

## HEALTH [\[PDF La Une\]](#) The first radiation-free refuge is in the Drôme **Living far away from radiation**

**They say they are there for a test. In a not so lost corner of the valley of the Drôme. Next-Up Organisation has opened a refuge zone for people who are electro-hypersensitive (EHS) and who don't know where else to go. Just a breather to get back on their feet, far from the EM radiation that torments them.**

A little corner of paradise in the Drôme, where nature seems to have forgotten the TGV, the arterial road and the motorway not far off, all heading south to the Mediterranean.

Beneath the arching trees of this private estate sit two caravans... not quite like others. Because all their windows are covered in aluminium foil. Welcome to the first "refuge zone" for the EHS (electro-hypersensitive) set up by Next-Up Organisation.

No chance here of wandering about with your mobile on - not even on stand-by - or picking up your e-mails via Wi-fi.

Because it is so difficult to establish an area entirely free of radiation in France, Next-Up has provided the next best thing, a "temporary refuge zone" to help those suffering from the EHS syndrome.

This condition is not yet officially recognised by this country, unlike Sweden or Switzerland(see below).

"In 2005 Next-Up decided to set up radiation-free areas but we soon ran into problems," explains the French director of the organisation. "There are planning regulations to observe, especially in a protected area." However they almost succeeded in setting up an "eco-village". "Also in the Drôme. Everything was done according to the rule-book but at the last moment there was a hitch ... In France radiation-free zones are definitely not wanted, because of certain financial interests. In fact to establish a place like this there has to be real political will on the part of the government".

### "I'm like an animal looking for a place to hide"

In spite of this setback, there was no thought of abandoning the project. In the following weeks the temporary refuge was set up. "We're in a test period, everything has been done according to the law," explains the director. In this low radiation zone, "without any beams or HF radiation or any 50Hz LF radiation, because all the electric installations and wiring are completely buried" should enable the most sensitive to find a little peace. Also to sleep, since one of the typical EHS symptoms is insomnia.

Anne Cautain, 53, was the first to try out this new sort of refuge. She and her daughter Laure Birgy, 23, arrived in Nice on 20 July. Since then, she says, in this caravan with no electricity, she has been able to find a little respite. "For months I've been like an animal looking for a place to hide. I daren't even tell you where I was sleeping, it was like being homeless because I can't tolerate anything any more."

Her testimony is incredible. Yet Anne is still confident and refuses to give way to despair. "I just want to regain a normal life, I tell myself that even if I can't be cured at least my condition must improve." After a week in the Drôme, she is making her way home and leaving a place for others who like her are suffering from a condition that is often poorly understood.

"We've had requests from all over Europe and all parts of France. We were expecting someone from Caen who wasn't able to get here. Before they could leave they had to go into hospital."

Because even the journey is a problem, and usually people travel bundled up in a veil or a blanket, in a car insulated with aluminium foil. A real obstacle course before having the right to even a brief rest from the battle.

Mireille ROSSI



Anne and Laure