

FRANCE: MIVILUDES will cease to exist on 1 January 2020

– HRWF (01.10.2019) – *“The European Federation for Research on Sectarianism (FECRIS) assists victims of sectarian discrimination and receives support of our government”*, said the spokesperson of the French delegation at the OSCE/ ODIHR Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Warsaw.

He was hereby partly using his right of reply against CAP/ Freedom of Conscience, a NGO with ECOSOC status which had criticized the financing by the French state of FECRIS. For years, this anti-cult organization was repeatedly pointed at for defaming minority religious groups in Europe and for supporting its Russian vice-president, who was notorious for his hate speech towards Jehovah’s Witnesses (now banned in Russia since 2017), Mormons, Hare Krishna devotees and other non-Orthodox religions.

In 2017, the Faculty for Comparative Study of Religions and Humanism in Antwerp published a book in French entitled **“Les mouvements antisectes et la laïcité: Le cas de la FECRIS”** (<https://bit.ly/2p2wRu9>) by Patricia Duval and Willy Fautré, which was an updated translation of their book in English **“Anti-sect movements and State Neutrality. A Study Case: The FECRIS”** (<https://bit.ly/2ohDoRo>) published several years ago in the university journal “Staat-Religion-Gesellschaft” by the Technical University of Dresden (Editors: Gerhard Besier and Hubert Seiwert).

Now, the end of the existence of the controversial MIVILUDES which for years had been repeatedly accused of defamation and discrimination by French and foreign NGOs and sometimes sentenced by courts, has been programmed: 31 December 2019.

Today, 1 October, Thomas Mahler said in *Le Point*, in an article entitled "Does the government abandon the fight against the sects?":

Miviludes had no president for a year and the retirement of Serge Blisko. It is now downright threatened with dissolution, as revealed this morning France Inter. Yesterday, Anne Josso, Secretary General of the Interministerial Mission of vigilance and fight against sectarian drifts, announced internally that the structure would be attached to the Ministry of the Interior from 1 January, and therefore no longer depend on Matignon. Anne Josso was received by Marc Guillaume, Secretary General of the Government, who spoke of a "redevelopment" and downsizing. Originally composed of fifteen people with seven specialized advisers and administrative staff, the Miviludes should be limited to three or four civil servants. It should merge with the Interministerial Committee for the Prevention of Delinquency and Radicalization (CIPDR). (...)

For Miviludes officials as well as for activists, there is no doubt: the fight against sectarian aberrations is no longer a government priority. An activist explains us, for example, that each year, the Ministry of the Interior must issue a circular inviting the prefects to organize an information meeting with Miviludes and local associations or social services, "which leads to 40 or 50 meetings a year. But this year, Castaner (Ministry of Interior) did not do it." (Translation by CAP/ Freedom of conscience).

See some articles published in French media:

https://www.liberation.fr/checknews/2019/10/01/sectes-la-miviludes-va-t-elle-disparaitre_1754651

<https://www.franceinter.fr/lutte-contre-les-sectes-la-miviludes-va-t-elle-disparaitre>

https://www.lepoint.fr/societe/le-gouvernement-abandonne-t-il-la-lutte-contre-les-sectes-01-10-2019-2338675_23.php