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Turtle meat trafficking in Polynesia

The 1st



Tahiti, June 2, 2025 – *"It's an open secret,"* the channel's employees explained to *Tahiti Infos* at the end of last week. One or more turtle meat sales were reportedly organized at the Polynesia La 1ère station. The latest one took place at the beginning of May. At the works council meeting on 22 May, this subject was raised. *"The worst thing is that executives are involved, they have sold some and some have even bought some,"* denounce the



employees of the public channel who point the finger at the management which, according to them, *"wants to hush up this affair"*.

The sale and purchase of turtle meat in Polynesia The 1st^{was} on everyone's lips on May 22, in the resort of Pamatai, after the subject was raised in the works council.

This case dates back to the beginning of May, *"only a few days after the broadcast, on our airwaves, of a story concerning the increase in turtle poaching. It's really nonsense,"* say several employees of the France Télévisions group.

"I'm still in shock, I was even outraged" or *"the worst thing is that executives are involved, they sold some and some even bought some"*, some will say. Others on the other hand do not, hesitate to denounce the fact that *"everyone knew, it was public knowledge within the station and those who say that they are shocked, it is because in fact, they are shocked that we caught and that it was debated in the works council"*.

On the heights of Pamatai, the employees even changed the slogan of the public channel. It is no longer *"Polynesia The 1st Te Hono Tahi"* but *"Polynesia The 1st Te Honu Tahi"*. *"We heard only that in the canteen. We even told those who were on the air to be careful not to make a mistake about the slogan!"*

"A dirty story that the boss wanted to hide"



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It all started with *"a very banal story"*. Indeed, during the lunch break of the members of the works council, this subject was debated by some of the employees in the canteen. One of them said *"almost crying, that we are forbidden to bring our family in, but there are some who bring in turtle meat"*.

And the Vigipirate plan being in place at Polynésie La 1ère, a memo specifies that any person outside the service is prohibited on the premises of the establishment. The regional director of Polynesia La 1ère, Jean-Philippe Lemée, even confirmed this ban when the question was put to him in the works council.

Following his statement, *"he was told that we heard that a person from outside the station entered and that there was a sale of turtle meat within the company. And the boss simply said: yes. So he was aware of this case and he never did anything even though it's illegal and it's a crime and it goes back now."*

"This subject was mainly discussed in the works council because the dishes were sold by executives and executives bought them (...). The director even lost his temper, especially when the elected officials asked him if a complaint had been filed because it is a crime. He simply replied that there will be sanctions and that he will take care of this matter (...). Normally, the works council is aware of the procedures that the management is following, but here, we don't know anything even though it's an employee like any other," some denounce.

"It's all the more scandalous that we are in the middle of preparing for what the management of France Télévisions calls 'the France Télévisions environmental convention'."

"Low profile"

Many of them point to the responsibility of the management in this case. According to our information, this is not the first time that various sales have taken place on the premises of the establishment. *"The sale was gradual. First there were lemons, then fruit salads and now turtle meat."*

"Now, we have reached another level. I don't know what this will lead to." And according to our information, all this *"was done in full view of everyone (...). The ice house was even placed in the patio."*

According to the information gathered, what also *"shocked"* many people was that the day after the works council, *"the person concerned did not keep a low profile (...). They all met in the director's office and it was a lot of fun. Maybe the management told her she'll get a little slap on the hand, that's all."*

"Démanteler tout un réseau"

"C'est le devoir de la direction de dénoncer ce délit car il a été commis à l'intérieur de nos murs, on ne peut pas laisser passer cela. C'est comme si demain, une personne vient vendre de l'ice ici", poursuit un salarié.

Pour certains, cette plainte permettrait, si les faits sont avérés, et qu'il y a bien vendeur, acheteur et commanditaire, surtout de *"démanteler le réseau en place"* car vraisemblablement, *"on n'est pas la seule entreprise où ces plats sont livrés"*.

Lorsque la livraison se fait, la viande de tortue serait déjà dans des barquettes et vendue à 1 000 francs voire 1 500 francs. *"Ce n'est jamais du brut, tout est préparé. Et cela reste très discret."* *"C'est tout un réseau que tu as. C'est un secret de polichinelle qui existe depuis des années."*

Toujours selon nos sources, le directeur régional aurait reconnu la gravité de la chose, mais aurait assuré que sa priorité est de retrouver les acheteurs. *"On lui a dit qu'on a déjà identifié*

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le vendeur et si une plainte est déposée, une enquête va être ouverte et les acheteurs vont être trouvés. On pourra même remonter la filière."

Certains salariés regrettent même que les élus et syndicats, au courant de cette affaire, n'aient rien fait.

"Il va engager une procédure pour voir si les faits sont avérés"

Le directeur régional, Jean-Philippe Lemée, actuellement à Paris, n'a pas répondu à nos questions sur le sujet. Contacté à son tour, le directeur éditorial, Alex Bellerose, a assuré avoir entendu parler de cette affaire, "mais je n'ai pas plus d'information", a-t-il dit.

Il confirme cependant que la direction prend les choses très au sérieux et que des actions auraient déjà été prises depuis Paris. "Une procédure pour voir si les faits sont avérés" est déjà lancée. Des procédures disciplinaires pourraient aussi être prises.

À ce stade, Alex Bellerose n'exclut pas non plus que cette affaire puisse déboucher sur une dénonciation calomnieuse en interne et qu'il n'y aurait jamais eu de vente de viande de tortue à la station. Si tel était le cas, là encore, "de lourdes procédures disciplinaires pourraient être prises contre ceux qui font courir ces informations".

Selon lui, Jean-Philippe Lemée devrait communiquer sur ce sujet à son retour.

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