of income that varies according to the composition of the household.

¹⁵ bretagne.dreets.gouv.fr+15Insee+15Insee+15InseeBREIZH-INFO+3Région Bretagne+3Insee+3

Furthermore, who has not met Bretons living in precarious, even degrading conditions ?¹⁶¹⁷¹⁸¹⁹

A new start

Regardless of who is in power in Paris, Brittany continues to fall behind. Our economy is generally failing (we will come back to this), our education system is struggling (despite respectable results), our road infrastructure is outdated, and homes are becoming second homes or being converted into AirBnBs.

Due to a lack of comprehensive economic vision and noble political decision-making, our weaknesses are increasing to the point of driving Bretons away from their workplaces.

Without any desire to paint a dark picture, far too many young Bretons are facing a future without real hope or ambition, even if their surroundings (landscapes, coast, sea) are beautiful.

Our experience brings us face to face with this inevitability: we can no longer count on the French government to solve our problems.

We know this, whether it is for Brittany, Corsica, New Caledonia, etc., Paris only "moves" if the central government is put under pressure. It is therefore time for Brittany to take matters into its own hands and build a better future; and it is up to us, for and on behalf of present and future generations to write the next chapter in Breton history: that of ensuring that powers are devolved from the central state by 2032.

Why is Brittany not already truly “autonomous”?

Why is Brittany not largely autonomous like Wales or Scotland?

There is no single answer to this question: history, politics, and economics all play a role.

For centuries, Brittany was an independent state with its own laws and leaders, but internal divisions and external pressures made its independence and later its autonomy difficult to maintain. Unlike Scotland, for example, which retained its legal system and some political systems after the Act of Union of 1707, Brittany was gradually absorbed by France. As was the case with Scotland initially, the edicts of 1532 put an end to independence, while preserving autonomy, stipulating that France undertook not to levy taxes in Brittany without the consent of its Parliament, to maintain Breton institutions, such as the Parliament, the Chancellery, and the Chamber of Accounts, to recognize the

¹⁶ <https://www.letelegramme.fr/ille-et-vilaine/rennes-35000/on-vit-avec-la-faim-il-raconte-son-quotidien-avec-615-euros-par-mois-dans-le-quartier-le-plus-pauvre-de-rennes-6716075.php>

¹⁷ <https://www.letelegramme.fr/morbihan/lorient-56100/pauvrete-a-lorient-il-y-a-de-plus-en-plus-de-travailleurs-pauvres-6716846.php>

¹⁸ <https://www.letelegramme.fr/cotes-d-armor/guingamp-22200/guingamp-ville-la-plus-pauvre-de-bretagne-ca-ne-doit-pas-etre-une-fatalite-6715640.php>

¹⁹ <https://www.letelegramme.fr/cotes-d-armor/guingamp-22200/guingamp-ville-la-plus-pauvre-de-bretagne-ca-ne-doit-pas-etre-une-fatalite-6715640.php>

right of Bretons to be judged in Brittany, and to generally preserve all other privileges, including "*all ancient charters and memorable rights enjoyed until now.*"²⁰

These rights were the subject of debate between Brittany and France until their abolition on the night of August 4, 1789, deciding on the abolition of "privileges" and the "sacrifice" of autonomies, such as that of Brittany in the name of "*the intimate union of all parts of the empire.*"²¹ Thus, the annexation of Brittany was illegally confirmed by the unilateral proclamation of the French Republic, an entity supposedly "one" and "indivisible." This led to the imposition of French law and administration, the dissolution of our Parliament, and, consequently, the erasure of Brittany as a distinct political, economic, and legal entity.

Yet, Breton identity and culture survived.

The Breton language, literature, and institutions (as long as they existed) perpetuated the idea of Brittany.

But above all, it was the strength and resilience of its people that ensured the survival of our nation.

Brittany has many assets

As mentioned above, over time, while France has granted very partial decentralisation, Brittany lacks control and means of action over most areas naturally falling under its jurisdiction. This situation is particularly disturbing and a source of loss of competitiveness when compared to other non-independent nations.

A key factor, not often discussed, is economic dependence. Brittany is fully integrated into the French economy, but major decisions regarding infrastructure, investment, and industry have always favoured other "regions," particularly the Paris region and southeastern France. This has led to economic underdevelopment and the perception that Brittany is too small or too poor to have the means to develop.

However, this dependence is the consequence of decisions made far from Brittany, and not a reflection of the many assets our country possesses.

Doubts...

Yes Breizh is aware that many Bretons cannot imagine that this dependence is detrimental to their standard of living, their purchasing power, their social security, their children's future, etc.

²⁰ Departmental Archives of Loire-Atlantique. Dominique Le Page "The Edict of Union of Plessis-Macé" - November 2016 and <http://bcd.bzh/becedia/fr/ledit-du-plessis-mace>.

²¹ « Une constitution nationale et la liberté publique étant plus avantageuses aux provinces que les privilèges dont quelques-unes jouissaient, et dont le sacrifice est nécessaire à l'union intime de toutes les parties de l'empire, il est déclaré que tous les privilèges particuliers de provinces, principautés, pays, cantons, villes et communautés d'habitants, soit pécuniaires, soit de toute autre nature, soient abolis sans retour, et demeureront confondus dans le droit commun de tous les Français. » Article 10 des décrets du 4 août 1789.

They may also be thinking: "Why is the current decentralisation not sufficient, and what difference would a devolution of powers to Brittany from the central government make?"

Since the law of March 2, 1982, the "regions" in France, and therefore Brittany, have had partial (and theoretical !) responsibility for transportation (management of ports and airports, regional express trains, public bus stations, etc.), high schools (construction, maintenance, and operation, etc.), vocational training, land use planning and the environment, and economic development.

But these areas of responsibility remain so, theoretical. This is partly due to the failure to transfer the necessary budgets to the region, which prevents Brittany from developing real policies. On the other hand, this is all the more critical so as the French administrative organisation and its "layered" structure create a loss of resources and therefore efficiency. This was highlighted in a publication by Michel Degoffe on the French Constitutional Council's website.²²

If we compare the situation in Brittany with that of our Welsh or Scottish cousins, we see that several areas should be included in a devolution of powers: health and social action, all sectors of education and training, local government and housing, justice and policing, agriculture, forestry and fisheries, the environment, tourism, sport and culture (including languages), economic development and transport (including infrastructure), taxation (including the power to set rates and bands of earned income), the allocation of VAT, the devolution of air passenger tax, the destination of fines, confiscations and fixed penalties, and, finally, the devolution of vast powers in the area of social protection.

In short, we see that the United Kingdom operates with Scotland and Wales truly possessing powers delegated by London, without the Kingdom facing political crises or dysfunctions. In contrast, France, which is centralized, experiences many of these.

Thus, at the risk of repeating ourselves, Yes Breizh asserts that several dozen areas directly affecting the daily lives of Bretons are neither defined, nor steered, nor managed by a Breton democratic representation. Moreover, the French multi-layered system leads to a loss of efficiency in Brittany, when regions, "départements", municipalities, communities of municipalities, metropolitan areas, and "Préfets,"²³ each administer their own actions. The cherry on top of the multi-layered system is the various national and local agencies with areas of expertise overlapping with "départemental", municipal, and regional structures, all without any real coordination or synergies.

Generally speaking, the central government has established multiple intermediaries.²⁴ The French system is internationally renowned for its technocratic and bureaucratic talent. Everyone agrees that, in the chaos of this jungle, it is difficult to know who makes the decisions. Indeed, the organisation (or ...disorganisation) of the system makes the whole thing confusing, even incomprehensible, and therefore antidemocratic, since it is financed by our taxes.

The devolution of powers and a new organisation in Brittany for the Bretons appear essential.

²² Michel DEGOFFE Professeur de droit public à l'Université Paris Cité - <https://www.conseil-constitutionnel.fr/publications/titre-vii/1982-2022-quarante-ans-de-decentralisation-en-france>

²³ The "Préfets" could be compared to Governors or High Commissioners.

²⁴ As highlighted by a recent French Senate report : <https://www.senat.fr/travaux-parlementaires/structures-temporaires/commissions-denquete/commission-denquete-sur-les-missions-des-agences-operateurs-et-organismes-consultatifs-de-letat.html>

The obstacles to greater decentralisation and the devolution of powers

Many of our representatives and influential people believe that further decentralisation, even autonomy, is desirable. But, in practice, nothing has really been done beyond vague declarations of intent and therefore, without any future.

Let us return to many important issues.

- We must address :
 - o the dilapidated rail network,
 - o the organisation that needs to be reviewed to facilitate rail transport between our major cities (Brittany finances TGV (high-speed trains) but they run in Brittany at the speed of regional trains)...
 - o the congested road network.
- Energy production is controlled in Paris and specifically controls some of the most valuable parts of our coastline. No major energy project in Brittany can exist without the direct or indirect approval of the French central government.
- Broadcasting is also controlled by the French central government. No national Breton channel exists unlike Scotland for example, which has had its own channel since 2019: BBC Scotland. It is the French MPs in Paris who ultimately decide on the airtime granted to Bretons through what are called "detachments" only on France 3 and the 'ICI' network...

A necessary awareness

How can we, ordinary Breton voters, understand who is responsible?

How can we hold political leaders accountable when they, themselves, do not always understand how this organisation works and sometimes sincerely admit their powerlessness?

Moreover, the organisation of France remains singularly that of another century. The French central government in Paris holds ultimate power over Brittany and exercises it every day through its representatives, such as les "Préfets", heirs to the provincial governors of the monarchy. These "Préfets", appointed by Paris and not elected, have, among other things, authority over most of the powers in a "département" or region; they even replace mayors in the event of a vacancy without consulting the "département" or the regional council!

And what about our elected officials?

Despite the good intentions sometimes expressed by parties in Brittany or by our elected officials for greater autonomy in decision-making and action, it is clear that there are virtually no results. Our Breton MPs, with the exception of Paul Molac, rarely defend the interests of Brittany in a cross-party manner.

But our elected officials are our elected officials.

It is up to us to mandate them and convey our wishes to be incorporated into their commitments.

Yes Breizh believes within a democratic, demanding system, without adopting consumer attitudes towards our elected officials.

We have a dream...

Yes Breizh believes, first and foremost, that we can help to give Brittany the opportunity to contribute to building a clear, transparent, and accountable democracy.

Yes Breizh believes that, by identifying what unites us rather than what divides us, we can move forward to begin taking control of our future.

Yes Breizh believes that Brittany has many assets to boost its economy, intelligently manage tax revenues, and ultimately improve the quality of life of Bretons.

Currently, the French central government is leading us toward the usual choice in France between cutting spending and increasing taxes.

Yes Breizh believes that devolution of powers will allow Brittany to unleash its full potential by creating a more dynamic, diversified, and adaptable economy, and therefore better prepared for the challenges ahead.

Too small? Too poor?

As already noted, a common argument that often blocks any rational thinking is: "Brittany is too small and too poor."

Too small?

Brittany (5 "départements") has nearly 5 million (4,987,000) inhabitants as of January 1, 2025²⁵.

Wales has 3.2 million inhabitants, Scotland 5.57 million.

In Europe, nearly twenty nations are independent while having equivalent, and often smaller, populations.

Here are a few examples:

- Denmark: 5.9 million
- Finland: 5.6 million
- Slovakia: 5.4 million
- Ireland: 5.3 million

²⁵ <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/8379557>

- Croatia: 3.8 million
- Lithuania: 2.7 million
- Slovenia: 2.1 million
- Latvia: 1.8 million
- Estonia: 1.3 million
- And Cyprus, Luxembourg, Malta, Iceland, etc.

What these nations share - sometimes with autonomous, though non-sovereign, nations - is not their size or the skills and talents of their populations, but the fact that they have total or extensive control, particularly over their economies.

Too poor?²⁶

Denmark, which is fairly comparable to Brittany in both population and area, has a GDP of €337 billion, 75% more than Brittany's GDP which stood at €191 billion in 2024.

It is surprising, however, that a European country quite similar to Brittany in many respects should have such a difference in GDP!

Just at Brittany's level, we find Greece with a GDP of €181 billion, then Ukraine at €169 billion, and Hungary with €153 billion. Scotland, for its part, has a GDP of €280 billion in 2022 for a population of 5.5 million, a GDP 50% higher than Brittany's, despite having a similar population. As for Catalonia, its GDP stands at €213 billion.

Another benchmark: if we take Brittany's GDP per capita into account, our country ranks fifteenth out of twenty-eight in the EU.

Thus, with a GDP per capita of €29,792, Brittany ranks between Spain at €25,443 and Italy at €30,203, but is ahead of Portugal and even Poland.

But this indicator must be compared with that of Ireland (€81,573), which is... almost three times higher than ours!

And if we take France as a benchmark, it ranks thirteenth in terms of GDP per capita, at €36,873, while Brittany's, let us remember, is €29,792 per capita, a third lower.

Yes Breizh questions this considerable gap between Brittany's GDP per capita and that of the French average.

²⁶ <https://www.nhu.bzh/pib-produit-interieur-brut-de-la-bretagne/>
<https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/4480852->
<https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/1405599?geo=DEP>

Conclusion: Although certainly higher than the administrative region's GDP per capita of €30,258, we use this figure to calculate Loire-Atlantique's overall GDP. 1,429,272 inhabitants x €30,258 = €43.2 billion

Comparison is not reason? Are you sure?

Ireland and Iceland, very poor countries a century ago, were also hit hard by the 2008 financial crisis.

Yet, within a few years, Ireland's growth outpaced that of most European countries by adopting a bold fiscal policy while complying with European rules.

As for Iceland, despite a population similar to that of Nantes and the collapse of its banking sector, its economy recovered within three years. Iceland's success is due in part to its decisive response: unlike France, it punished reckless bankers, implemented major financial reforms, and used its own currency to stabilise the economy. If we look at the situation in the Baltic countries, since the end of the Soviet Union, these three states, also poor before 1991, have demonstrated their ability to be agile, efficient, and outward-looking actors, surpassing many regions of Western Europe. If we take the example of Estonia, after regaining its independence in 1991, it established itself as one of the world's leading technological nations. This success was achieved thanks to simplified tax legislation, facilitating business compliance with regulations,²⁷ and a strategy focused on digital innovation.

Brittany has a future through devolution

A devolution of powers to Brittany would not immediately make Brittany richer, but it would give us the economic tools we currently lack.

Today, Brittany does not have real powers in terms of taxation and borrowing. Only the French central government has these powers, and everyone knows the catastrophic results of exercising them.

As already mentioned above, the French government generally provides the Brittany "Region" with a very limited annual subsidy, which the "Region" uses to finance its missions. This arrangement means that Breton political, economic, cultural, and other actions are determined by the priorities of the central government rather than by the needs of the country, preventing Brittany from fully leveraging its strengths.

A devolution of economic powers would change this.

Brittany would have control over:

- taxation and the collection of Breton taxes for Brittany (*one example: preventing the super-rich from evading taxes while ordinary citizens pay their share; a second: limiting taxes on corporate profits when they are reinvested in order to attract new investors*);
- simplification of the tax code (*for example: the French tax code is 1,292 pages long, while others in Europe can have fewer than 300 pages*);
- no longer being subject to decisions coming from elsewhere (*when the 2008 banking crisis erupted, the French government bailed out the banks, shifting the burden onto taxpayers. No banker was held accountable for playing with citizens' money*).

²⁷ Also compliant with European Union rules.

Building a stronger economy

A devolution of powers would allow Brittany to take control of its economic future. This means:

- investing in major infrastructure projects, such as broadband and transport;
- developing renewable energy on a large scale, taking complete control of regional planning and energy policy in line with European directives;
- attracting high-tech industries, making Brittany a hub of innovation.

Brittany could thus boost its economy while ensuring that its economic policy reflects its values, such as promoting social justice and guaranteeing a high quality of life for all Bretons.

Is devolution feasible in practice? Would Brittany be able to better control its economy?

Why should we be less competent than French specialists, technocrats, or senior civil servants who have plunged France, and therefore Brittany, into a precarious financial situation and hampered its dynamism?

The Negative Impact of the French Central state on Brittany

As a proportion of our population, thanks to France, we have a deficit of nearly **€254 billion** to manage, which is being passed on to future generations of Bretons.

If we compare Brittany to other nations of similar size and economy²⁸, while, through France, we have to suffer a deficit of 113% of GDP, Denmark has a deficit of 31%, Estonia 23%, Ireland 41%, Latvia 47%, Croatia 58%, etc.

What Brittany is de facto suffering financially is clearly due to the poor economic management of the French central state. There is no reason to believe that a Brittany benefiting from devolved powers would not do better. Indeed, no obstacle - whether in terms of skills, the education system, or our position in France or Europe - would prevent us from meeting the challenge of fiscal recovery, on our own, by developing policies largely inspired by those implemented in countries like Denmark, Iceland, etc., while maintaining close ties with Brussels and Paris.

Devolving powers to Brittany, which have so far been concentrated in Paris, would enable Brittany to reshape its economy, rather than being trapped in a system that prioritises the interests of Paris, or a select few, over our own.

We have assets.

Brittany has several major economic assets that could be fully developed, including, in particular, a highly skilled workforce, with more than a third of working-age adults holding higher education (more than in France). This skilled workforce is an essential asset for sectors such as:

- shipbuilding;

²⁸ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/fr/web/products-euro-indicators/w/2-22042025-ap>

- digital technologies and robotics;
- energy transition;
- agri-food;
- maritime;
- security (including cybersecurity) and civil protection;
- cultural-related fields.

With devolution, what about the link with France and therefore the central state?

Yes Breizh simply believes that today, Brittany needs to benefit from the devolution of powers to be able to find Breton solutions to its problems while establishing ambitious and sustainable development goals.

Of course, if these solutions can be "exported" to other parts of France or Europe, we will be delighted to share our experience with them.

The converse is of course true with the intensification of exchanges and partnerships on relevant issues with other nations or regions in Europe.

Yes Breizh believes that certain areas, such as currency and defence, can remain the responsibility of Paris, which in any case does not assume these responsibilities independently (eurozone, NATO, etc.).

Relations with Paris can remain close, based on a new, responsible and respectful relationship on both sides.

Brittany and the world

Brittany currently has minimal influence on international affairs, with the French central government speaking for all of France on the international stage. Since Brittany represents only about 8% of the French population, the interests of the central government dominate negotiations and shape international relations.

This was clearly demonstrated during the Brexit negotiations. Breton issues ultimately carried little weight in trade negotiations with the United Kingdom.

Whatever your opinion on the EU,²⁹ it is useful that Brittany has a much greater influence than it does today on France's position in general with respect to the EU and on the EU itself in possible negotiations for new trade agreements with the United Kingdom. Moreover,

Brittany has every interest in developing its relations with our Welsh, Scottish, Cornish and other cousins. Not to mention our relationship with Ireland, facilitated by its position in the European Union.

²⁹ European Union

To this end, Yes Breizh believes it is essential to open permanent offices in each of the capitals in which our own interests are to be promoted and if these "offices" can be hosted by the French embassies, as the United Kingdom allows for the Welsh and the Scottish, this would show that what is good for Brittany is good for France (the reverse is not always true).

Brittany and sustainable development

In terms of sustainable development, Yes Breizh's approach is true and concrete. Our approach, and the very nature of Yes Breizh's actions and proposals, are rooted in a sustainable development approach respectful of our environment and people.

Yes Breizh, like others, is convinced that, throughout the 21st century, the climate will continue to warm, the population will age, and digital technologies will become increasingly important.

These issues are currently barely addressed by the French central state. Therefore, much remains to be done for Brittany.

Yes Breizh believes that many challenges must be addressed throughout the world, but also in Brittany to ensure sustainable development and a smart energy transition for us, but also, and especially, for future generations.

Yes Breizh particularly wishes discussions and tangible actions to be undertaken on:

- the concrete reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (*analysis, actions, budgets, timetables, monitoring*)
- the development of new energy production sectors (*note that energy is a long-term process, particularly in terms of infrastructure, and requires strong and thoughtful decisions in Brittany for the Bretons*)
- given the growing urbanisation of Brittany (*as elsewhere in Europe*), consensual discussions and actions against land take and the nature of urban infrastructure, as well as the mobilisation of our companies and research centres (*particularly in universities*) to improve the environmental impact of building materials as well as thermal and energy renovation methods;
- the aging of our population, which is increasing, particularly in Brittany, due to the influx of non-Breton elderly people;
- in relation to our agri-food sector, how to ensure the supply of recognised quality food to our populations (*this could become a successful export sector*), etc.

Yes Breizh believes that the changes to be made are essential and must be implemented quickly, given that practices are difficult to change in a short period of time. Concrete explanations must therefore be provided to Bretons in order to break the usual opposition between individual and collective change.

Brittany and its Defence

One of the most important functions of any government is to protect its citizens. Defence is not limited to fighter jets and warships: it also involves protecting populations from all forms of threats, whether military, natural disasters, or cyberattacks.

On paper, Brittany is located in one of the safest regions in the world. But our maritime environment, the Ile Longue³⁰ base, and, above all, changing geopolitics mean that the global security landscape is more uncertain today than at any time since the 1930s.

It is unclear whether NATO can and will continue to be able to count on the United States to play its full role, and the implications of this situation for the alliance remain uncertain. Reducing dependence on the United States will require helping to make defence a higher priority than in the past. Yes Breizh approves the recent French national strategic review, which includes the impacts of:

- climate change—*leading to flooding, coastal erosion, forest fires, and extreme weather events;*
- cyberattacks—*targeting critics, businesses, and public services;*
- online disinformation campaigns—*designed to destabilise democracies and influence elections.*

While Yes Breizh does not propose the creation of a Breton army, it recommends that regiments or units located in Brittany be identifiable as "Breton" (flag, markings on uniforms).

However, Yes Breizh believes that the entities ensuring security in Brittany should be grouped into a single force. Thus, the national police, the local police and the "gendarmerie" would be part of a single force, similar to the *Garda* in Ireland, and would report directly to the Breton executive, which is derived from the Assembly of Brittany.

Brittany and immigration

Yes Breizh believes that our immigration policy should be controlled by Brittany. It is up to Brittany to decide who can enter, stay, work, and settle - whether temporarily, such as university students, or permanently, for those wishing to build a new life in Brittany -.

As stated, Yes Breizh considers that anyone settling in Brittany - regardless of age, disability, gender identity, marital status, ethnic origin, religion, etc.- is a full citizen of Brittany as long as they claim it and share its values.

Devolution? Fear of change?

Yes Breizh understands that Bretons, already sensitive to what is being discussed here in terms of their desire for devolution of powers to Brittany (or those who might become so), might be concerned about its consequences.

It is quite normal for most of us to want assurances that our daily lives would not be disrupted by a devolution of powers.

³⁰ L'Ile Longue is located at the very west of Brittany. It hosts the French nuclear submarines. Its British equivalent is Fastlane.

What share of France's national debt would Brittany potentially inherit?

Even if, a priori, this issue of debt contracted by the French central state does not concern Brittany (which has never approved it), it could be imagined, as indicated above, that a portion of the debt could be allocated to us, for example, proportionally to our population.

This would represent approximately... €250 billion...

If this portion were allocated to us, Yes Breizh believes that Brittany should then demand full responsibility for its fiscal and financial policy, including control of its own borrowing in relation to the country's needs. This means we then could decide where to invest, whether in infrastructure, public services, or growing our economy.

What would happen to France's large public sector employers?

Some jobs could be eliminated as a result of downsizing entities representing French centralisation, but Brittany would need to set up equivalent organisations. Many civil servants could join them to generate as many jobs as those eliminated.

What will happen to social benefits and assistance for people with disabilities?

Currently, benefits and assistance for people with disabilities are controlled by the central government.

Devolution of powers could affect health care by adopting the French system but improving them, particularly in :

- support for caregivers;
- the pivotal role of general practitioners.

What would happen to pensions?

If the French system was not part, by construction,³¹ of the devolved actions, Brittany could offer Bretons a supplementary retirement system through capitalisation thanks to the possibility of creating a sovereign fund.

Brittany, on the other hand, would pay close attention to the management of Breton pensions by the central government and the relevant private organisations.

What about the administrative organization?

A devolution of powers by the central government would involve the election of a Breton Assembly, from which the Breton executive would naturally emerge.

The “départements” would be maintained, as would, temporarily, the layers of the French mille-feuille, but a long-term consultation process (7 years) would aim to simplify operations and eliminate inefficiencies, particularly in the use of public funds.

Consistently, the need for local intermediaries is essential to strengthen local democracy and allow local taxes (such as taxes on second homes) to be allocated to local priorities. Fixed territorial boundaries could ultimately avoid the frequent and unnecessary reorganisations seen in the past.

³¹ Private and occupational pensions are also protected by law, meaning that the organisations managing them must pay members' contributions.

What about Breton farmers and food security?

Agriculture and agri-food are essential to Brittany's economy, but despite certain "efforts," key decisions remain influenced by Paris and Brussels.

Some trade agreements allow for cheaper and lower-quality imports, which harms the competitiveness of Breton farmers.

Devolution of powers would give Brittany the opportunity to better control developments in agricultural and food security policies and thus better protect the Breton agricultural sector from unfair competition, invest in sustainable agriculture, and build a food system that benefits both producers and consumers. A permanent Breton office in Brussels would allow us to make our voice heard and exert as much influence as necessary on decision-making.

Could devolution of powers make housing more affordable?

Housing policy is decentralised, but the main financial powers remain in the hands of Paris. This makes it more difficult for Brittany to combat rising rents, property prices, and homelessness. The French central government currently sets the housing benefit scales. Brittany, therefore, cannot adjust the assistance it provides to Breton tenants. The tax rules applicable to homeowners and second homes, in addition to the housing tax, are also controlled by Paris, which limits efforts to curb speculation in second homes, which, as already noted, ultimately drives Bretons (often young people) away from their workplaces.

With a devolution of powers, Brittany could introduce stricter rent controls, invest more in social housing, and establish fairer tax rules for second homes. This would give Brittany the power to consider housing as a fundamental right rather than simply a commodity.

What about the safety of people and property?

Yes Breizh believes that living in Brittany implies respect and trust in a society governed by laws freely accepted by a majority and applicable to all. Yes Breizh is aware that incivility is gaining ground in Brittany.

This invincibility can lead to knee-jerk reactions from Bretons, but also a loss of confidence in our social fabric, in short, in what unites us.

Yes Breizh is aware that the current judicial and police systems are exhausted and demotivating, both for those who experience them from within and for Breton society as a whole.

At the same time, the sentences handed down are enforced to varying degrees, which further diminishes their educational effect. Indeed, while the principle of a sentence is to represent compensation for a disruption of social balance, the sentence must be proportionate and applied to allow the individual who has broken the law to be deterred from repeating the offense.

Yes Breizh believes that serious offenses or crimes must be tried quickly while respecting the rights of the defence and the prosecution. Minor offenses or infractions in terms of incivility must be handled based on the principles of the highway code and the points-based driving license. Each offense is converted into lost points and a fine, and their accumulation can lead to a "loss" of rights and therefore a court appearance or mandatory civics training.

Furthermore, in cases where judgments result in light sentences, in order to avoid overloading the prison system, the use of electronic bracelets will be expanded.

Would devolution imply legal developments?

The devolution of powers would allow Brittany to define its own legal foundations by drawing closer to its legal history, but also to other, even more independent and equitable models existing in Europe.

Would devolution have an impact on sport?

Today, there are no Breton football, rugby, or other teams.

Yes Breizh believes it would be desirable to promote Brittany through each club reaching the elite level in the French championships. Like Vannes for rugby, and many football clubs, the promotion of belonging to Brittany would be supported.

What cultural policy would Brittany have in the event of devolution?

Brittany currently benefits from cultural budgets whose total corresponds roughly to the operating budget of the Paris Opera alone...

Yes Breizh believes that Breton identity is a fragile ecosystem. It relies heavily on the Breton language, which is at the heart of Brittany's culture.

Just as Quebec values French in an English-speaking world, and just as France strives to perpetuate the ideas of the Enlightenment with the language of Voltaire despite a cultural environment marked by Anglo-Saxon culture, Brittany values its languages, particularly Breton, the last continental Celtic language in Europe.

On the sensitive subject of languages, Yes Breizh considers that French is today the most commonly spoken language in Brittany, that Breton is the national language of Brittany, and that Gallo is the regional language spoken in Eastern Brittany.

These three languages will be officialised, respected, promoted, and taught in a positively engaging manner.

Yes Breizh also encourages reflection on contemporary Breton art to move away from a certain folklorism that was already opposed a century ago by the Seiz Breur.³²

What about education and training in the event of devolution?

Yes Breizh believes that French national education policy is not achieving the results its cost should allow. A devolution of powers would allow for a move closer to Scandinavian models while remaining in compliance with European regulations in this area.

Devolved powers financed by Brittany for Brittany

More generally, the devolution of powers would allow for the direct receipt of budgets funded by Breton taxes for all of the above-mentioned issues, rather than only receiving a small portion of them in return from Paris.

Moving towards devolution: the mission of Yes Breizh

³² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seiz_Breur

Yes Breizh is aware of the difficulty of the path ahead, or even of the path to create.

Yes Breizh specifies that it is not a political party. Thus, Yes Breizh rejects any political categorisation or allegiance, other than that to Brittany, the Bretons.

Yes Breizh's "team members" come from diverse backgrounds and are thus better able to understand, explain, and convince.

Yes Breizh is not dogmatic, but rather pragmatic in its desire to see Brittany take a different, positive, and exciting path, avoiding any semantic traps³³ that lead to reflexes rather than reflections on how to conduct actions within a democratic framework.

Yes Breizh does not intend to participate in elections. However, it may support any candidacy for political, associative, or other mandates. This will be the case on the condition that this candidacy commits to working on actions that could lead to a devolution of powers by 2032.

This candidacy label will secure the support of all Yes Breizh members.³⁴

Similarly, ultimately, any representative of the French central government (the "Préfet" for example) or of another state, as well as any elected official holding a local or national mandate, will be considered legitimate if they obtain a Yes Breizh label.

A Devolution to understand and want

Brittany can only commit to devolution if its people so desire, having understood that devolution is a realistic and beneficial option for the country and each individual.

When this desire emerges following a vote (or a referendum), it will be necessary to amend the Constitution of the French Republic³⁵ within 18 months while implementing the devolution processes. During the first session of the Assembly of Brittany, which will be held following the vote of the Bretons, a framework text will be presented and voted on to explain in general the mode of governance, the rights, duties, and values underlying the work of the Assembly and that of the executive resulting from it.

³³ Starting a sterile debate on the choice of words rather than working on actions.

³⁴ Yes Breizh will abandon this label as soon as an executive is appointed following the election of a Breton Assembly.

³⁵ What will be done for New Caledonia for its future status as an associated State or what has already been partially done for Corsica. But the French constitution is rather hard to modify because of the dogma of 'one and indivisible' French republic.

How can I help make this devolution happen?

Yes Breizh believes in Brittany and its future.

Yes Breizh is a collective of strong individuals determined to unite, without ego, to move towards positive changes for Brittany by 2032.

You!

If you consider yourself Breton or if you like Brittany, regardless of your origins, gender, political or religious affiliation, if you support our goals, here is how you can help us, and also help yourself!

- ✓ Join Yes Breizh! You can easily become a member online at HelloAsso.com or at GoFundMe.com.
- ✓ Follow us on social media and share our content (links below).
- ✓ Get involved by joining one of the many Yes Breizh groups. If one does not exist in your area, why not create one? **Having Yes Breizh groups in Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Cornwall or Man would be fantastic.**
- ✓ Spread the word by organising public meetings. Contact us to do so. Interact with your elected officials and, if you are a member of a political party, association, or other organisation, lobby them on this issue.
- ✓ Above all, talk about Brittany issues and Breton devolution with your friends, family, and colleagues.

Together we will make a difference.

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