

New rooftops in France to go green

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Green roofs have an isolating effect, helping reduce the amount of energy needed to heat a building in winter and cool it in summer.

They also retain rainwater, thus helping reduce problems with runoff, while favouring biodiversity and giving birds a place to nest in the urban jungle, ecologists say.

The law approved by parliament was more limited in scope than initial calls by French environmental activists to make [green roofs](#) that cover the entire surface mandatory on all new buildings.

The Socialist government convinced activists to limit the scope of the law to [commercial buildings](#).

The law was also made less onerous for businesses by requiring only part of the roof to be covered with plants, and giving them the choice of installing [solar panels](#) to generate electricity instead.

Green roofs are popular in Germany and Australia, and Canada's city of Toronto adopted a by-law in 2009 mandating them in industrial and [residential buildings](#).

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