



Energy Observer



## Communiqué - Energy Observer: on course for French Guiana!

04 décembre 2020 - 10h30



Energy Observer left Guadeloupe and the Antilles arc in her wake on 23 November and is now continuing her journey around the Overseas Territories bound for French Guiana, the 61st stopover in her circumnavigation of the world. It's a stopover, which will enable the crew to continue its Odyssey in a region boasting exceptional natural heritage and combining cutting-edge technologies and Amazonian primary forest, a European spaceport and a quite unique biodiversity reserve.



Energy Observer Productions - David Champion

### Tricky sailing conditions on the Maroni River

Introducing the boat to some new latitudes and some quite unprecedented sailing conditions as far as Saint-Laurent du Maroni, the passage spanning nearly 800 nautical miles took 8 days in all.

As the vessel made her approach in this outermost region of Europe on the South American continent, the boat crossed tacks with a number of fishermen from French Guiana and Suriname before arriving at the mouth of the Maroni River. Thanks to the appearance of wide mud banks deposited by the Amazon River, this coastal area is brimming with species, which come and take shelter in the mangroves, freshwater marshes, brackish lagoons and flood-prone savannahs. It's a unique landscape which greets the crew, flanked by long beaches of worldwide renown as a result of the area forming a nesting ground for leatherback turtles.



© Energy Observer Productions - David Champion

### Using outer space to protect the planet

Guided by Victorien Erussard, founder of Energy Observer, the crew will visit a major scientific site: the Guiana space centre, managed by the CNES (the national centre for space studies), Energy Observer's scientific and educational partner. Since 1964 and the decision to install a spaceport on this section of the coast between Kourou et Sinnamary, French Guiana has become an iconic site in the global mission to conquer space.

Today, space is being used to try to understand climate imbalance and monitor its evolution. In this way, European satellites of the Copernicus constellation are providing scientists the world over with the data required to model the climate and monitor the changing ecosystems and the chemical make-up of the atmosphere. From melting ice to monitoring of forest cover, the satellites observe, measure and inform us about the state of the planet.



© CNESES/Arianespace/Optique Vidéo CSGS Martin,

2018

A region with multiple energy challenges

French Guiana has its own challenges to face in areas that are not connected to one another and which cannot rely on the networks we're familiar with. Whilst the demand for electricity is increasing with a growth in the population that is far greater than that of metropolitan France, the challenge of a breakdown in the supply of oil-fired power stations has become a particularly hot potato.

During its visit, the crew will likely witness the difficulty of local energy production with a small environmental footprint and the failed attempts to utilise renewable energies.

And yet, French Guiana is keen to find a way by relying on its natural assets: the future that is being written right now is rallying together inhabitants and engineers, who are coming together in this stretch of coast between the sea and the primary forest. Biomass, photovoltaics and hydrogen will enable the region to quickly make their energy transition a reality. From the grey hydrogen of Ariane launchers to the soon to be green hydrogen of the future reusable rockets, the spaceport and the whole of the local region are eager to come together as one to invent tomorrow's energy ecosystem. An ecosystem that is clean, virtuous, renewable and a provider of jobs.

Victorien and his crew are passionate about this multicultural region, whose lush vegetation is a reflection of the countless challenges it will have to face. With the illegal immigration of Suriname, gold panning and unauthorised deforestation, overfishing, remote indigenous populations with no access to the minimum of services and uncontrolled urbanisation, French Guiana pushes the edges of our imagination as a land of exile and punishment. However, not so very far away from the Cayenne penal colony and Devil's Island where Captain Alfred Dreyfus, famously and wrongly accused of treason, despaired, a new future is indeed being written and Energy Observer is there to tell the tale.



© Energy Observer Productions - Agathe Roullin

#### About Energy Observer

The Energy Observer project was born in 2013 from the commitment of Victorien Erussard, a master mariner, who teamed up with explorer, Jérôme Delafosse. Aware that it is now vital to commit to the planet, they gathered around them a complementary team of sailors, scientists, engineers and reporters to create the first self-sufficient vessel capable of drawing its energy from nature whilst also preserving it.

The dream became a reality 4 years later, when the Energy Observer vessel was launched for the first time. Developed from a legendary multiple award-winning catamaran, Energy Observer is a laboratory for ecological transition designed to push back the limits of zero-emission technologies. Hydrogen, solar, wind and water power, all the solutions are experimented with, tested and optimised here with a view to making clean energies a practical reality that is accessible to all.

Criss-crossing the oceans in a bid to get out and meet those who are coming up with sustainable solutions for the planet every day, Energy Observer has become a movement, a round the world Odyssey, where every stopover is an opportunity to learn, to understand and to share the different energies.

