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RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE

PREMIER MINISTRE

REPORT TO THE PRIME MINISTER

2008

**Interministerial Mission of Vigilance and Combat against Sectarian Aberrations
MIVILUDES**

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Foreword by the Chairman

I would like to start by thanking my predecessor, the Prefect Jean-Michel Roulet, who breathed new life into the Interministerial Mission of Vigilance and Combat against Sectarian Aberrations during his three-year combat.

This high ranking civil servant was undoubtedly able to find the right balance between respect for the fundamental freedoms which represent the foundation of the Republic and firmness when faced with behaviour breaching public order and the dignity of human beings.

Catherine Katz worked at his side and provided the Mission with her precious experience as a magistrate which she now invests in a new cause, within the Interministerial Mission of Combat against drugs and addiction. Catherine has been replaced with another magistrate, Amélie Cladière, who immediately launched into structural reforms within the Miviludes.

This activity report is therefore mainly the result of work by the previous team. This report focuses on new strategies and new risks of sectarian aberrations, particularly in the sectors of health, access to employment and professional training.

The report also specifically refers to the decision of the Ministry of Health to create a monitoring tool dedicated to non conventional therapeutical practices, or the target set by the Ministry of Labour to prosecute sectarian movements if breaches of labour law are detected, such as the absence of remuneration or an employment contract, and the repeated intentions of the Ministry of the Interior, clearly stated in its circular of 25 February 2008, to "boost State action against sectarian aberrations".

In this line, Miviludes, whose central mission is to coordinate the action of all public authorities, will attempt to ensure a more active presence in the field, in direct contact with the groups concerned and with all public actors or associations involved.

In the same way, in view of transparency, Miviludes will report on its activities in all fields publically in the form of a bimonthly newsletter. The report also details the partnership agreement signed between Miviludes and the parliamentary-National Assembly channel to better inform our fellow citizens of the dangers and risks of sectarian aberrations detected in certain movements.

Once again, as was the case last year, this report focuses on the international nature of the sectarian phenomenon.

At the invitation of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, of the OSCE, Miviludes travelled to Warsaw on 8 October 2008 to emphasise, in direct relation with the services of the Quai d'Orsay, the democratic and balanced nature of its initiatives and its respect for civil liberties and person freedoms.

In view of optimising its goals, Miviludes has launched a restructuring program for its entities (General secretariat, Executive Operational Control Committee and Orientation Council) in view of becoming more effective and more operational.

The Interministerial Mission of Vigilance and Combat against Sectarian Aberrations will therefore continue to reveal the commercial aims and psycho-spiritual techniques applied in the form of misleading appearances and used to achieve mental manipulation and other dangerous practices for individuals and fundamental freedoms with the same determination as in the past. The protection of the key interests which represent the very foundation of a democracy depend on this process.

Introduction

According to the many requests sent to the Documentation française, and the growing number of visitors to the web site of the Miviludes, the report issued by the Chairman of Miviludes to the Prime Minister is met with ever greater interest each year. In the last six years, this annual report has gained ground and extended its horizons, providing ever more complete and in-depth information on the sectarian phenomenon, and targeting an ever wider audience. The letters received by the Miviludes clearly demonstrate the wide and diversified audience reached and affected by the annual report, via various channels.

This constant requirement for quality is a permanent challenge for member of personnel working for the Interministerial Mission or the services of the Ministries concerned, who all contribute to this report.

This was particularly the case in 2008, a transition year for the Interministerial Mission of Vigilance and Combat against Sectarian Aberrations. A transition period due to the departure of Jean-Michel Roulet and the appointment of Georges Fenech as Chairman of Miviludes, due to the renewal of a significant proportion of the standing General secretariat, but also due to substantial modifications to work in the field, which led Miviludes to change its procedures when collaborating with public authorities, for which it is responsible for "encouraging the coordination of preventive and repressive action" (article 1 of the decree of 28 November 2002 founding the Miviludes) against dangerous or reprehensible behaviour in the form of sectarian aberrations.

The removal of the departmental "Cells of vigilance" whose competences have been transferred to the "departmental councils for the prevention of delinquency, aid for victims and the combat against drugs, sectarian aberrations and gender violence" subsequent to the simplification of administrative procedures applied in 2007 must, according to the circular of 27 May 2005 from the Prime Minister on the combat against sectarian aberrations, be completed by the creation, within these departmental councils, of working groups specifically responsible for monitoring issues relating to the combat against sectarian aberrations.

In the circular of 25 February 2008, the Minister of the Interior strongly requested that Prefects "boost the State's action in the combat against sectarian aberrations" and organise a meeting of these working groups once each quarter for this purpose to "centralise and compare information on any sectarian aberrations".

During the preparation and holding of these meetings, decentralised services became fully aware of the need to reinforce available information in the field and requested that Miviludes provide this information in accordance with its mission.

In the same way, the in-depth reform of the information and investigatory services, the natural contacts of Miviludes, had an effect on the functioning of the Miviludes.

This report is therefore, as was the case in 2008, a transition report, remaining particularly open in terms of the future, and the prospects inherent to the renewal of the teams and practices in the combat against sectarian aberrations within the Miviludes and throughout France. However, this report continues on from the report in 2007 in many ways.

The report opens by describing the new and particularly concerning risk of aberrations in the field of employment and professional training, followed by an in-depth study of the risks of Satanism, mentioned in previous reports. A description of the multiplication of risks via Internet is followed by a new study of the lobbying strategies used by international movements with risks of sectarian aberrations, which follows on from the study described in the report from 2007, with specific reference to the UN this year.

In the same way, after a description of the new methods used in the combat against sectarian aberrations, a survey of the assistance available to victims in Europe is reported on, completing the study of legal and administrative resources available in the combat against sectarian aberrations in Europe presented in 2007.

This year's annual rapport presents a central theme focusing on risks in the health sector, and more particularly on the misuse of therapeutical practices. Although this issue was also presented in previous reports, this concern took on massive proportions in 2008 due to the multiplication of offers based on well-being and personal development and lacking any serious backing, some of which implied a real health risk. This survey is extended with a description by the General Directorate of Health within the Ministry of Health, focusing on the planned framework for non-conventional practices with a therapeutic purpose. These paragraphs only partially relate to the field of sectarian aberrations, however they provide readers with precious clarification on the delicate border line between simple charlatans, which may or may not actually be harmful or dangerous, and sectarian aberrations, which can be promoted or encouraged by such practices. This topic therefore primarily concerns the services of the Ministry of Health, but falls into the field of competences of Miviludes when aberrations are detected which could imply, or facilitate, mental manipulation. In this very context, Miviludes received many questions from the public and public authorities facing offers liable to imply risks in 2008.

Finally, the report of each of the Ministries on the Executive operational control committee for the combat against sectarian aberrations includes a substantial section on "prospects" this year, leading the way for projects in 2009 and future years. In the same way, the report on the action of Miviludes in 2008 looks globally to coming years. In terms of action in France in particular, 2008 saw many new needs arise, which could not be immediately satisfied, but which will be covered in 2009, in accordance with the mission of Miviludes, which aims to provide ever increasing support for public authorities working in the field.

Section 1

Sectarian risk



Contribution of the general delegation for employment and professional training

New strategies, new risks: sectarian aberrations in the field of employment and professional training

Prevention of sectarian aberrations

The rise in popularity of training with a significant "behavioural" dimension has been noted for many years now. Some of these actions relate to "personal development", sometimes with a "therapeutical" purpose. Some of these services raise questions, not only in terms of legislation governing professional training, but also in terms of legislation governing public health (the illegal practice of regulated medical professions, etc.).

In fact, it is important to remember that training is a form of education where one individual transmits their knowledge and skills to other individuals. This requires the definition of set objectives based on the knowledge held by trainees. Professional training must actually be of use for a job or employment and/or the development of current knowledge. For this reason, personal development programs are not generally considered to be part of the field of continuous professional training.

In terms of applicable rules, particularly the attribution of expenses, circular DGEFP n° 2006-35 dated 14 November 2006 specifies that "behavioural" based actions targeting a general or mixed audience and therefore with no specific relation to a position are excluded from the field of continuous professional training. This also applies for actions relating to general organisation (of a service or company), with no specific reference to a position or target skills".

- Enquiry with regional inspectorates

An enquiry was carried out targeting regional inspectorates between end-2007 and early-2008 to more precisely identify the actual situation with regard training courses and service providers. Most regional services declared that they paid great attention to this type of training course pursuant to applicable law. They consider that the number of training courses of this type is either increasing or stable. However, these services noted a constant flow of declarations from new training bodies in these fields, representing slightly more than 10% of new declarations. The specialities declared mainly concern the development of mental ability, behavioural elements, personal development training courses and sometimes psychology and health, i.e. approx. 20% of the total number of training service providers declared.

Most of these training courses aim to provide behavioural skills or professional "attitudes" for a specific position, which is acceptable in terms of regulations and for implementation. However, problems arise, particularly for initiatives or training courses in the field of health or well-being. Difficulties are based on the often vague nature of the planned initiatives, which prevents any kind of assessment. The very general nature of article L. 6313-7 of the labour code is however emphasised, and was previously highlighted in circular n^o 2000-20 of 25 May 2000. The professional or qualifying nature of these training courses is very frequently not proved, and the set goals and programs remain ambiguous, or do not mention any kind of learning progress, prerequisites or the specific professional situation of trainees. These courses do not include any kind of assessment to appraise the skills acquired. These courses, may, particularly in the field of health or psychology, specify techniques or methods which have not been tested or recognised by the competent authorities. The level of danger involved increases if the courses also include mental destabilisation, exorbitant financial demands and attacks on physical integrity.

Charlatans and sectarian aberrations: minority but worrying phenomena

Some service providers declare themselves as training bodies to obtain official state "recognition", as the declaration of activity is often incorrectly (and illegally) presented as "approval", or to prove the "professional" nature of their services. They then develop their offers, mainly targeting the general public, who purchase these services individually and from their own pockets, to take advantage of VAT benefits. These service providers are usually unaware of the obligations of professional training bodies in terms of contracts, advertising, the prior provision of educational documents to trainees and accounting in case of multiple activities. This type of suspect service provider only represents a small percentage of all bodies offering behavioural training courses, however, as shown in the enquiry, this small percentage is the source of esoteric practices and charlatans, which can also lead to the illegal practice of regulated medical professions. While this phenomenon is not wide-scale, inspectorates must pay attention as 90% of regions declare that they have processed declarations implying a serious risk of fraud and/or sectarian aberrations.

With more specific reference to training, increased vigilance has been organised since the year 2000, particularly in the registration of training bodies or during post-registration inspections organised by professional training inspectorates. These checks must ensure the exclusion of any natural or legal person whose objectives differ from those of continuous training or whose activities aim to or have the effect of breaching the freedoms of a person, or attacking his or her dignity or personality, from the field of continuous professional training.

Applicable legislation also aims to protect companies and the public from any advertising which contains any expression which may be misleading with regard access to training courses, their content, sanctions or the means of financing.

- Contributing to improving the quality of services

In 2005-2006, the number of inspections of training bodies remained low, particularly due to the extent of checks in the context of the European social fund, and this trend continued in future years. This blocked the dissuasive effect of inspections and the distribution of advice on behaviour in the field. It must however be emphasised that the approved collector parity organisations (OPCA), which finance most training courses for very small, small and medium-sized businesses, have a role to play in regulation and are taking this role more and more seriously, although these organisations cannot replace the action of inspectorates and state sanctions when required. Regular controls of the procedures implemented or not implemented in this field by the State would enhance the effectiveness of inspections and help to improve the quality of the global services provided.

Reforming professional training: improving the quality of training services

In the context of the consideration of the reform of professional training planned for early-2009, three working groups were created, including one group assigned to the quality of training services and acquisition. The proposals made by this working group aim to answer three main questions:

- How to reduce the value of declaration for training bodies?
- How to guarantee the quality of a training body and its services?
- What can be considered as good practices for training acquisition?

Miscellaneous recommendations were issued following debates, relating to the identification of training bodies and their services and the acquisition of training, particularly by companies (very small, small and medium-sized business in particular).

With regard training bodies, the main proposal aims to improve the understanding of available services and recommends the creation of a registration system for training bodies via a portal-directory, enabling customers to identify the entries without including any indication of the quality of the services provided, unlike the current system of registration with the administration, which implies guaranteed quality. Quality certifications or labels acquired by these bodies are strongly encouraged and should appear in this portal-directory. The second recommendation relates to the clarification of the conditions for the VAT exemption which is currently accorded automatically upon request, including for commercial service providers aiming for profit. These first two recommendations have a direct impact on the combat against sectarian aberrations in professional training by removing the false notion of "approved by the State" and the VAT exemption, which is a real windfall for many charlatans.

The third recommendation aims to improve the clarity of information on available services and proposes the creation of an on-line identity card for each body, standardised at national level. The portal-directory should be accessible to all (general public, companies, intermediaries). The fourth recommendation relates to the upstream commitments of the actors in question and proposes an agreement signed by all parties: order providers, acquirers, users and the training body. This agreement would summarise the aims of the initiative and the different resources involved. Finally, a fifth recommendation proposes that a certificate mentioning the aims of the course and the tests passed, if applicable, be issued to beneficiaries at the end of the course. This document may therefore be produced in future validation processes or be included in the dossier of the actor concerned. This would improve the identification of training bodies and provide a more explicit framework for the goals and results of training courses, enabling tighter control in the name of the combat against sectarian aberrations and charlatans.

The recommendations for the acquisition of training by companies, particularly very small, small and medium-sized businesses, propose the development of mediation between the public and small businesses to improve the quality of training. These clearly designated intermediaries will be intended to encourage the development of life-long training, support the expression of demand, provide assistance in searching for appropriate services and simplify assessment. The mediation function targeting small businesses should be entrusted to social partners, via OPCA in their fields of competence, and OPACIF for those on individual leave.

Awareness and training campaigns in 2008

The general delegation of employment and vocational training has continued its efforts to ensure the awareness of and train the main order providers and financial backers of public and private training on the dangers of sectarian aberrations. An awareness campaign was particularly organised with the Agency for the employment of disabled workers within the employment policy sub-division.

As is the case each year, a two-day awareness session was organised for the group of student labour inspectors assigned to professional training on the issue of sectarian aberrations and two meetings were also organised with Mrs Catherine Picard, President of UNADFI, and Mr Henri-Pierre Debord, advisor for Miviludes.

A conference/debate coordinated by the FONGECIF, in partnership with ADFI Normandie, was held at the University of Rouen and covered the theme of sectarian aberrations in professional training. This initial awareness campaign in Upper Normandy attracted more than one hundred visitors, including training professionals and students.

Guidelines for 2009

The general delegation for employment and vocational training intends to continue to ensure the awareness of and train target audiences such as the operators of the new employment agency, who are responsible for a vulnerable sector of the public.

Contribution by the Ministry of the Interior

Satanism

The missions of the SDIG are an extension of those formerly exercised by general information services in the combat against sectarian aberrations, with a particular focus on activities which threaten public order.

The search for information on sectarian movements is performed by all national correspondants belonging to the different departmental general information services (SDIG) which transmit information to the central sub-division.

Satanic deviations continue to be monitored. Considerable attention is focused on the analysis of profanations of religious sites and graves generally speaking, with specific focus on the nature of the acts (racism, vandalism, satanism, etc.).

The current face of satanism in France

Satanism continues to thrive in France in an informal and vague manner, mainly via the Internet or word of mouth, at Black Metal concerts, in specialist night clubs or at private gigs. The multiple grave profanations reported in recent years and the signature of their authors confirms that France is not free of the disturbance of Satanists.

- Satanism events in France

There is still no official definition of Satanism and this phenomena continues to exist in multiple forms. This makes it difficult to establish the total number of Satanists.

Most Satan lovers continue to take their inspiration from the texts of Anton Szandor LaVey (including the Nine Satanic Sins, the Nine Satanic Statements, the Eleven Satanic Rules of the Earth and the Satanic Bible written by LaVey in 1969 and translated into French in 2006).

The Satanic doctrine is based on anti-conformism (Satanists believe in themselves, in their own qualities and they declare themselves their own gods) and on individualism (we live in "a cruel world" and "only the strongest must survive").

No strictly Satanic association is currently declared in France, with an official bureau and an object relating to the worship of Satan. The few structured clubs which attracted attention to themselves around a decade ago have disappeared (the Wicca group, the Temple of Set, etc.). A few movements with a more or less direct relation with Satan do however exist.

- Recent structures and meeting points detected

The only structures participating in Satanic phenomena are currently mainly commercial: publishing houses, shops, music industry, etc. A few recently created training courses could however be reported for their more or less direct links with occult and Satanic beliefs:

- The LAPF (Libre Assemblée Païenne Francophone - Free French-speaking Pagan Assembly), declared on 11 August 2004 to the sub-prefecture of Langon (Gironde) aims to coordinate dialogue between the different spiritual trends, including Paganism/neopaganism, Shamanism and Wicca (pre-Christian traditions including Satanic beliefs).

- The Association 666, the number of the Beast, whose goal is "the study of the conflict between paganism and Christianity from the dawn of time to today" is discreet and almost inactive.

- The store "Le Saint-Graal" is specialised in the sale of so-called esoteric products. This shop displays a picture in its window which is similar to the pentacle, the symbol of black magic or Satanism. During June 2006, an investigation by the Aire-sur-la-Lys (Pas-de-Calais) gendarmerie revealed the existence of purification sessions and various rituals, notably involving the slitting of the throats of goats or roosters. The participants of these sessions were customers at Le Saint-Graal store. Animal carcasses were found in April 2007 in the Neufossé canal in Racquinghem (Pas-de-Calais).

We could also mention the International Church of Satan, which only exists in France virtually, but which proposes on-line membership of the Church. The official site is translated into several languages and provides exhaustive information on the world of Anton LaVey and his disciples.

Specialist shops, bars, clubs and night clubs are particularly popular with gothics and Satanists.

Flyers are available in these establishments and indicate other addresses, such as sex shops specialised in fetichism, or orgies organised.

One bar in the capital acts as the base camp for a group of a dozen Satanists fascinated by the personality and the criminal past of an artist known for his paintings showing serial killers.

- The gothic movement and the Internet: two catalysts for Satanistic ideas

The gothic movement arrived in France twenty or so years ago and currently attracts an ever growing audience. The gothic approach mainly establishes a medieval world full of heroic and other types of fantasy, creating a sort of vast mixed-up movement including fans of role play and Black Metal music, but also fetichism and certain Satanist environments.

The gothic trend is popular with young fringe movements looking for some kind of identity, and groups tend to evolve in a morbid black world including strange medieval characters with a clear fondness for magical practices, spiritism and superstitions.

While gothism does not systematically lead to Satanism, it may provide the first step down this road, particularly via increasingly explicit blogs (on-line personal diaries or web sites).

In addition, the Internet, the preferred means of communication for Satanists throughout the world, is undoubtedly the main channel for the spreading of this ideology. In fact, many French or English-speaking sites exist on Satanism, with varying degrees of violence. These sites include extracts from the Satanic Bible, texts, or even complete books, but also links to sites sharing similar cultures, such as witchcraft, demonology, vampirism, magic, the gothic world, Black Metal, etc.

A plethora of blogs also exists filled with comments by web visitors boldly revealing their love for Satan. Multiple blogs display the preferred topics of their creators right from the home page: vampirism, mental decrepitude, cemeteries, black romanticism, scarifications, Blood Fetishism, gothic trends, depression, sadness, death, suicidal thoughts, etc.

Skyrock.com/blog is the leading host server of blogs in France with approximately two million French sites, including several thousand sites which refer directly to the worship of Satan in their title or content. Skyrock management has already created a team responsible for permanently monitoring more than one hundred and thirty million articles and comments to prevent abuse.

One site, with the title "Gothic" is a full-scale on-line encyclopedia on the Gothic world, with sixty or so references, including lengthy articles on black masses and Satanism. We could also mention the existence of a gothic directory, based on trends, www.annuaire-gothique.com.

Finally, one of the most complete web sites on gothic trends is the site designed by a gothic follower (Corpus Angel). In addition, the web pages of the French-speaking gothic community offer a load of information on concert dates and venues, the publication of a range of fanzines, and addresses for gothic meeting places, bars, shops and evenings.

Satanism, a danger for physical integrity

- Satanism, a source of inspiration for vulnerable or suicidal individuals

Generally speaking, Satanists do not encourage suicide and consider suicide as an act of weakness. According to the philosophy of the Church of Satan, "suicide is strongly disapproved of as it cuts off life (the total indulgence)".

However some of its technological support media entirely focused on Satan justify suicides reported in the press. These media can therefore represent a decisive factor pushing vulnerable school kids to take the final step.

Thousands of youngsters throughout the world discuss their bad feelings and suicidal thoughts via this new and free media, open to all. Some of these youngsters could be tempted to use the blogs and chat pages not only to share their discomfort in life, but also to prepare a group suicide.

In September 2005, two school pupils aged 13 and 14 committed suicide by throwing themselves off the 17th floor of a building block in Ivry-sur-Seine (Val-de-Marne department). The two young girls had often raised the subject of death and had implied that they were going to commit suicide sooner or later. They had met thanks to their shared appreciation of the gothic world. On 31 May 2008, a similar event occurred in Belgium with the suicide of two teenage gothics aged 16, by hanging.

- Phenomenon reaches Black Metal fans

The artistic expression of satanic culture is mainly vented via Black Metal music, which is increasing popular with youngsters. Some teenagers, generally in a vulnerable phase or struggling intellectually, totally love this musical style and the ideology behind the scenes.

Many albums are chock full of cabalistic and esoteric symbols: death, candles, fire, blood, the inverted cross, the devil, etc. According to critics, subliminal messages may even be inserted in the music.

Their influence varies depending on individuals, most fans simply demonstrate a certain fondness for gruesome sounds, or are attracted to an "In" concept with mainly commercial aims, however the audience is young and not yet mature enough to resist the influence of the "imaging" displayed and could rapidly adopt this style and its principles.

Calls to join the army of Satan are frequent. At some concerts, many fans do not hesitate to wear costumes and makeup to imitate their idols. Dressed entirely in black, fans were the inverted cross more discreetly on a daily basis.

In fact, increasing numbers of teenagers, often at the younger end of the age bracket, like and adore groups or singers with a Satanic flavour, and attempt to copy the imaginary rituals described in the songs or at shows.

The extended impregnation in a dark culture dominated by Satanic music, violent words and expressive role play, can lead some youngsters to find themselves at more "open" meetings where Black Metal music meets Satanism and Nazism.

Overview of satanic profanations

Recent years have seen a gradual but constant increase in degradations of religious sites and graves. This trend was confirmed by figures for 2008, however the strictly Satanic nature of these events remains proportionally insignificant.

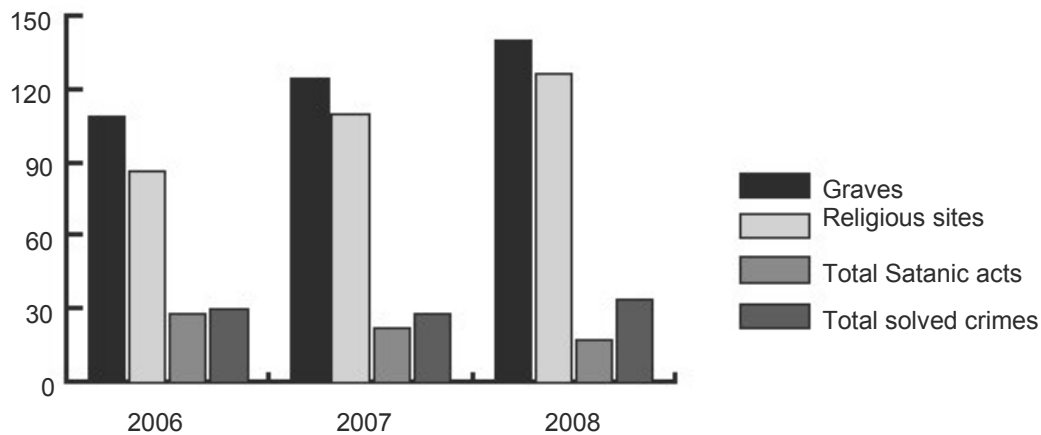
In 2008, 22 out of the total 266 sites affected (cemeteries, religious sites and calvaries), proved to be Satanic acts. In 2007, 22 out of the 234 offenses recorded were Satanic and in 2006, 28 out of 195 acts were dedicated to Satan. The numbers of this type of act are therefore currently stagnating.

These acts generally involve anti-Christian statements and inverted crosses, allusions to Satan and his world, accompanied by blasphemous phrases; no signs of full-scale rituals have been globally observed.

Breaking and entering of sacred sites sometimes includes profanation, implying to an increase in the theft of religious artefacts and sacramental bread, and pointing investigators towards Satanic groups. This was particularly the case in several churches in the Hautes-Pyrénées in September 2007, including the Saint-Jean cathedral in Perpignan (eastern Pyrenees).

39 out of the 266 incidents reported in 2008 led to the arrest of those concerned, meaning that 14.7% of crimes are solved, i.e. 80 arrests, including 57 minors (85 arrests including 40 minors in 2007); in 2007, the culprits were found for 12% of incidents, as compared with 15.4% in 2006 and 17% in 2005.

Anti-Christian degradations



The average age of the culprits fell for all of these crimes. Minors aged 7 to 9 were arrested for degradations to tombs last September in Puymirol (Lot-et-Garonne department), while young teenagers who are barely older and are struggling emotionally do not hesitate to also commit such acts.

The exclusively Satanic nature of these acts must be considered from a relative point of view. According to the statements of the culprits, they were generally pushed by a sense of pure vandalism or daredevilry, and were drunk in some cases. They mainly work in groups, filled with hate for religion. The groups tend to lack structure, although some of them can be considered as part of the gothic movement.

Young "amateur Satanists", under the influence of the image of Satanic deviations displayed by the media, sometimes decide to commit Satanic acts. Acts of profanation are mainly committed by first-time delinquents, playing out copy-cat crimes and expressing a certain support for Satanic ideologies in some cases, however these acts cannot be considered as full-scale rituals.

The anti-Satanism resistance movement

Certain parties are reacting and speaking out against this rise in Satanic ideology. Several Catholics, the main community targeted by this phenomenon, and Christians more generally, have created a group (www.indignations.org) which aims to denounce acts of anti-Catholic profanation.

This group acts by notifying the public authorities of these incidents, and by the massive distribution of petitions and letters, aiming to ensure that the general public is aware of this social problem.

In February 2006, at a three-day session organised in Francheville (Rhône department), one hundred and fifty Catholic exorcists and their partners, religious and secular specialists of the occult discussed the rise in Satanism amid the young.

In March 2006, French bishops adopted the new exorcism ritual (the previous version had been adopted in 1614). For the first time, the text was translated from Latin into national languages and now clearly encourages exorcist priests to take an interest in medicine and psychiatry to improve their approaches, as the Church maintains that great caution should be taken with regard exorcisms.

At European level, in December 2006, the Italian police force created a specialist anti-Satanist force, the anti-sect Squadra (team) (SAS), including fifteen investigators, and psychologists and analysts, who focus on phenomena relating to Satanist, esoteric and religious groups.

The aim of the Squadra is to work on the occult world by collecting in and analysing reports and facts using mobile regional teams, and by working in the field to solve the most serious criminal cases such as sexual violence, drug use, and theft relating individuals to occult phenomena. A priest is also planned on the team.

In addition, the Regina Apostolorum Pontifical university in Rome organises classes on Satanism and exorcism, to teach priests and future priests to differentiate between Satanic possession and mental disorder.

In Russia, thirty or more Satanic groups, mainly relating to the neo-nazis, have been listed in Moscow. In 2003, the Russian Ministry of the Interior created a department responsible for enquiring into the activity of Satanic movements, which were multiplying their rituals and assassinations.

Comments

In certain countries, such as Italy or Brazil, the extent of Satanism has reached worrying proportions, however the progression of the sector in France appears far more limited, leading to minor offenses, but rarely major criminal acts.

Satanic structures are no longer hitting the headlines, however the movement has not died down as such. The groups continue their work via an extensive network of relations over the Internet; a plethora of sites exist and attract many teenagers, driven by a sense of curiosity for the strange and paranormal and a need to find their own identity.

The clear increase in degradations to cemeteries and religious sites has an substantial impact on local populations due to the seriousness of the incidents, the damage to private and public property, and respect for beliefs and all that is sacred. The young age of the culprits is also a key source of concern.

The principle of precaution must apply, above all for minors, both with regard browsing on the Internet, and the adoption of gothic culture and Black Metal music.

Satanic aberrations hit the headlines in Europe

Miviludes has analysed and monitored the Satanic phenomenon for several years, bringing the attention of public authorities and the general public to the dangers of this movement.

In previous reports, Miviludes had insisted on the fact that belief in Satan is not a source of concern, its focus is exclusively on the deviations originating in the ideas and concepts enshrined by the Satanic movement. This report confirms this point.

Some of the concepts distributed via the Internet can plant the seed of suicide in the heads of young teenagers or lead them to make contact with extremist groups with neo-nazi type ideologies, etc. These factors were covered in detail in the Miviludes report of 2007.

This year, with the French European Presidency, Miviludes aimed to analyse this phenomenon at European level, based on information transmitted by diplomatic correspondents.

The United Kingdom

Two Satanic movements were identified in the United Kingdom: Satanic religious groups which mainly raise their heads to advertise their way of thinking, and Satanists known as Dabblers, who can be identified thanks to their practices which often breach common law.

- Satanic "religious" groups

Satanic religious groups are considered by INFORM ¹ (association responsible for monitoring new religious movements) as a fully fledged religious movement, with organised structures, which do not pray to a superior entity, but which promote a lifestyle based on egocentricity.

This movement can also include followers of Druidism and Pagan groups.

The members of these Satanist religious groups do not sacrifice animals during their ceremonies.

¹ - Information Network Focus on Religious Movements.

Three main Satanist groups have been identified: the Church of Satan, the Temple of Set, and the Order of Nine Angles. According to INFORM, it is very difficult to assess the number of followers of these groups, as their meetings are not open to the public and their members are not talkative; nonetheless, according to figures, the Church of Satan had up to 5,000 members and the Temple of Set an estimated 500 members in 1995.

The group considered as the most problematic, the Order of Nine Angles (ONA) makes its presence known via Internet forums, although it is impossible to obtain information on its size due to the secret nature of their activities. According to INFORM experts, the ONA is listed as a Satanist fascist group, whose ideas are inspired by national socialism.

Despite this, no breach of law attributable to these Satanist groups has as yet been claimed or reported in recent years.

INFORM describes typical members of these groups as single, and globally from artistic backgrounds.

Further to multiple enquiries relating to child abuse and the Temple of Set in the United States in the 1980s, several statements have been made about the British branch of the group, however no proof has ever been found.

INFORM considers that all allegations of violent Satanic rituals scare people and feed the rumours circulating about these groups.

- Dabblers

Dabblers are individuals, mostly young adults, who are attracted by the different artistic expressions of Satanism such as music, photography, or comic strips.

There is no fixed theology, Dabblers accumulate elements from a range of sources such as black magic and miscellaneous occult traditions.

Dabblers occasionally breach the law with acts which are intended to appear Satanic, such as profanations of cemeteries, graffiti on walls, or barbaric acts involving animals.

INFORM considers that the above acts and suicide by youngsters, scarification, and the encouragement of racial hatred are not necessarily attributable to "Satanist" movements, but to sub-groups creating their own sub-cultures (sic).

Illegal acts with a direct or indirect relation to Satanism are not included in the statistics produced by the Home Office as a separate category and it is therefore difficult to determine the scale of the phenomenon in the United Kingdom in all circumstances.

Italy

Satanic sects are a recurrent phenomenon in Italy. They have mainly developed in the north of the country, in Emilia-Romagna and in Piedmont. Some of these Satanic sects are also located in Tuscany.

This phenomenon started in Italy in the 1960s and has since grown. Several Satanist groups have disappeared, but new movements have emerged, generally in secret; a gradual increase in the number of followers has been detected, with figures climbing from around a hundred in the 1960s to approximately 3,500 at the current time, belonging to around 600 small groups.

Most of the organisations practice esoteric, and even barbaric or criminal rites.

Many criminal incidents concerning the activity of Satanic individuals or groups are reported to the Italian police. Most of these incidents are penal infractions and breach common law: sexual assault, group rape of vulnerable individuals, administration of toxic substances, trafficking of child pornography, profanation of tombs, theft and concealment of corpses.

Many other cases have been publicised by the media. Between 1968 and 1985, the "Monster of Florence" group, with eight members, sexually assaulted and murdered eight couples courting in the Tuscany countryside... In January 2004, several members of the sect known as the "Beasts of Satan" were arrested for murder in Varese.

Several members of the "Children of Satan" group disappeared during the group's Satanic initiation rites. More recently, practices relating to "Acid" Satanism have multiplied: these practices bring together users of "hard" drugs, leading to deviant behaviour ranging from violence to more serious crimes.

The public authorities and the Church, concerned by the extent of the phenomenon, created various committees assigned the task of monitoring these organisations.

Squadre mobili (mobile teams) were created within the police force, to carry out judicial enquiries on this type of phenomenon.

The Italian police force pays particular attention to Satanist websites, specifically in the context of child pornography.

The Italian Church reacted rapidly, considering that it was its duty to inform and warn the faithful. The Italian Episcopal conference created an association in 1987: The GRIS (Socio-religious information and research group).

Germany

In Germany, the Satanist movement has been particularly successful since the Berlin wall came down in 1989. The new Länder discovered this phenomenon, whose presence had been limited during the communist period. However, Satanism remains a relatively unknown factor, whose extent it is difficult to estimate. It is however possible to distinguish between organised Satanism, with its rituals and the current gothic trend popular with many youngsters. The German particularity lies in the links established with the neo-Nazi movement.

A few Satanic murders have been extensively mediatised in recent years. The most famous case is most certainly the "Witten case", where a woman was found guilty of a murder she claimed to have committed while being manipulated by a demon. This grisly event was the subject of a feature length television documentary on the ZDF channel in 2006.

While it is easier to determine the Satanist intentions behind some events such as the profanations of cemeteries, etc., German police services cannot provide precise figures in this field.

German experts are also divided on their opinion as to the number of followers for the Satanist movement. Figures range from 5,000 to 20,000. Working class youngsters are most certainly the most likely to be pulled in by this movement.

Action by the public authorities is limited in this sector. In fact, article 4 of the fundamental law dictates State neutrality with regard all types of beliefs, therefore Satanism is not prohibited as such. The prevention of Satanic acts is mainly ensured by movements working to combat sectarian aberrations mostly within the administrations of the Länder, Catholic and Protestant churches, and in the form of private associations.

Music plays a key role in these movements: while many Black Metal groups are not actually Satanists, they may have gothic tendencies and feel a similar feeling of intense disappointment with life, and even suicidal urges.

The German authorities consider that a clear link exists between Satanist movements and the neo-Nazi movement: this observation is based on the study of several Internet sites. To give an example, violent anti-Semitism was detected in the texts of a nationalist-socialist Black Metal group founded in 1997.

The German police services have detected gothic trends in the profiles of most individuals having attempted to commit acts of mass murder in schools.

Spain

Spanish authorities indicate that they have not recorded any crimes relating to Satanism in recent times. This phenomenon is however clearly present in Spain. In fact, the number of Satanic sects and followers are estimated at around one hundred and at 2,500 respectively. Most of these groups are established in the region of Levante, plus a few groups in south Andalucia, Galicia and Castilla-y-León. The region of Madrid is also considered to be home to a concentration of Satanic sects. Some of the most known groups in Spain include: Lucifer's Friends, the Community of the Spirit of the Grand Eagle, the Sisters of the Halo of Beelzebub, the Church of Satan, etc.

It must be noted that some Catholic priests are recognised as experts in Satanism in Spain, particularly fathers Guerra Manuel and Picazo Ruiz. Picazo Ruiz, priest of the town of Gandia, was attacked with a knife and injured by a follower of Satan in 2000.

Several cases relating to Satanism have hit the headlines in Spain. In September 1997 in Madrid, the headless corpse of a man with a pentacle and the number 666 on his skin was not identified.

Also in 1997, two young girls aged 8 and 10 were subjected to Satanic rituals (ingestion of human blood) and sexual orgies by seven adults (including their own parents). The statements by the two girls were obtained by the Spanish judicial services and are reliable.

In 1999, a young woman aged 22 was kidnapped in Almassera and taken to an abandoned house, where several individuals practiced Satanic rituals.

In November 2001, the municipal police of Arganzuela called an end to a Satanic party in a former slaughterhouse. On this occasion, they witnessed the presence of the remains of a ritual: blood, animal guts, Satanic drawings and texts.

In December 2003, the courts of Alicante condemned Antonio R.B. to a seventy-year prison sentence for having assaulted 18 children aged between 11 and 14 between January 1998 and January 2001. All of the victims confirmed that, in addition to rape, the culprit had attempted to integrate them in the half-moon Satanic sect.

In 2004, two men were arrested for profanation of around thirty tombs in the municipal cemeteries of Villaobispo. When arrested, the two men were dressed in black tunics bearing Satanic symbols.

In addition, the Spanish authorities have detected the development of a black market for blessed sacramental bread in recent years, with a value of 80 to 500 euros each. This sacramental bread is in fact required for black mass rituals.

Portugal

According to the Portuguese Ministry of the Interior, no crime has been committed to date by a Satanic movement.

The only reprehensible acts attributed to Satanic practices (mainly the profanation of cemeteries and churches) were committed by youngsters under the influence of extreme musical scenes (Black and Black Metal). The Portuguese police therefore monitor the main rock music festivals inviting groups popular with these scenes.

It is worth noting that, according to the main Portuguese association providing aid for victims (APAV, founded in 1990), no case has as yet been recorded with a victim of a religious movement, sectarian or other...

Russia

The Satanic phenomenon can boast around thirty small groups and 2,000 members in Russia. Satanism developed after the year 1989, and mainly targets sites and objects relating to the Orthodox religion. The Internet is currently a key vector for communication.

Although Satanism is now a real movement, this trend still and primarily represents an accusation in Russia. The term is used by the most active Orthodox sectors to refer to any apparent attempt to reverse values, and particularly to the troubles which the collapse of the 1990s brutally revealed to the Russian people.

The Satanist movement in Russia conceals a dual reality:

- Traditional Satanist groups have maintained their anti-religious atheist heritage, in addition to Satanist doctrines. These groups have boosted the cause of the Orthodox Church, mainly via the profanation of religious sites or objects (mutilation of icons, destruction of crosses, including a giant cross recently blessed by Patriarch Alexis II in 1996, a bomb placed in a church in Moscow in 1997, etc.).
- With regard the new Satanist scenes imported from the United States and more specifically based on the foundation of the Church of Satan of Anton LaVey, no official "branch" has as yet been opened in Russia, thanks to the obstacles effectively set up by national regulations. Nonetheless, dozens of small Satanist groups now exist throughout the country; experts have demonstrated the key role played by certain rock music concerts, as the first stepping stone to the Satanist movement for youngsters.

In Russia, Satanist beliefs tend to frequently team up with ultranationalist or Nazi movements, impregnated with a fascination for violence and racial hatred.

The most recent criminal act dates from 10 September 2008, when the bodies of four teenagers were discovered in a town located some 300 kilometres to the north of Moscow (Iaroslavl). The bodies had been mutilated with 666 knife strokes and acts of cannibalism accompanied with explicitly Satanist claims and were in a sickening condition.

Belarus

One Satanist movement hits the headlines sporadically, however this is an ultra-minority movement with very little influence within Belarus society.

This movement has no influence on the younger generations in this country, which, according to religious authorities, is increasing turning to traditional religion.

Switzerland

Satanism is not a major concern for the Confederation; the statistics provided by the Swiss authorities reflect very minor levels of activity. Crimes likely to be related to Satanism may be punished on the basis of the articles of law applicable to breaches of the freedoms of belief and conscience, and as crimes against public order.

This movement can mainly be identified in the younger generations by the specific behaviour of many individuals dressed in black, with their hair dyed black, and wearing inverted crosses. According to the authorities, this Satanism expressed by teenagers is not based on ideology, and reflects a need to cause provocation. This phenomenon is qualified as "playing with Satanism".

In Switzerland, Satanism may occasionally raise its head in the form of serious infractions, such as the fire in a church in Aarau in 2004 lit by a young follower of a Satanist circle.

Globally speaking, current information held by the police implies the existence of a wide range of groups of teenagers which meet up under the Satanist heading.

Austria

In Austria, the monitoring of deviant acts relating to Satanism is the responsibility of the Federal Office for the protection of the Constitution and the combat against terrorism.

Austrian authorities highlight the difficulty of defining this phenomenon with any type of precision, as the forms and causes vary widely (simple means of expressing a certain discomfort or full-scale religious phenomenon). The secret nature of this deviation also explains the difficulty in assessing the number of followers in a pertinent manner according to the Austrian authorities.

The wide-scale influence of Black Metal music on the Satanist scene and the appearance of another phenomenon similar to Satanism - vampirism - has also been noted in this country.

The Austrian police forces specified that the Satanist element had been considered in recent crimes and offenses, and in teenage suicides, however no solid proof had been found to support this hypothesis.

Belgium

In Belgium, Satanism is not specifically studied, and is considered as other sectarian movements in terms of prevention and combat. Since 2000, only three cases of Satanism have been reported, however no proof was found.

Specialists consider that Belgian youngsters are not influenced by this phenomenon.

Cyprus

The Orthodox Church acknowledges the existence of a few Satanic circles. According to this Church, Satanism in Cyprus has little relation to the Satanist perceptions of the Middle Ages, or the obscure ceremonies of the XVIII and XIX centuries, and is globally influenced by the neo-Satanist organisations of the 20th century. The members of these groups refer to Aleister Crowley, precursor of neo-Satanism.

According to the confessions of a former follower, the few groups present in Cyprus were organised from abroad and members only communicated via the Internet. A few cases relating to this movement have been reported in recent times:

- The Cypriot police found several decapitated sheep drained of their blood several years ago (no date indicated). This incident was attributed to the Satanist group, Church of Satan, which mainly comprised youngsters living in the small town of Limassol.
- In May 2008, the attempted suicide of a young member of the circle of Lucifer's friends was related to that fact that he had cut his girlfriend to drink her blood. This circle organised initiation ceremonies in Cyprus, but also in the northern part of the island (Turkish territory).

In cemeteries, followers broke and toppled crosses, sang out songs to the glory of Satan and sprayed themselves with animal blood. Some ceremonies involved the massive consumption of drugs (ecstasy) and alcohol.

According to the Orthodox Church, followers are mainly recruited from foreign students who initially receive sexual proposals and are later trapped by oaths of silence before being encouraged to commit suicide, to join Satan.

Greece

Since the arrest of the Satanic group, Katsoulas, in 1993, no crime or offense relating to Satanism has been detected, although the office for sectarian aberrations of the General Police Directorate of the region of Attica has been paying close attention to reports of possible Satanic initiatives since this dramatic case.

For information, the Katsoulas group assassinated a 28-year old woman and a 14-year old girl in the context of a ritual. The culprits, two men, were condemned to two life sentences plus 15 or 20 years and their accomplice, a young barely adult girl, was sentenced to over 18 years of imprisonment.

Poland

An initial study of Satanism in Poland was completed in 1987 by the Polish Ministry of the Interior. An infiltration operation led to the identification of three groups in Poland:

- One group led by Polish Robert Szwed which developed Satanic rituals for the first time: this group was very active in the regions of Czestochowa and Wroclaw.
- Satanists belonging to the Church of Satan, who drink the blood of various animals in their rituals.
- Luciferian movements which are recognised as more radical and include collective rape in their different rituals.

Polish sociologists refer to "traditional" Satanists, which include the followers of the Church of Satan founded by Anton LaVey in 1966.

Ireland

Over the last two decades, certain criminal acts have been attributed to Luciferians. These cases involve disappearances and rape, sexual abuse of children and the improper treatment of animals.

Enquiries revealed clear psychological disorders in some of the culprits, and solid links between these facts and membership of Satanist groups were not found.

Specialists note that in Ireland, the importance of the family in this country with four million inhabitants is in clear contrast with Satanist type movements, and that the founding principles of national identity lead to the absolute rejection of this type of group in Ireland.

Norway

Black Metal, the musical scene based on Satanic inspiration, has existed in Norway since the 1980s. This music refers to Satanism and Scandinavian mythology; the main music groups in this movement sell hundreds of thousands of copies of their albums.

This movement attracted the attention of the media in the early 1990s, with a spectacularly violent turn of events, targeting people and property: between 1991 and 1995, around forty churches were the victims of profanation, and a certain number of assaults and rapes were committed by Black Metal musicians or fans. This wave of violence came to an end in 1995 with a twenty-one year prison sentence (the maximum possible sentence in Norway) for murder.

Since this dramatic case, Satanism has remained very marginal in Norway.

Finland

A few isolated offenses inspired by Satanist doctrines have been reported in recent years, such as the profanation of tombs and cemeteries (one or two cemeteries fall victim to profanation each year) and church fires.

The last serious case dates from 1998: at Hyvinkaa, three youngsters tortured a person before killing the victim and eating certain parts of the victim's body. The court stated, in its decision, that the culprits had acted under the overriding influence of Satanism. The leader of the group received a life sentence: this case is classified as confidential by the Finnish authorities.

Sweden

In the 1990s, several cases of the sexual exploitation of children were identified in relation to Satanic rituals. These events are no longer part of the current criminal scene in Sweden.

No case related to Satanism has been reported in Sweden in recent years.

Conclusion

In all other countries in Europe subject to the enquiry, Satanism is either a very low-scale phenomenon or quite simply the authorities turn a blind eye, considering that this movement is not significant and does not require any specific consideration when handling crimes or offenses.

Satanism is a real factor in modern Europe and particularly affects teenagers and is notably communicated via a musical scene and the Internet.

This movement, whose extent varies depending on the country, is generally well developed in Europe and its influence is growing.

The "values" which Satanism is supposed to convey are actually simply a channel for morbidity and violence, even if a few rare "intellectuals" do attempt to create a philosophic base.

The approach of this movement removes hope from the lives of teenagers and encourages the normal negative questioning of this age group. This movement also destroys all hope in the future, pushing some teenagers to commit murder or suicide.

In the future, public authorities should pay more attention to the Satanist movement including an in-depth study of its networks, its actual goals, and its development in modern societies.

The Internet: amplifying the risk of sectarian aberrations

A significant percentage of the vigilance of states in terms of sectarian movements and networks concentrates on the Internet.

The stakes are high. We will not attempt to provide an exhaustive assessment of the different areas of risk based on the emergence of the sectarian threat on the web, we will simply resume this threat in terms of three levels of analysis and concerns.

Level one relates to the attractive nature of the sites and their omnipresence for potential target audiences.

Level two reflects the possibility for the creators of sectarian web sites to present misleading projects, services and products, independently to the actual organisation and functioning of a movement or network, and therefore circumvent their legal liabilities, thanks to the Internet.

Finally, level three considers the plethora of proposals combining a search for meaning, personal development, well-being, self-achievement, and people management, dispersing the risk and making it difficult to define this risk. In fact, only an in-depth search can lead to the detection of the consistency of action by entities surviving on the "web" with no apparent link between them.

Finally, it must be stated that the Internet has become a unique means of slating institutions and the people working for them.

The attractive nature of the Internet and the omnipresence of risk

Stage one involves the creation of one or several "concepts" by the founder. Stage two involves the protection of these "concepts" with intellectual property rights or copyright via the national and international institutes for the protection of intellectual property. This has two advantages: protection of the use and controlled distribution of the messages and proposals targeting potential new members.

The next phase involves commercialisation, including support conferences, seminars, training courses and the development of a network of promoters. The attempt to separate the legal entities used for the central goal of the movement in order to escape the notice of administrative and judicial authorities must also be noted.

To this end, obtaining information on the history of the oldest sectarian movements and networks is a means of determining the methods they use to protect their interests. The diversified legal structures and non-transparent operating modes of these movements are indeed mainly based on former confrontation between these movements and national legislation. Over and beyond preventing transparency, the set goal of these movements is to hinder, and even prevent, the detection of the risk of sectarian aberrations and the application of the prerogatives of the services of the States.

All of these stages can be detected by an experienced analyst. The methods applied, both before and after the age of the Internet, remain the same.

Before the appearance of the Internet, their approach was mainly based on informative meetings, invitations to an initial experience of common living or a conference, after which the candidate was asked to make an "initial commitment".

This method is still used.

Proposals may be made by closed communities, which offer a physical rupture with the original environment of the candidate, maintain an anti-social policy inaccessible to investigators using traditional investigation techniques, and make financial demands in view of the gift of ones self to the community. Proposals may also relate to practices which are open to the outside world such as psychotherapeutic movements or networks which recommend a lifestyle where members continue to maintain a social life.

These aberrations occur in the field of personal development, the desire to achieve something humanely, socially and professionally, leading to a psychological rejection of the original environment rather than a physical rupture, an institutional policy based on the questioning of approved and regulated methods and practices, and exorbitant financial demands relating to the need to purchase an ever growing number of services and products.

With the use of the Internet, networked closed communities generally establish calculated distancing. This means that the Internet enables the community itself to avoid outside contact, with only the federating legal structure appearing on the "web".

This enables network leaders to present the "ideals" of the movement, their history and key themes with the associated products and services. The webmasters/recruiters will guide future members to the community which will then organise the "absolute seduction" phases and ensure the dependency of the members.

Movements which are open to the outside world have become experts in the distribution of their proposals via networks of service providers or "qualified followers", who appear on the web independently to the actual networked organisation. This dilution of the risk is managed by service providers mainly offering solutions to personal, social and professional problems. This sector is home to many at-risk practices which are not immediately evident.

Web visitors are bombarded with a plethora of "therapeutic" services for "well-being", "personal development" and "self-achievement" solutions which appear to be standard associations or companies, and visitors are not therefore able to detect the risk via "conceptual" key terms or "doctrines" which are carefully hidden behind the professional terms of practitioners.

The methods and practices proposed appear to be part of a transparent logic on the well-being market, although the offer may make some kind of "spiritualist" or "religious" claim for its services.

In this way, web visitors searching for services using key terms such as "well-being" or "self-achievement" are facing increasingly serious levels of risk, due to the ability of these sectarian networks to wield most current topics or hot social issues, without need for any reference to concepts or methodologies in the initial approach to individuals who are receptive to a change in lifestyle or looking for new ground.

In addition, the use of blogs or forums linked to vulnerable sites encourages an initial, apparently innocent, contact, with the at-risk network.

Internet renders vigilance more complex

Sectarian organisations may, thanks to the Internet, approach future followers/consumers in an appropriate, almost individualised, manner, multiplying the impact of the "seduction phase".

The most complete architecture of sectarian organisations is based on the use of copyrights with centralised management and decentralised distribution, and the search for followers/customers or followers/consumers, via marketing led by the owners of rights and implemented via the web.

It has therefore become more and more frequent to find freelance cabinets or associations promoting protected items, linking these cabinets to the owners of rights to concepts while attempting to appear as independent workers, freelancers or practitioners with their own business.

The extensive diversity of their personal backgrounds, the often confirmed assumption of training by monitors linked to this or that at-risk movement, the self-proclaimed nature of their skills and the guaranteed success of their practices, which are neither questioned nor confirmed, are all clues to the real nature of the service provider.

It is also more and more routine to face personal support "professionals" linked to the sectarian phenomenon, which combine the use of several concepts and methods.

The detection of at-risk groups via the consideration of legal, commercial or financial dependence is therefore pertinent when assessing the threat of sectarian aberrations.

The Internet: an effective means of hiding the expansion of the sectarian threat

The actions of "prosect" lobbies whose main goal is to dispute the justification of the actions of the public authorities and provide a smoke screen between "concepts" and "practices" by calling out for the protection of "spiritual minorities" adds to the considerable complication of the recent changes to the operating modes of sects.

The use of the Internet by sectarian groups, both for the spreading of their sensitive activities and for the application of a strategy based on ever more sophisticated communication, effectively calls for the creation of "spokesperson" groups as separate legal entities from the active movements and networks. These entities create and manage a misleading website with offensive goals.

The Internet therefore diversifies points of impact, dilutes the liabilities of the organisers of these networks with an inherent risk of sectarian aberrations and encourages the emergence of new areas of conflict between organised movements and States with rule of law.

"Conceptual" sites are used to highlight topics and "practical" sites are used to develop new contacts and attract the attention of individuals. Finally, "controversial" sites, full-scale pro-sect lobbies, attack public authorities.

A double front line is taking form: the first front line relates to the rise in power of "judicial manipulation" and the second front line is based on the ability of sectarian organisations to dispute the justification behind State action against their reprehensible or dangerous behaviour.

The Internet is one of the key revealing factors in the rise in power of "judicial manipulation" and their actions.

This phenomenon is partly based on the exponential growth in the number of concepts and methods protected either by copyright (stage one) or by registered trademarks or other intellectual property rights (stage two).

Products and services with inherent risks of sectarian aberrations are increasingly commercial, although some types of organisations remain attached to non-commercial concepts, either for appearance only or in line with their philosophy.

The objections to these products and services raised by the families of followers, associations for the defence of victims or lawyers naturally leads these critics to refer to the protected tangible or intangible property, or even confidential property within the organization in question.

In real terms, the fact that a critic publishes extracts from texts such as quotations, or descriptions of the concepts and practices owned by a sectarian movement or network can lead to "commercial" conflict or even judicial proceedings.

This type of conflict has led to arbitration between movements and victims in recent times, particularly if the public authorities intervene further to a complaint or report in the context of the combat against sectarian aberrations.

On the other hand, these same movements and networks increasingly apply the procedure to demand access to administrative documents and to prosecute for slander.

The first approach aims to claim the use of information which is actually or allegedly protected and to indirectly oblige the public authorities to reveal the source of the data held, thereby placing the individuals having contacted the public authorities in danger.

However, many of the recent decisions by the Access commission for administrative documents (CADA) have confirmed the decisions of administrations to reject these requests on the basis of the safety of individuals or the general public.

The monitoring of sites and blogs opened by the movements or influential groups acting in their interests frequently indicates their tactics and strategies.

Hence, movements may decide to launch legal proceedings for slander against a public authority if a judicial risk arises for the movement, after attempting to prevent the claimant from taking action via an indemnity or commercial arbitration.

The Internet: ground for future conflict between movements, victims of sectarian aberrations and public authorities

Sectarian movements have a lead on those mandated to apply the law and even more so on those mandated to detect the legal loopholes created by these movements.

The Internet is the priority revealing factor for this situation and the inherent conflict of interests.

Two examples demonstrate this state of affairs:

- The first example concerns the use of the term "Miviludes" by the organisations monitored by the Interministerial Mission. The aim is to appear near to the top of the list of reference sites, to detract attention and to artificially increase the numbers of web visitors to their sites.
- The second example concerns the infinite flexibility of this means of communication to create ad hoc blogs or supposedly commercial announcements aiming to establish contact, start dialogue and set the baiting process up. This type of blog will not immediately disclose its origin and the nature of the links proposed is not evident. This is the ideal means of obtaining personal data although the use of web nicknames provides theoretical protection.

Some consider that the game is fair between sectarian organisations and the public authorities. This is totally untrue. The acceleration of the circulation of information thanks to the freedom to create, move or close sites and forums renders the task of the public authorities ever more complex, particularly in view of the ability of movements and networks to contact new "targets" and take control discreetly.

Nonetheless, the movements' claim to increase their control of the Internet using legal tools and threats is counteracted by the initiatives of critics, who are sometimes former members, and therefore very aware of internal communication strategies, and public authorities which are able to detect organisations representing a sectarian threat on the web, mainly thanks to information and investigation services, which are extensively active in this field.

International influential strategies in 2008: examples of action by sectarian movements within the UN

The influential strategies of sectarian movements are mainly based on the use of any space or event with possibilities for visibility and communication. Their aim, in this context, is to make themselves heard, not to recruit, but to improve their reputations and respectability while reducing the credibility of action by public authorities.

The Miviludes reports of 2006 and 2007 revealed the mechanisms used with two examples: the first example targeted the national level with the lobbying surrounding the parliamentary investigatory commission on "Stolen childhood: minors, victims of sects" ² and the second example targeted the international level with the analysis of the action taken by the sectarian movement, mainly in the context of the Annual human dimension implementation meeting of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, which is part of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

After a reminder of the general situation for the influential strategy of lobbyists on the international stage, we continued with the analysis of the initiatives within the UN during the year 2008.

In the last dozen or so years, criticism of French policies on vigilance and the combat against sectarian aberrations and the actors involved (Miviludes, associations for the defence of victims, members of parliament) has echoed around the international scene thanks to the investment of a few lobbyists whose approach deliberately targets the field of religious freedom. The arguments of these lobbyists mainly reflect those of two North American movements, which systematically present themselves as the victims of religious discrimination attributable, according to their spokespersons, to the intolerance of the "anti-sect movement" comprising associations and some government institutions.

These lobby organisations, which are generally national or international NGO rather than sectarian movements directly, are few and far between.

2 - National Assembly, December 2006.

Despite this, these lobbyists have invested enough energy over the last dozen or so years to attract our attention. These lobbies share the fact that they focus their activities on respect for Human rights in the world. In the context of their combat for religious freedom and the rights of minorities, they regularly denounce the attitude, considered by them as restrictive, of some countries such as France, Belgium and Germany, which have implemented a policy or taken ad hoc initiatives for vigilance and the combat against sectarian aberrations and for the protection of the victims of these aberrations.

As is the case for targets, the same approaches are repeatedly used: on the one hand, the incessant accusation of breaching religious freedom places sectarian movements as victims, and, on the other hand, the denial of the existence of sects implies that victims of their practices cannot exist. The role of Miviludes and the very principle of its existence, parliamentary works – and particularly the list of movements published in 1995 in the first report by the parliamentary investigatory commission on sects in France – the About-Picard law ³, the financing of associations for the defence of victims accused of stigmatising religious minorities by the State, the absence of two-party debates and the credit accorded to the testimonies of "apostates" are regularly criticised.

The Miviludes report from 2007 mentioned the "triumph of the echo or the copy and paste technique" to refer to the repeated content of the criticism proffered by sectarian movements and their supporters in institutions such as the Council of Europe, the OSCE, the UN and also in the annual reports of the US Department of State on religious freedom in the world.

The international stage is undoubtedly the preferred channel of expression of sectarian movements as it represents an impressive resonance box and above all because it adds a certain degree of respectability to their existence, regardless of the content and results. Some movements go so far as to accompany their actions with ambiguous communication in which confusion between facts and fiction almost always dominates the stage: complaints or enquiries by a given sectarian movement against France will be presented in the form of clever amalgamations or allusions as a condemnation of France by an international institution although this fact will never actually be stated as such. Sectarian lobbies have infiltrated channels of expression reserved for civilian society. Far from rejecting this right or criticising this attitude, we aim to decrypt these messages, as explained in previous reports, in the context of our mission, i.e. to observe and analyse the sectarian phenomenon.

³ - Law of 12 June 2001 aiming to reinforce the prevention and repression of sectarian movements breaching human rights and fundamental freedoms (the "About-Picard" law, named for the two members of parliament having drafted the law).

Complaints and claims against France

22 May 2008, the La Croix newspaper had the following heading on its front page: "The Human Rights Council of the UN: France is caught in the act" referring to an article on "abuse of Human rights" focusing on, among other factors, prison crowding, the prohibition of ostentatious religious signs, etc., and mentioning that two US NGOs "criticised Miviludes which, according to the NGOs, had contributed to the stigmatisation of certain religious groups in France" [...]. This opinion was shared by "Human Rights Without Frontiers", according to which Miviludes encourages "racial discrimination by stigmatising minority religious groups".

The violence behind these accusations is clear. And yet, when placed in the context of lobbying by the sectarian movement, these accusations take on a whole new dimension and provide extensive information on the misinformation strategy of those who are experts in reversing roles by pretending to be the victims of breaches of Human rights, while in fact flouting them constantly. It is therefore necessary to consider what actually happened within the UN.

In the different procedures explained below, the movements themselves acted directly, or via Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) or International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs), which implicitly support their cause.

The different claims of the various parties were compiled into a reference report to be used, with other documents, to examine the French situation in the context of the new Universal Periodic Review (UPR) by the Human Rights Council:

- The European Raelian movement submitted a complaint for religious discrimination.
- Le Centre d'Information et de Conseil des nouvelles spiritualités (CICNS - Centre of Information and Counselling on New Spiritualities) denounced the "aberrations of the anti-sect movement" with a long list of the events and facts, which, according to the claim, supported its analysis.
- Human Rights Without Frontiers (HRWF) particularly criticised the activities of Miviludes and the associations assisting the families of victims of sectarian aberrations and strongly disputed the financial support provided by the State in the form of subsidies.
- The Institute on Religion and Public Policy (IRPP) focused its criticism on the About-Picard law, the training of magistrates and Miviludes.
- The Becket Fund for Religious Liberty (BFRL), specialist in the judicial context of the freedom of religion, more specifically targets the About-Picard law.

In addition, the Raelian movement in France, Switzerland, Belgium and Quebec notified the High Commissioner for Human Rights on discrimination suffered by submitting twenty five new claims in June, with no action as yet.

21 May 2008, the Coordination des associations et particuliers pour la liberté de conscience (CAP-LC - Collective group of associations and individuals for freedom of conscience) addressed a claim to the attention of Leandro Desquoy, special reporter on the independence of judges and magistrates and Asma Jahangir, special reporter for the freedom of religion and beliefs. This claim, drafted by the US lawyer of scientology in the name of the association, concerned "breaches of the right to a fair trial and the independence of the French judicial system".

We reiterate that the president of the Union nationale des Frères de Plymouth (National union of the Plymouth Brethren) mentioned in the Miviludes report in 2005, had submitted a complaint against France in 2007 for which the admissibility decision is pending.

The specific nature of the UN context

As is the case for any international body, the UN is in constant dialogue with society at large. Several channels are available for those wishing to make their opinions heard.

Universal Periodic Reviews (UPR) were used as the context for initial action by pro-sect lobbyists this year. UPRs are an integral part of the Human Rights Council⁴ whose aim is to promote the respect and defence of Human rights and all fundamental freedoms. These reviews were created in April 2008, and aim to assess the Human rights situation in the States. Each country is discussed in a three-hour debate after which recommendations are addressed to the State in question. The situation is examined on the basis of the three reports: the first report is presented by the country debated, the second compiles information held on the country by the United Nations and the third report comprises a summary of information supplied by NGOs established by the High Commissioner of Human Rights. Society at large is therefore able to express its opinion via this channel, and the pro-sect lobby has flooded the channel. Recommendations are issued after the review.

Other interventions are heard in the context of the option made available to NGOs to submit claims if they feel that they have suffered a case of real or assumed breach of Human rights. They may mainly contact special reporters or conventional committees. Not all claims and complaints are admissible.

4 - In June 2006, the Human Rights Council, whose head office is in Geneva, replaced the Commission of Human rights.

The players

The 2007 report highlighted the functional or incidental relations between the actions, via the analysis of the actions of sectarian movements and their allies on the OSCE, leading to the unveiling of a full-scale and active network. It was therefore noted that criticism against French policies and actors – Miviludes and the associations assisting victims – was echoing between the different contributions of the various parties: at the UN, the OSCE, the Council of Europe, and in the contributions mentioned in the annual reports of the US Department of State on religious freedom in the world and Human rights in the world. This criticism may be issued by the movements themselves – generally scientology, Jehovah's witnesses, Moon's church, and the Raelians – as they have the necessary resources to organise intensive lobbying, both on national and international levels, and have no qualms about taking the stage, some as regular actors, and others on a more occasional manner. Criticism may also be made via certain NGOs, which are either infiltrated or side kicks for the movements. These NGOs fight for religious freedoms and the rights of minorities, and relay the arguments of the movements in question by regularly denouncing, with varying degrees of virulence, the attitude of certain States, such as France, which have taken action in the field of vigilance and the combat against sectarian aberrations and to protect victims.

With regard the UN, several types of contributions have been listed by movements, NGOs and INGOs subtly created for this purpose.

The European Raelian movement expressed its position in the context of the UPR and the CAP-LC, targeting special reporters on the independence of judges and magistrates and for the freedom of religion and beliefs.

A document dated 21 May 2008 was submitted in the name of the CAP-LC, however the following elements demonstrate that scientology was probably behind the document.

The CAP-LC is a French association created in 2000 to unite religious minorities and combat discrimination with regard the right to a freedom of conscience and belief and to denounce acts and attitudes which breach Human rights or threaten fundamental freedoms". The association is mainly reputed for its long-standing rapid criticism of any attempt to monitor or combat sectarian aberrations. The CAP-LC claims that many of its members are part of the minorities targeted under the term "sects" with government discrimination"⁵. The report from 2007 explained that the arguments and methods used implied that Scientology was the source of its inspiration, which is proved by the current UN situation.

5 - <http://www.coordiap.com/Document/resolution-62-154-en.pdf>

In fact, the US lawyer of the movement submitted the CAP-LC complaint to the UN. In addition, the 2008 report by the US Department of State on religious freedoms in the world presented the claim as submitted by The Church of Scientology ⁶, and not the CAP-LC. This confusion is both present for some, but clear for those looking to decrypt the strategies at play.

The CICNS, which, until now, had restricted its lobbying to the national field, also contributed to the UPR. In June 2008, the CICNS, with the support of Human Rights Without Frontiers (HRWF ⁷), addressed a letter to the French President⁸ providing advice on the replacement of Jean-Michel Roulet as the future President of MIVILUDES.

The stated target was to "ensure respect for the search for a spiritual identity in view of diversity and to put an end to the unacceptable and yet daily confusion of spiritual movements and criminality and mental manipulation". The CICNS claims to "have no relation to any movement considered as a "sect" and to not represent any specific spiritual trend".

Since the creation of the CAP-LC in 2004, the two associations have participated in all actions against the monitoring of and combat against sectarian aberrations, and immediately reacted to any initiative by the government, associations or the parliament⁹.

Two of the INGO: Human Rights Without Frontiers International (HRWF) and The Institute on Religion and Public Policy (IRPP); both of which are very active in the Defence of religious minorities, regularly criticise French policies on the monitoring of and combat against sectarian aberrations, particularly within the OSCE ¹⁰. Their actions, role in the pro-sect lobbying network and mainly their connections with Scientology, were explained in detail in the 2007 report of Miviludes ¹¹.

HRWF claims that it works independently to any political, ideological or religious movement¹². The association aims to "promote democracy, the rule of the law and the rights of individuals throughout the world, by all appropriate means".

The IRPP claims to be "interreligious" and aims to ensure respect with religious freedoms in the world. The head of IRPP addressed the French President this year to indicate the unfair nature of the content of the report *La Justice face aux dérives sectaires* (Justice and sectarian aberrations), mandated by the Prime Minister to Georges Fenech, magistrate, now President of MIVILUDES.

6 - <http://www.state.gov/drl/rls/irf/2008/index.htm>

7 - Cf. supra.

8 - Letter of 11 June 2008.

9 - Cf. Miviludes report 2006 with regard the influential strategy used for the works of the parliamentary investigatory commission on "Minors, victims of sects".

10 - Cf. Miviludes report 2007 where they are designated as the leading INGO with influence in the pro-sect movement.

11 - Cf. 2007 Miviludes report: pages 124-129.

12 - <http://www.hrwf.net>

Finally, The Becket Fund for Religious Liberty (BFRL ¹³), presents itself as an interreligious not-for-profit organization, aiming to protect and defend the free expression of all religions. Created in 1994 by a lawyer, this INGO based in Washington holds advisory status within the ECOSOC (UN Economic and social council), and intervenes in many disputes between religions and the State, particularly on US soil. However this INGO is a newcomer on the network, as this is the first time it has taken action for the French situation. Until now, the BFRL had not published reports on a European country. Over and beyond the criticism of what he refers to as "restrictions on religious minorities" in France, he made observations on the principle of secularity and the prohibition to wear religious signs at school.

Words, proposals, confusion and grand announcements

- Recurrent criticism and personal attacks

Sectarian movements and their allies like to bring the debate into the field of freedom of religion and portray themselves as the victims of attacks on this freedom. The arguments used by the different parties within the UN are no exception.

Within the UN, just like elsewhere, the same old tried and tested arguments are strung out: "breach of religious freedoms", combined with discrimination by actors in the combat against and monitoring of sectarian aberrations, part of a "crusade" and considered as "sectarian discrimination and violence". The Miviludes and associations for the Defence of victims such as the Union nationale des associations de Defence des familles et de l'individu victimes des sectes (UNADFI - National union of Associations for the Defence of Families and Individuals, victims of sects), the Centre contre les manipulations mentales – Centre Roger-Ikor (CCMM - Centre Against Mental Manipulation) or the European Federation of centres of research and information on sectarianism (FECRIS) are targeted in this way. According to tradition, parliamentary initiatives, such as the reports of the investigatory commission – and the "list" of movements published in the first report of the parliamentary investigatory commission on sects in France in particular – and the About-Picard law, which is unanimously criticised by these movements, are collectively designated as the source of this discrimination.

13 - <http://www.becketfund.org/index.php/case>

In addition to these recurrent targets which have supposedly been the source of "breaches of religious freedoms" for the last decade or so, new targets have been observed recently in the combat against sectarian aberrations in France: on the one hand, the legal protection of the witnesses in the parliamentary investigatory commissions¹⁴, which the CICNS considers as an attempt "to prevent the persons slandered in the Parliamentary reports from defending themselves", and, on the other hand, the report mandated to Georges Fenech by the Prime Minister on Justice and sectarian aberrations, which was the basis for the aforementioned claim by the CAP-LC. This claim cloaks the traditional criticisms of Scientology and its allies against France, which have echoed for many years, in judicial colouring and clearly represents a simple pretext. In fact, from the very opening lines, and on several occasions later in the report, it is evident that the main aim is to slate the author of the report in question¹⁵.

The same ad hominem verbal assault was heard almost word for word on the OSCE stage in October 2008, at the Annual human dimension implementation meeting in Warsaw, and these verbal assaults are also available on the Internet thanks to well known French members of Scientology. These practice is similar to the "black propaganda" method which is the trademark of a famous sect and involves slating opponents by all available means in view of making the enemy unpopular, up to the point of totally eradicating the enemy, as recommended by the founding guru. The permanent representation of France within the OSCE, via the counsellor for religious affairs within the Ministry of foreign affairs, publically declared that "the ad hominem attacks against the President of MIVILUDES, appointed by decree by the French President could be considered as slander and no comments were required".

- Proposals: creation of independent bodies and call for the of the UN

Just like their observations, the proposals of the lobbies do not vary from one year to another and their UN grievances are no exception. Their claims mainly call for the holding of information on movements by an "independent observatory on spiritual minorities" managed by "experts in religion or sociology" (IRPP, CICNS) or "scientists, specialists in religious behaviour, which respect Human rights" (HRWF), such as the Information Network Focus On Religious Movements (INFORM)¹⁶, a British organization mainly led by religious sociologists. In other words, the aim is to ensure an objective and neutral approach, which is lacking with Miviludes and the information services, and to leave the field to academic experts and religious specialists, the very people who, duly referenced by the sectarian movement, have constantly slated the actors in vigilance and the combat against sectarian aberrations and questioned the reliability of the testimonies of former followers¹⁷.

14 - Law n° 2008-1187 of 14 November 2008: adopted unanimously on 4 November 2008 at the initiative of the President of the French National Assembly, Bernard Accoyer; this law followed on from legal action launched by some sectarian movements against witnesses, institutional actors and former followers, who had spoken out before the parliamentary investigatory commission on "Minors, victims of sects".

15 - ...a priority target, a long-term and multi-positioned participant in the vigilance and combat against sectarian aberrations.

16 - Information Network Focus on Religious Movements (INFORM): association mainly led by religious sociologists, founded in London in 1998 by Eileen Barker, aiming to collect in and provide information on new religious and/or spiritual movements.

17 - Cf. Apostates and religious organizations: why their statements should not be taken at face value by Bryan Ryan Wilson and "The reliability of the testimony of an apostate about new religious movements", study by Professor Lonnie D. Kliever published by Scientology (Freedom publishing).

This proposal is simplified, as it considers any action involving monitoring and combat as a breach of religious freedoms, while most of the concerns of the State and associations in the field currently relate to fields such as health or training, where it is often difficult to identify any spiritual input.

The intention to dissolve Miviludes and cut off the financing of associations defending victims of sectarian aberrations by the State is not clearly expressed here as it has been in the past within the OSCE. However, the HRWF, after having identified the Miviludes and these associations as the main vectors for religious discrimination, recommends that the Government assign the Miviludes to the Bureau of religions of the Ministry of the Interior and reserves financing for organisations which promote religious freedom and not, as is currently the case in their eyes, those which preach discrimination in this field, implicitly referring to the aforementioned associations.

These claims also call on the expertise of the Human Rights Council of the UN to investigate the "activities of the State and associations" (HRWF), to assess "the treatment of religious minorities (not only the major religions) in France" (BFRL) or to report on "breaches of the right to a fair trial and the independence and neutrality of the French legal system in cases relating to associations of religious minorities and their members in France" (CAP-LC).

- Amalgams, confusion and grand announcements

The UN system is extremely complex for the general public, which only really understands its role – the promotion of ideals such as peace in the world, and the development of and compliance with Human rights – and an easy to recognise logo. Any reference to the UN is proof of respectability and some movements do not hesitate to use, or, for some, abuse, this reference.

This applies to the boasting of "advisory status" which itself comprises several categories creating a "hierarchy" of member NGOs. This status must not be mixed up with the "association of an INGO with the Department of Public Information of the United Nations", which only allows access to the premises of the UN, and to information, but which does not authorise participation at meetings under any circumstances.

The example of the Friends of United Nations mentioned in the report in 2006¹⁸ is educational. This INGO is known for its participation in initiatives in France along side of Scientology. On its website, this organization, which displays a logo which is evidently intended to resemble the UN logo, claims to be "associated with the Department of Public Information of the United Nations" (DPI). This could imply that the group benefits from the prestigious advisory status and is incorporated in the UN system, while in fact the simple association with the DPI implies no such thing. The general public is globally unable to tell the difference, apart from UN specialists. Sectarian lobbies are well aware of this and play on this complexity without shame.

Thanks to Moon's network of humanitarian associations working for peace, this INGO can legitimately claim advisory status within the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), one of the leading entities within the UN. However, when the Interreligious and International Federation for World Peace (IIFWP), a moon entity, published the "Speech of Dr Hyun Jin Moon, copresident of the IIFWP of the UN" on the web site of the CAP-LC, it placed the event in the context of "Interreligious dialogue within the UN" when celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Declaration of Human rights, implying that the prestigious institution had officially given the floor to the copresident of the movement, while, in fact, the meeting was simply organised on the premises of the UN and was exclusively managed by Moon and not the prestigious international entity. Cleverly manipulated after this event, this is an example of a non-event which became a media "scoop".

With regard the submission of claims, complaints or other requests, they allow the lobbies to highlight the existence of UN interaction in bold, irrespective of the outcome, and whether or not France is criticised. The same type of logic is more generally applicable for any legal action launched by sectarian movements. Submitting a complaint has immediate benefits for sects and is presented in their propaganda as the actual condemnation of the State, institution or person targeted.

In the past, our country has been subject to comments by the special reporter on the freedom of religion or beliefs²⁰. However, despite these comments and the contributions of the above "pro-sect" lobby, it must be noted that the final document on France adopted on 13 June 2008 in the context of the UPR did not include any conclusion and/or recommendation on French policy for the vigilance of and combat against sectarian aberrations and, to date, the complaints submitted by the CAP-LC have not led to any questioning of France. The lobby omits to mention this point.

18 - 2006 Miviludes report, page 131.

19 - Several Moon associations hold advisory status at the UN, including: the Interreligious and International Federation for World Peace (IIFWP), with special advisory status and in the "Registered" category on the list, Women's Federation for World Peace.

20 - Ecosoc report/Human Rights' Commission (8 March 2006), by Asma Jahangir, special reporter on the freedom of religion or beliefs. The limited comments contained in this text are briefly summarised in the compilation of UN documents on France, which were taken as the basis for the UPR, among other reports.

However, the grand announcement effect is guaranteed when the very official report issued by the US Department of State on religious freedoms in the world lists the grievances of sectarian lobbies. This was particularly the case in 2008, which reported on the "complaint submitted against France by Scientology", to the UN to the special reporter on the independence of judges and lawyers.

This actually refers to the complaint submitted by the US lawyer of Scientology in the name of the CAP-LC, which independently boasted its scoop in a press release under the title: "Militant activism by Georges Fenech reported to the UN". In the same press release, CAP-LC also prided itself for having denounced "the slander suffered by certain religions [...] to the UN", or more precisely to the High Commissioner of Human Rights in the context of the preparations for resolution 62/154 on "the combat against the defamation of religions".

The echo of these complaints and claims was widely relayed months later by other voices at the Annual human dimension implementation meeting organised in Warsaw by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE institution), and has since been multiplied thanks to the virtues of the Internet, with the flames fed by the sectarian lobby, although no follow-up has as yet been taken for these complaints, which can be considered as smoke effect.

Conclusion

At the end of the day, with the aggregate effects of these grand announcements, these groups attempt to give credit to the concept that France is regularly criticised by international bodies, while in fact, France is only criticised within these bodies by the pro-sect movement itself, and that, generally speaking, these complaints have never been considered admissible or been adopted by the international bodies themselves.

However, the sectarian movement, either directly or via their side kicks, fear that the effectiveness of French policies to combat and monitor sectarian aberrations will endanger their survival, or that other countries will take their inspiration from France, to satisfy the increasingly frequent demands of victims and their families. It is therefore essential for the sects to counter-attack and communicate in bad faith.

The misinformation process, the fruit of active lobbying by the pro-sect movement, is occasionally successful if we do not pay enough attention. The compilation prepared by the High Commissioner of Human Rights within the UN in view of the examination of the French situation in the context of the UPR presented the Miviludes as "one of the mechanisms responsible for religious groups and belief groups".

This totally incorrect information, although subsequently corrected, bore the prestigious UN trademark. This type of description can give credit to sectarian movements and their allies which benefit from the amalgam between combat against sectarian aberrations and breach of religious freedoms simply to portray themselves as victims.

Luckily, the UN and the OSCE and the Council of Europe, our ambassadors and permanent representatives with these bodies filter the lies spread here and there relating to the allegedly anti-freedoms position of the French State. Whenever necessary, they correct facts and filter the misinformation.

French delegations within these bodies explain French policies towards monitoring and sectarian aberrations, and reiterate that monitoring is performed in strict compliance with fundamental freedoms and the Defence of these same freedoms, which are constantly flouted and endangered by movements committing sectarian aberrations. Their victims must be able to count on the State, guarantor of safety and the free exercise of civil liberties, to protect them from acts which offend human dignity.

Section 2

Combating sectarian aberrations



Contribution by the Ministry of the Interior

Targeted action

This paragraph represents the contribution of the Ministry of the Interior (national gendarmerie) to the annual report of the Interministerial Mission of Vigilance and Combat Against Sectarian Aberrations (Miviludes) addressed to the Prime Minister.

The first part includes suggestions made to improve the monitoring of sectarian aberrations.

The second part reports on judicial enquiries underway, led by the operational units of the gendarmerie.

Proposals to improve the monitoring of sectarian aberrations

Law condemns all practices which are prejudicial to Human rights and fundamental liberties, or are a threat to public order. The specific field of mental manipulation is typical of sectarian aberrations. Repression by the State is necessary if a certain number of criteria are satisfied:

- One or more people start to believe in certain ideas which differ from the ideas generally accepted by society. The person receiving these ideas starts to modify all of their references, relations and projects. The life of the person escapes their control. The person is directed and conditioned by the psycho-sectarian manipulator.
- This commitment costs money and will represent a substantial share of the budget. The person becomes dependent. The sectarian hold is established when the victim cuts with all aspects of the former life, friends and family, work, and the usual centres of interest. Financial commitment becomes considerable at this point.

The role of the victim is key, everything is permitted to meet the needs of the sect and attention is optimised in the phases ranging from prevention to repression in the context of the combat against sectarian aberrations. The involvement of the victim is indispensable if penal action is to be possible.

With regard the national gendarmerie, its forces take action via the execution of their traditional missions.

Information obtained by operational units (generally territorial forces) is used and transmitted by the personnel of regional information units, groupings and specialised training courses (maritime, air, air transport, and weapons forces).

These personnel groups are trained at the school of gendarmerie in Le Mans, within the operational information training centre (CFRO). During training, they are made aware of sectarian phenomena by the national gendarmerie sect referral agent. In the same way, trainee investigators are provided with information on sectarian aberrations from a magistrate from the Division of criminal affairs and pardons (DACG) of the Ministry of Justice, during their training at the National Training Centre for judicial police (CNFPJ) in Fontainebleau. This information process could be extended to higher ranking judicial police during training courses for heads of search units, directors of investigation and investigators at the CNFPJ.

Investigators must be able to identify the victims of sectarian aberrations to take the appropriate action to assist victims, listen to witnesses and process complaints.

All investigators faced with a victim of sectarian aberrations, with statements which are difficult to understand or confusing, must not hesitate to contact services which are familiar with monitoring the combat against sectarian aberrations to fully understand the situation and identify all of the components of the offenses recorded. While all offenses recorded in the context of sectarian aberrations are considered as common law crimes, article 223-15-2 of the penal code on the crime of the fraudulent abuse of ignorance or weakness (based on the About-Picard law of 12 June 2001) is still little known and used.

When it comes to finding a more effective solution in the repression of sectarian aberrations, the forces of order face a lack of information on closed environments, where they cannot legally intervene. However, information is collected by the other actors involved (medical and social actors, teachers, etc.). Extended collaboration with other administrations would therefore be preferable and is expected. While it is true that the referral agents and units created at departmental and regional level simplify the distribution of information on closed communities, the systematic exchange of information faces judicial barriers (professional confidentiality, gathering of information and automatic data processing), which need to be lifted by legislators to enable this system to become truly effective in terms of the combat against sectarian aberrations.

Current status of ongoing enquiries

The gendarmerie units contacted can act either on their own initiative or, as a result of a notification to proceed from the state prosecutor following a complaint, a denunciation or a testimony. The latter case is more frequent.

When an investigation is opened for more serious cases, this generally leads to examinations and legal constraints or detention pending trial. Investigations carried out in enquiries with a direct link to sectarian aberrations concern the following infractions:

- Abuse of weakness.
- Abuse of the ignorance or weakness of a person subjected to mental manipulation.
- Endangering others (adults or children).
- Non-representation of minors.
- Non-compliance with children's rights to education and schooling.
- Non-denunciation of crimes.
- Concealment of criminals.
- Non-assistance of an individual in danger.
- Non-denunciation of mistreatment.
- Kidnapping of children.
- Rape and sexual assault of minors aged under 15.
- Rape and sexual assault on individuals whose vulnerability is apparent or known.
- Rape with torture or barbaric acts.
- Sexual assault by a person with authority.
- Attack and injury – violence towards others (adults and children).

In addition, investigations into funds can be led to verify the origin and use of the financial resources managed by sectarian organisations.

Assistance provided for the victims of sectarian aberrations in Europe

After having examined, in 2006 and 2007, the perception of sectarian phenomena in Europe from the point of view of the public authorities, Miviludes considers that it is now appropriate to consider this same issue from the point of view of the victims and that it would be beneficial and worthwhile to question our diplomatic contacts in ally countries and partners, on the perception which victims have of the sectarian phenomenon in view of considerations likely to lead to better mutual understanding and the reinforcement of the protection of our citizens.

The aim is to examine the assistance available to victims in each country where such assistance exists: private associations or public structures assisting victims, families and individuals; the aim is to identify their perception of sectarian aberrations and their effects on the victims which contact them, their observations and their actions for these victims; secondly, we will consider cooperation between the different associations within each country, and their relations with the public authorities of the country in question, together with consular authorities and – when existing – the international relations of these associations which combat a phenomenon which is globally oblivious to geopolitical borders.

None of the countries studied have a structure comparable to MIVILUDES. While the situation of France has one specificity and several particularities, particularly relating to its conception of secularity, the guidelines for French policy in terms of the assessment of risk, the implementation of sanctions against aberrations in application of common law, and the treatment of victims, generally exist in other countries, often in a more executive form, but not necessarily less strict as such. Private or public structures providing help for victims are therefore required.

In France, the combat against sectarian aberrations is part of "Criteria enabling the identification of sectarian hold: professional, social and family-based rupture; notion of time and non-availability of the follower; financial considerations: exorbitant financial requirements; control by the group or guru and mental destabilisation; promises and secrets; hold on children via brainwashing; health; proselytising and recruitment; misuse of economic circuits; infiltration of public authorities and breach of physical integrity; and with one single aim, the victims: followers, former followers and their families.

Public authorities aim to search for and identify movements which could be considered as sects, and then repress all reprehensible behaviour: Common Law offenses can only occur if the victim has already been psychologically broken down by the manipulation of a group or guru. This hold must be established prior to a crime; common law applies in specific fields, characterised by constraint.

On 27 May 2005, a circular issued by the Prime Minister confirmed the "criteria" reiterated in the circular of the Ministry of Justice of 29 February 1996.

Other European countries – Belgium, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Poland – globally apply the same approach to the problem as France, although the details differ. In the same way, in some countries, the combat against sectarian aberrations is managed by the religions themselves or by independent institutions; public structures or private associations.

France

In France, assistance for the victims of sectarian aberrations is available via private initiatives and the public authorities.

Assistance provided for the victims of sectarian aberrations by private associations

- Union Nationale des associations de defence des familles et de l'individu victimes de sectes (UNADFI - National union of Associations for the Defence of Families and Individuals, victims of sects)

In France, the combat against sectarian aberrations was initially launched in the private sector. This combat was initiated by the families, with the creation of the Associations for the Defence of Families and Individuals (ADFI) in 1974 in Rennes and the European Federation of Centres of Research and Information on Sectarianism (FECRIS) in 1994. The law of 15 June 2000, reinforcing the presumption of innocence and the rights of victims, added an article in the code of penal procedure – modified by the law of 12 June 2001, known as the About-Picard law – enabling the defence associations working against sectarian movements to position themselves as plaintiffs in the context of certain offenses breaching Human rights (article 2-17 of the code of penal procedure).

Finally, the ADFI of Lille created a support centre for the victims of sectarian organisations thanks to subsidies from local authorities (town hall, departmental council, regional council) five years ago. This centre offers social, judicial and psychological services for families via qualified professionals, including one lawyer and one psychologist.

These private associations are generally the first port of call to contact former followers. In addition, they detect new movements in an ever changing sectarian environment. Finally, they can provide previous information for public authorities (judicial offices, police, gendarmerie, Miviludes).

The UNADFI was recognised as a charity in 1996. The UNADFI is approved by the Ministry of Youth and Sport and also obtained the approval of the National education authority in 2002.

The UNADFI is an associate member of the Union Nationale des associations familiales (UNAF - National Union of Associations for Families), and unites and coordinates associations for the defence of families and individuals, victims of sects (ADFI), and aims to provide information on the sectarian phenomenon, act preventively and help victims. ADFI are specialised in providing information on sectors, prevention and helping victims; one office exists in each region.

- Le Centre contre les manipulations mentales – Centre Roger-Ikor (CCMM - Centre Against Mental Manipulation)

The CCMM aims to contribute to the protection of the freedom of individuals. The CCMM opposes any collective or individual action which aims to penetrate, tame or ensure the dependency of minds, particularly those of young people, irrespective of the means used. The CCMM distributes information, educates and warns the public on the basis of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, the International Convention on the rights of the child and with reference to the values of the French Republic, and secularity in particular. These principles are the basis for the actions of the CCMM and have not changed since its creation: defence of human beings against all forms of manipulation by actions referring to the values of the French Republic, Human rights, the rights of children and particularly the principles of freedom of conscience and the inherent religious freedoms and secularity.

The CCMM has recently been restructured, switching from a centralised national organization to a federation of administratively and financially independent regional associations. Regional associations are gradually being created throughout France under various names (CCMM région Île-de-France (greater Paris), Info sectes (web site on sects), le Groupe d'étude des mouvements de pensée en vue de la prévention de l'individu (GEMPPPI - Study group for conviction movements for the protection of individuals), etc.) and are interrelated by their joint adhesion to the values and principles defined in the "CCMM charter". The charter written by the founder, Roger Ikor, was updated on the occasion of the "25th anniversary congress" in 2006. The CCMM is approved by the Ministry of National Education, Higher Education, and Research and by the Ministry of Youth, Sports, and Associations.

- Other private associations

Local associations mainly distribute information on sects and assist victims of sectarian aberrations.

Info-sectes spécial universités et écoles (ISSUE - Information group for universities and selective educational institutes) was created in 1994 and is run by young volunteers concerned by the ground covered by sects breaching the freedoms and rights of individuals and which work together to better act, ensure awareness and provide information. The group approaches individuals to explain why sects and totalitarian groups are an issue and to encourage consideration of their position. They act locally in view of preventing the dangers of sectarian organisations. ISSUE is organised into local associations, which are federated at national level and receive subsidies from town halls, departmental councils and student groups.

In September 2002, the associations in Lyons and Paris were unable to continue with their activities due to low membership in recent years. The dissolution of these associations was therefore scheduled. However, in view of continuing the combat against sectarianism and totalitarianism (particularly targeting young people), and meeting the many requests for information and awareness campaigns, the remaining members of ISSUE decided to join up with a new association, the Sect information centre for Rhône- Alpes (CISRA), based in Lyons, "association operating under the law of 1901", in partnership with the CCMM.

In addition, Vigi-Sectes is a French-speaking evangelical association created in 1998 and governed by articles 21 to 79 of the local civil code applicable in the administrative departments of Bas-Rhin, Haut-Rhin and Moselle. This association maintains a web site providing information on sects and the victims of sects, however the assistance offered to the victims of sectarian aberrations is globally spiritual.

Finally, a couple - a psychologist and his partner - launched a private initiative in the form of a mobile intervention unit created in 2000. The Cellule d'intervention mobile sur emprise sectaire (CIMES - Mobile intervention unit for sectarian hold), has taken action in several emergency situations relating to former followers having recently left sects and their families, and situations faced by judicial and health professionals requiring a specific approach and therapy.

Assistance provided for the victims of sectarian aberrations by public authorities

- Parliamentary and government action

Whether we consider the Vivien report in 1983, drafted at the request of the Prime Minister, or the Interministerial Mission of Vigilance and Combat against Sectarian Aberrations (Miviludes), the French government has clearly demonstrated its commitment to protect its citizens and institutions from the activities of sectarian organisations.

In political terms, this approach was based on input from the parliamentary investigatory commissions (1995 & 1999) and the creation of interministerial bodies to combat these aberrations.

In 1995, the parliamentary report of Alain Gest and Jacques Guyard on Sects in France estimates the number of followers at 160,000 according to general information, or 400,000 according to UNADFI. This report, encouraging the awareness of sectarian risk, led to the organisation of an observation phase, from 9 May 1996, with the creation of the Interministerial sect observatory, and later leading to the creation of the Interministerial mission of combat against sects (MILS) on 7 October 1998.

On 18 December 1998, a law was voted to reinforce controls of mandatory schooling.

The parliamentary report of 1999 on sects and financial considerations then led to a focus on the economic influence and strategy of sectarian movements since the early 1990s and their favourite fields of action: training, IT, personal development, pharmaceuticals and medicine and distribution (e.g. sale of biological agricultural products).

Finally, on 12 June 2001, the About-Picard law was approved. This law, aiming to prevent and suppress movements infringing on human rights and fundamental freedoms does not exclusively target sectarian movements. It applies to all legal persons de jure or de facto. This text extended the former offense of the fraudulent abuse of weakness. It also dictates sanctions for advertising by sectarian movements and enables the dissolution of legal persons.

District courts may dissolve a legal person whose activities aim to create, maintain or take advantage of the psychological or physical control of participants in these activities, if several final sentences for a given list of offenses have been issued. It must be noted that courts may dissolve several legal persons if these persons have the same objective and are united by common interests, and if any one of their de jure or de facto directors has received a final penal conviction.

Finally, assistance provided for the victims of sectarian aberrations is reinforced with provisions on the fraudulent abuse of ignorance or weakness. The new Article of the penal code, Article 223-15-2, sanctions the fraudulent abuse of ignorance or weakness in minors or particularly vulnerable people (age, sickness or disability). It also protects persons subject to physical or psychological control, resulting from grave or recurrent pressure placed on them or from the implementation of techniques intended to alter a person's judgement with the aim of leading them to commit acts or abstain from acts which are severely punishable by law.

On 28 November 2002, the Interministerial Mission for Vigilance and Combat against Sectarian Aberrations (Miviludes) was created to observe and analyse sectarian movements; to promote, while respecting civil liberties, the coordination of preventive and repressive action by the authorities; to develop the exchange of information between public services; to contribute to informing and training civil servants, inform the public of sectarian risks and dangers and simplify the provision of assistance for victims of sectarian aberrations, both nationally and internationally.

Miviludes aims to obtain all relevant information – while avoiding misinformation. Miviludes participates in the works of the "Departmental cells of vigilance" now "advisory working groups on the prevention of delinquency, gender violence, drug addiction and sectarian aberrations" within France. Miviludes receives confidential information from families: the families of former followers, and confidential information collected by the associations Combating sectarian organisations and protecting victims, or from the different Ministries or exchanges with other countries, such as the Centre for information and counsel on harmful sectarian organizations in Belgium (CIAOSN). Its role is to analyse changes to the sectarian environment and produce an annual report for the Prime Minister; to train investigators, magistrates and any other person able to detect aberrations and provide information on French action to prevent sectarian aberrations via its web site and the publication of guides.

Finally, in April 2008, the Prime Minister entrusted Georges Fenech, a magistrate, with the consideration and assessment of judicial provisions for the combat against sectarian aberrations; government action is firm – in compliance with the principles of the French Republic with regard freedom of opinion and beliefs – in the combat against sectarian aberrations.

- L'Institut National d'Aide aux Victimes Et de Médiation (INAVEM - National Institute providing Assistance for Victims and Mediation services)

The INAVEM was created in 1986 by the Ministry of Justice, and initially regrouped around fifty associations (which already existed) providing assistance for victims. Several ministries contribute to the financing of the INAVEM, dominated by the Ministry of Justice.

The fundamental missions of the INAVEM as the leader of a network of one hundred and fifty national associations are to lead, coordinate and promote this network providing assistance for victims, and to launch partnerships and agreements to simplify the access of victims to the services of associations. The main targets of the INAVEM are to define and assess missions ensuring aid for victims; coordination and support for associations assisting victims, providing information and ensuring the awareness of professionals and the public of aid for victims.

The INAVEM represents associations providing assistance for victims nationally within bodies such as the National council of aid for victims, the Guarantee fund for the victims of terrorism and other offenses, or the national parole board.

The INAVEM provides information for the public, professionals in all sectors and associations providing assistance for victims via a Quarterly newsletter on legal news and initiatives in favour of victims, combined with the ad hoc publishing of works, such as the texts of the National conferences of associations assisting victims, collections of legal texts, topical files, etc. and regularly updates the website.

The INAVEM regularly takes the floor before the Government, members of parliament or administrations, to propose new measures, legislation or regulations to improve the rights of victims and/or services for victims.

The INAVEM is approved as a training body and proposes a training program for employees, volunteers and directors of associations, civil servants or local authority staff, and the companies concerned each year.

The INAVEM supports the activities of associations, mainly via the project leaders in the "coordination centre" of the INAVEM, who are in constant contact with associations assisting victims. These project leaders are each specialised in a field relating to the care of victims and the distribution of information to victims, psychological help and the rights of victims, collective catastrophes and mediation practices. Their action mainly aims to reinforce the structure of the network of associations providing assistance for victims, and to assess and promote the initiatives of associations. Meetings are often organised between associations in the form of national study days or regional working meetings. These meetings enable innovative practices to be shared and provide input for general INAVEM guidelines.

Finally, the INAVEM has hosted and managed a national hotline for victims since October 2001. Hotline operators listen to victims of offenses and direct them to associations near to their homes and to other relevant services or bodies and handle the activities of the European Forum of Victim services (now Victim Support Europe), which combines the national associations of fifteen countries to improve the rights of and services for victims in Europe. In fact, the INAVEM and associations assisting victims have priority relations with institutional partners, such as courts, judicial and legal entities, the police and gendarmerie, hospitals, town halls, and establish national or regional agreements with the banking sector, commercial organisations or transport firms. These agreements or relations concern persons who are victims in their work place. They often also concern the customers or users of the companies exposed, for example with the French public rail network (SNCF) or the Paris transport network (RATP) or personnel assaulted, to ensure appropriate psychological support.

Agreements also exist with Ministries of foreign affairs and the National education authority. The contact details of French citizens which suffer serious violence abroad and their families are transmitted to the INAVEM together with the details of the violence. The agreement on National education provides for meetings between associations and personnel, students or parents of pupils, having suffered from violence in an educational environment, at the initiative of educational authorities. This initial agreement had a duration of three years and expired in March 2002. The agreement was renewed in 2004 and extended, beyond the fourteen initially selected pilot departments, to all French departments.

- Victims Directorate (DAV)

The DAV was opened in 2005 and is a permanent structure operating within the Ministry of the Interior and Territorial planning.

Police and the gendarmerie are the initial contacts of victims, and supporting, listening to, providing information and guiding victims must be clear priorities. The DAV is responsible for proposing and organising initiatives intended to ensure a dynamic and operational policy for aid for victims within the Ministry of the Interior and Territorial planning.

The mandate of the DAV particularly covers the internal proposal of appropriate initiatives, methods and tools to improve the consideration of victims in services subject to the authority of the Ministry of the Interior and Territorial planning. The DAV is particularly responsible for changing the mentalities and behaviour of the police and gendarmerie and, in terms of external relations, maintaining close and permanent relations with all associations of victims and for aid to victims by analysing and relaying their expectations. The Directorate contributes to Interministerial works in this field.

Finally, the works organised in June 2008, by the Service for access to law and justice and for urban policy (SADJPV) in partnership with UNADFI, CCMM, INAVEM and Miviludes, aimed to improve coordination between private associations, which are aware of the sectarian phenomenon, but hold inadequate details of legal procedures, and public organisations which are relay associations for justice such as the INAVEM, which, although less aware of the sectarian phenomenon, have complete expertise over the ins and outs of legal proceedings. This cooperation will enable the mutual training of their personnel, on the one hand when handling the victims of criminal offenses in law suits, and, on the other hand, when understanding mental manipulation and concluding protocols to ensure that action by the two groups of associations is complementary, particularly in operations by the judicial police.

Europe

In Europe, private associations are more involved in providing assistance for the victims of sectarian aberrations than public authorities, including in countries which have public structures providing aid for these victims. Many associations combine their experience in the context of the European Federation of Centres of Research and Information on Sectarianism (FECRIS).

This FECRIS has participatory INGO status (International Non-Government Organization), with the Council of Europe, and was created on 30 June 1994 in Paris as follow-up to the International Congress on Sectarianism in Barcelona in 1993, and its head office is located in Marseille.

FECRIS is a not-for-profit association operating under French law. Article 2 of the statutes states that the association is neutral in terms of politics, philosophy and religion.

Its targets are to combine the representative European associations concerned by contemporary sects and totalitarian organisations, whether legally founded or otherwise, whose practices breach the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the European Convention for the protection of Human Rights, the International Convention on the rights of the child, European legislation and national legislation; to represent member associations within the European institutions in the context of the distribution of information and the defence of individuals, families and democratic societies against the action of harmful sects; to warn international institutions and bodies of criminal action; to participate in the preparation of European legislation on sects and to create an international information network; finally, to carry out research and studies, particularly from a legal viewpoint, in any field possibly subject to sectarian aberrations.

One of the key bases for consideration and action by the member associations of FECRIS is listening to victims of actual or assumed abusive behaviour. Research and analysis targets and methods can be confirmed precisely by listening to those directly concerned. The FECRIS considers that sectarian aberrations are not static phenomena and that they change over time. Its arguments are based on data which are double checked and updated.

Its analysis focuses on behaviour as it is essential to resist pressure aiming to redirect the issue of sectarian aberrations into the field of beliefs and religions. This false debate is based on an incomplete approach to the problem, and is not compatible with scientific analysis.

This approach considers any organisation or individual selling beliefs or destructive behavioural techniques and which/who uses mental manipulation as a tool as a sect or guru. Conclusions have provisos and are prudent. They take account of fraud, pain and de-structuring for the victims and their families by denouncing the blind brainwashing generated by certain systems of thought and the inherent serious consequences for family, social and democratic structures.

Finally, the members of the FECRIS commit to cooperation according to the principles of respect for differing religious, philosophical and political beliefs; objectiveness and pragmatism in view of the complexity of the situations to be taken into consideration; discretion, respect for professional secrecy and constant changes in footing in view of the ever-evolving nature of sectarian phenomenon.

FECRIS currently includes forty five associations in twenty five countries: Germany, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Belarus, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Spain, Estonia, Finland, France, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Norway, the Netherlands, Poland, the United Kingdom, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine and the United States of America. This growth is due to associations in Eastern (European) countries joining FECRIS. These associations have gradually taken shape following the gradual migration and substantial development of sectarian movements from the USA and Western Europe.

The handling of the problem of sectarian aberrations and the assistance provided for victims varies considerably from one country to another.

Some European countries have public and private structures which provide assistance to the victims of sectarian aberrations.

Other European countries are lacking a public structure providing help for the victims of sectarian aberrations; help is however available from private associations.

Finally, other countries lack both public and private initiatives providing help for the victims of sectarian aberrations.

Belgium, the United Kingdom, Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Slovakia

Belgium is the country with the most similar approach to France, however its approach to sects remains particular.

The country created the Centre for information and counsel on harmful sectarian organizations (CIAOSN) in Brussels in 1999. The members of this independent centre working within the Ministry of Justice are appointed by the chamber of representatives, with 50% presented by the Council of Ministers. These are eminent personalities, from different fields, renowned for their knowledge, experience and interest in the sectarian phenomenon.

With regard public structures providing assistance for victims of sectarian aberrations, the CIAOSN is a federal public service which is also responsible for supporting victims. The CIAOSN deals with the public and can provide information on their rights and obligations. The CIAOSN does not however provide psychological assistance. This aid must be provided at community level (Translators' note: Belgium consists of three "communities" or administrative districts: the French-speaking community, the German-speaking community, and the Flemish-speaking community).

Many private structures are available and provide help for the victims of sectarian aberrations. Several associations provide help for families and the victims of sectarian aberrations, however these associations are less and less active. In fact, these associations have lost their *raison d'être* since the creation of a federal public service provided assistance to victims of sects, particularly since most of their directors have been appointed on the CIAOSN.

The only private association which is currently fully active is the not-for-profit association *Studie En Adviesgroep Sekten (SAS)*. This Dutch-speaking association studies sects and issues opinions.

The other associations barely struggle along. *SOS Sectes*, *Aide aux Victimes de Psychothérapeutes Autoproclamés (AVPA - Association providing Assistance for the Victims of Self-proclaimed Psychotherapists)*, *Association des Victimes des Pratiques Illégales de la Médecine (AVPIM - Association for the Victims of Illegal Medical Practices)* and *Contacts et Informations sur les Groupes Sectaires (CIGS - Contact and Information on Sectarian Groups)*.

All of these associations work together and maintain constant dialogue. They also maintain constant relations with similar French associations. Finally, at European level, Belgium is represented by the CIGS within *FECRIS*, where each member association represents the associations of its countries and acts as an internal relay for the *FECRIS* within each country.

In the United Kingdom, assistance is provided to the victims of sectarian aberrations by four private associations. Only one of these associations – *INFORM* – can actually wield any real weight thanks to public funding. The structures providing assistance to these victims are all private associations registered as charities and do not receive public funding apart from *INFORM*.

INFORM is a charity and receives subsidies, mainly from the Home Office, the Metropolitan Police of London and the Church of England. The aim of the charity is to monitor the new religious movements. This charity was not initially intended to assist victims. The charity is currently often contacted by families or the victims themselves due to its expertise on "sects". INFORM has a monopoly on sect expertise for the Government and its public funding is extensively criticised by the other associations which receive no financial backing from the Government and struggle to get by. The situation of INFORM, in terms of both the financing it receives from the Government and the positions taken by its president, and its "ambiguous" analysis of "new religious movements", makes this charity the target of criticism by the other associations who would like to benefit from the same resources. Finally, INFORM is the only association with access to the necessary resources (premises, researchers, etc.) within the London School of Economics (LSE) to obtain the information required to help the victims of sectarian aberrations.

Reachout Trust registered as a charity in the early 1990s and its aims are to help the victims of sectarian aberrations. Its director claims that the association is financed by donations and maintains relations with the United States and Eastern Europe. The director would be very interested in maintaining closer relations with France. The association has its own web site. According to the charity, it regularly dialogues with the private associations Cult Information Centre and Family Survival Trust and occasionally meets with representatives of INFORM. Reachout Trust considers itself independent to international organisations.

Cult Information Centre (CIC), created in 1987, is also a registered charity. CIC has its own web site. Its secretary general claims to be a former member of a sect. The association assists the families of the victims of sectarian aberrations, and the police and organises conferences in schools. CIC was previously a member of the FECRIS and "resigned on the grounds of differences in points of view with this organisation", according to the secretary general. According to other sources, CIC, and another association, Catalyst, were actually expelled due to financial links with the Amway sect in the United States.

The association Family Survival Trust (FST), formerly Family Action Information And Resource (FAIR), initially created to help the families of Moonies (followers of the Moon Unification Church), is directed by a former Member of the British Parliament and former Minister of the Home Office, and is obliged to spend excessive time lobbying to obtain public funding. The association FAIR changed its name in the context of the current reform of charities and split into two to become the FST, which continues to provide support for the victims of sectarian aberrations and their families, and Fair News Publishing, which publishes the newsletter of the association. This division is intended to ensure legal protection for the association against sectarian organisations. FST, which also runs a web site, has excellent relations with similar associations in Belgium and Spain, and with Miviludes.

A fifth private association of the same type, Catalyst, is facing financial difficulties according to the above organisations.

In Germany, the perception of the sectarian phenomenon is globally influenced by article 4 of the fundamental law which guarantees religious freedoms via State neutrality if the religious movement does not breach fundamental freedoms. At federal level, the assistance provided to the victims of sectarian aberrations is mainly based on the provision of information; structures providing help to these victims are mainly regional, denominational, or private initiatives.

The administrative authorities distribute information to the public on religious movements in general and on the new spiritual movements and sects. In addition to providing this general information, the authorities organise many initiatives mandated by the Catholic and Protestant churches, private associations or members of the general public with a particular interest in this field.

Administrative structures providing information and helping the victims of sectarian aberrations exist in all Länder. Structures providing aid and advice exist at Länder level. In the Land of Berlin, the Senate (Land Government) has created a hotline for victims and distributes information brochures. The Länder of Lower-Saxony, Hamburg, Hessen and Rhineland (North Rhine Westphalia) jointly proposed the adoption of a law enabling the victims of sectarian aberrations to launch law suits more easily on 12 October 2007, before the Bundesrat.

Most of the administrative structures of the Länder closely cooperate with the central government within a dedicated common cooperation network. Debating is productive and often leads to the adoption of legislative texts on the protection of victims. Close attention is paid to the Church of Scientology. This movement is apparently the only movement to be systematically monitored by the German administrative authorities, which consider that its activities may not be compatible with the fundamental law.

Further to a referendum called for by the people, the members of the Bundestag voted for the creation of a Commission of enquiry in 1996. This commission still exists and focuses on "elements generally known as sects or groups applying psychological pressure" (literal translation of "sogenannte Sekten und Psychogruppen"). It is indeed significant that federal structures are reluctant to refer to "sects" directly, and prefer eloquent side stepping phrases as shown above. The Commission of enquiry aims, in addition to the analysis of the activities of these groups and the reasons which push certain individuals to contact them, to identify means of preventing new recruitment and, when necessary, helping these individuals and their family and friends to leave these groups.

Denominational information structures include a "Working group on social and ethical issues" within the Catholic church, which works with services monitoring the sectarian aberrations present in the different diocese. Within the Protestant church, a "Central Observatory of ethical issues" works with the different regional bodies and publishes a wide range of documentation on the topic of sects.

Many private initiatives provide help for the victims of sectarian aberrations. A multitude of web sites are based in Germany and run either by private associations or by members of the general public. One of the more active associations is known as the AGPF (Movement for spiritual and psychic freedoms). The AGPF's web site includes a list of sects, and a list of priority contacts for the victims of these movements. Some of these initiatives have led to the creation of an Internet network aiming to bring together the experience and knowledge of members and coordinate actions. The activity of this network has particularly led to the organisation of national and international conferences.

In Austria, several organisations provide information and advice on sectarian aberrations, and federal and regional public structures. In addition, the federal Ministries of Health, Families and Youth, and of Education, the Arts and Culture, provide the public with several contacts specialised in issues relating to sectarian aberrations and two private institutions provide assistance for the victims of these aberrations and receive State funding.

The main federal or regional public structures are based in Vienna and Lower Austria. This includes: the Federal Bureau of Sectarian issues (Bundesstelle für Sektenfragen) based in Vienna, the Regional Bureau for the Defence of the Constitution and the combat against terrorism/"Extremism" sub-division (Landesamt Für Verfassungsschutz und Terrorismusbekämpfung/ Referat 'Extremismus') also based in Vienna, and the Bureau for Sectarian issues within the Government of Lower Austria (Amt der Niederösterreichischen Landesregierung, Landesstelle für Sektenfragen).

In addition, the Federal Ministries of Health, Families and Youth ("Youth policy" Division), and of Education, the Arts and Culture, ("psychological support and guidance in the school environment" Division) provide the public with several contacts specialised in issues relating to the sectarian phenomenon. Finally, two private institutions receive State funding: Kult und Co Tirol (Cult and Tyrol Ltd), based in Tyrol, and Logo Eso Info, based in Steiermark.

In the regions, the Ministry of Health, Families and Youth finances several structures providing advice to families, and especially focusing on sectarian and ideological factors: Ehe-, Familien-, Lebensberatung des katholischen Familienwerkes (Association providing advice – intended for couples and families – Catholic family works) based in Vienna, Magistrat der Landeshauptstadt Klagenfurt, Sektenberatung (magistrate of the town of Klagenfurt, advice on sects), in Kärnten, Familien-, Partner- und Jugendberatungsstelle des Niederösterreichische Hilfswerkes (Bureau providing advice – intended for families, couples and the young – social work in Lower Austria), Familienberatung des Oberösterreichischen Familienbundes (advice – intended for families – family association of Upper Austria), Familienberatung des Familienreferates des Landes Salzburg (advice for families provided by the family office of the Land of Salzburg), Jugend- und Familienberatungsstelle des Steirischen Familienbundes (Bureau of advice intended for families and youngsters within the family association in Steiermark), Caritas Beratungszentrum Tirol (Caritas Help centre in Tyrol) and the Institut für Sozialdienste (Vorarlberg) (Social services) in Vorarlberg.

With regard private associations, in addition to the associations providing information and advice Kult und Co Tirol (Cult and Tyrol Ltd) and Logo Eso Info (Logo is the name of an association providing information to youngsters; Logo Eso Info is an internal branch which specifically handles issues relating to esoterism, sects and the occult sciences) several private entities offer assistance to the victims of sectarian aberrations: Gesellschaft gegen Sekten und Kultgefahren (Group combating sectarian and religious dangers), based in Vienna, Netzwerk Verein für Sekten und Kultfragen (Association for sectarian and religious issues in Kärnten) and Netzwerk Verein für Sekten und Kultfragen (Association for sectarian and religious issues in Steiermark). Informal contact occurs between private structures and between these associations and the public authorities. These private associations also maintain informal contact with other organisations and foreign associations. It must be noted that the leader of Gesellschaft gegen Sekten und Kultgefahren (Group combating sectarian and religious dangers), Friedrich Griess, is the President of the FECRIS.

Switzerland was long a country which was highly reticent to control sectarian organisations, undoubtedly to avoid the impact of a history marked by the persecutions of miscellaneous Christian confessions. In the current context of extreme religious change, with the emergence of small but dangerous groups, the Swiss central government has now stated that it will provide national guidance in the field of the protection of victims of sectarian aberrations, while leaving the cantons, associations and general public free to take initiatives. In addition, the Swiss Confederation, which took its time to consider if and how to act in the context of Swiss law, now considers that it must assess its relations with active religious groups. The central government therefore decided to launch a "National research plan" (PNR 58) under the title "Religious groups", aiming to scientifically study the in-depth changes to the religious landscape, identify points of conflict and help to find solutions. Launched in 2007, PNR 58 should lead to a final report in 2010.

In terms of the combat against sectarian aberrations, while, in the private sector, Swiss structures providing assistance for the victims of these aberrations are similar to those in France, in the public sector, the approach differs due to the political organisation of Switzerland, which is a federal state with twenty six sovereign cantons, which hold competence for religious issues; this induces twenty six systems for the settling of problems relating to sectarian organisations. There is not therefore an office at central level which could standardise the situation. However, the central authorities, after having decided that this problem exclusively depended on canton-level authorities, now currently plays an increasing role in terms of coordination, the distribution of information and research. The specific involvement of the cantons of Geneva, Vaud, Valais and Tessin in this field should be highlighted. However, while the Swiss Confederation is not supposed to deal with these issues, subsequent to the vivid public reaction to the case of the Order of the Solar Temple in 1994, the central government has taken action to reinforce the initiatives of the cantons.

Further to a report published on 1st July 1999 by the Executive Commission of the National Council under the title "Sects or brainwashing movements in Switzerland" the Swiss Confederation created a central web site "Network of brainwashing movements" and an internal administrative network bringing together specialists in "brainwashing movements".

The "Network of brainwashing movements" web site includes a list of "information and advice centres" in the cantons. This list is updated annually and the Swiss confederation indicates two express reserves. The first reserve indicates that the list has been drafted on the basis of the information provided by the cantons and that the presence or absence of any given group on the list is therefore the responsibility of the cantons. The second reserve indicates that the list published by the federal chancellery – working under the Federal Council (Government) – is not intended to be exhaustive or imply any kind of judgement. Twenty one cantons out of the total twenty six cantons currently contribute to this list. Basel-Town, Neuchâtel, Nidwald, Obwald and Schwyz do not contribute.

The site "Network of brainwashing movements" offers general information on "brainwashing movements". It is also specified that the federal chancellery does not intend to provide exhaustive information and does not make any judgement over the terms "sect" or "brainwashing movement" and that a group can only be added to the list if the lead entity is known. The range of web sites include those of Christian institutions such as the working group of the Conference of Swiss bishops, the ecumenical association Religiøse Sondergruppen und Sekten, the Evangelical information centre (Kirchen – Sekten – Religionen), the universities of Lausanne and Fribourg, secular associations such as Infosekta, consisting of thirty or so members from a range of sectors – social, medical, the media, judicial sectors, politics and religion – and is active in the canton of Zurich, Information Religion is established in the canton of Basel-Town, Informationsplattform Religion distributes information on religious communities considered as sects by the representatives of Islamic orthodoxy and is located in Marburg in Germany, and sites run by members of the general public such as Religioscope.

This site also provides links to orders issued by the federal courts and relating to the freedom of conscience and belief and to relations between the State and religion, and to parliamentary interventions and the press releases of the Swiss Confederation in this field.

This site also indicates links to foreign sites on "brainwashing movements", with the same reserves on non-exhaustiveness and the identification of the leading entity of each group.

With regard the internal administrative network, which brings together specialists in "brainwashing movements", and which was also created subsequent to the report published on 1 July 1999, this interdepartmental working group periodically assesses the web site "Sects or brainwashing movements in Switzerland".

At canton level, French-speaking Switzerland holds the only (and most developed) structure financed and implemented at the initiative of the cantons of Geneva, Vaud, Valais and Tessin. The head office of this structure, the Intercantonal information centre for beliefs (CIC) is located in Geneva. The CIC was created as a non-profit organisation towards the end of 2001 (articles 80 and subsequent of the Swiss civil code) and is monitored by canton authorities. The role of the CIC is to create and distribute information on the doctrines, structures and activities of the religious communities and other religious, spiritual and esoteric groups, to the benefit of members of the general public, canton-level administrations and municipal administrations, schools, private entities and the media, all of which may receive this information. However, some form of competition apparently exists between private voluntary associations and the CIC. Their cooperation is not as effective as that organised between the Swiss CIC and private French associations, particularly UNADFI, and with Swiss universities. The CIC actually has little direct contact with the victims. The CIC mainly plays a preventive role, encourages dialogue between sect members and friends and family, provides advice for State services and private entities and contributes to the analysis and understanding of a profoundly changing religious landscape. Finally, the CIC participates at the annual meeting of State organisations responsible for sectarian aberrations in the context of the Council of Europe.

In the private sector, the Swiss and French systems are similar in the combat against sectarian aberrations, with the existence of a very dense network of private associations defending these victims. Many of these private structures have been created by those having been affected by this phenomenon in their life and help both the victims and their families.

Slovakian authorities have started to become aware of the potential dangers of sectarian organisations. This danger is explained in detail in the "Strategy for combating extremism" which the Government adopted in January 2006. The current Government has also made the combat against "extremism" one of its priorities. In this way, the raising of the threshold required to "register" a religious movement, to 20,000 members – contrary to the wishes of the United States embassy – aimed precisely at making the registration of "new religious movements" more difficult.

In Slovakia, where the sectarian phenomenon apparently affects around 50,000 people, both public and private (NGO) structures exist and provide assistance for the victims of sectarian aberrations. These structures are active in terms of prevention and provide advice on handling sects.

The Institute for relations between the State and Churches, in Bratislava, is a State institution working from within the Ministry of Culture. This Institute was created in 1997 and employs five specialists. This Institute analyses changes to the traditional and non-traditional religious environment in Slovakia. The body is a member of the FECRIS and collaborates with many organisations in miscellaneous countries, including the Miviludes, and with two other Slovakian structures. The body provides advice for victims of sectarian aberrations among other activities. The Institute laments that police officers trained by its services in the field of sectarian aberrations, within the Unit for the combat against extremism, do not remain long enough to use this training.

The Sect study centre within the Ecumenical council of Churches, in Bratislava, was created in 2001 and only has one single expert. This study centre provides advice to the victims of sectarian aberrations and publishes a magazine specialised in the sects' issue, Rozmer. This centre cooperates with the two other Slovakian structures, and with similar organisations in the Czech Republic (Study centre for sects and new religious movements), in Poland, Germany and Russia.

The prevention centre in the field of sects, Integra, at Banska Bystrica, is an NGO created in 2000. This centre is run by volunteers and mainly focuses on prevention and providing advice for the victims of sectarian organisations. The centre collaborates with the two other structures mentioned, and with the University of Banska Bystrica and the Slovakian network of "psychological advice centres". The centre laments that the reform of the "psychological advice centres" led to the disappearance of structures which had acquired expertise in the field of providing advice for victims of sectarian aberrations, such as the Centre for the prevention of drug addiction in Banska Bystrica. Integra has however continued to cooperate with this network which included fifty two centres and employed one hundred and forty counsellors early 2006.

The NGO addressed a questionnaire on advice in the field of sects to this network. According to the replies to this questionnaire, 85% of requests for information related to sectarian organisations. The main problems raised in these requests related to the education of children due to one of two parents being the member of a sect; or conflict within a couple, where one of the partners is a sect member; or requests for information on a specific sect and assistance for a friend or family member. Other requests related to divorce based on the fact that one of the two spouses belonged to a sect; or help to leave a sect or to cease dependency on a sect. Finally, other calls related to financial problems due to donations to a sect; or requests for psychiatric expertise or personal problems after a partner or spouse joins a sect; or attempts to find foster families for children.

Most requests for advice on a specific sect concern the Jehovah's witnesses, the Church of Scientology, satanic movements, Hare Krishna, or miscellaneous movements of Christian or Oriental inspiration, but also companies in the direct sales sector, such as Amway or Herbalife, alternative medicines, alternative schools such as Waldorf schools or the Russian sect-inspired school, Anastazia, occultism and esoterism. Between 80 and 100 sectarian organisations are considered to exist in Slovakia.

These three structures lament the absence of definition of a "cult" or "sect" in Slovakian legislation and that no official list of dangerous sectarian organisations is available and consider that this prevents the judicial and police authorities from taking action to combat sectarian aberrations. They consider that the current structures do not meet requirements. These three structures are truly specialised in the sectarian sector and lack resources. "Psychological advice centres" are undertrained in these very specific issues and are unable to play their role. Some consider that it would be appropriate to create associations of victims of sectarian aberrations, such as those existing in France.

Despite growing awareness of the potential dangers of sects, structures providing assistance for victims of sectarian aberrations remain far from adequate. The Slovakian structures show great interest in an exchange with France, which they consider being up to date on the issue and would appreciate continued cooperation with Miviludes.

Spain, Sweden, Italy, Bulgaria, Finland, Ireland, Poland, the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Denmark, and Lithuania

Assistance to the victims of sectarian aberrations in Spain is mainly provided by associations working in the private sector. No public structure exists specifically to cover these victims, either at national or local level. The Spanish government is only concerned by managing registers of religions and associations – except the general "monitoring" of the information services of civil and military police. Only certain autonomous communities (particularly in Catalonia and the Basque country) provide financial backing for associations providing aid for sect victims. The latter globally lament the lack of interest shown by the public authorities, and include:

- Barcelona: Atención e investigación de socioadicciones (AIS) (monitoring & enquiries into social addictions), a private association created in 1977 and directed by Julia Nueno. At national level, AIS maintains relations with the Ministry of Labour and Social affairs, and the sub-division of NGOs and volunteers, with which an agreement/program was signed in 2006 on a project under the title 'Atención a afectados por grupos de manipulación psicológica o sectas coercitivas' (monitoring of those affected by groups using mental manipulation or coercive sects), and is supported by a few Spanish banks (social works operated by La Caixa and Caja Madrid).

At regional level, AIS is globally supported by the autonomous community of Catalonia – (Generalitat), and the health and family planning departments in particular. The agreement concluded with the Generalitat mainly enables the community to provide free assistance and obtain recognition as a "sanitary centre for mental health" (obtained three years ago).

At local level, AIS is supported by the town hall of Barcelona, which particularly financed a prevention campaign based on the distribution of informative documents by the AIS to all civic centres, cultural sites and other youth associations.

At international level, AIS is a founding member of the FECRIS and is part of the Board of the International Cultic Studies Association (ICSA). Its therapeutic team mainly participates at the annual congress of the ICSA each year on "Psychological manipulation, cultic groups, and other alternative movements". The AIS also maintains contacts with the UNADFI in France.

- Barcelona: Equipo multidisciplinar para el asesoramiento y asistencia en problemas sectarios (EMAAPS) (multi-disciplinary team providing information and assistance for victims of sectarian aberrations in Spain). This centre is directed by Pepe Rodríguez, a doctor in psychology at the faculty of Barcelona, considered as one of the leading Spanish experts on sects and author of several books on the issue.

- Donostia - Saint-Sebastian: Largantza, Basque association against sectarian manipulation, created in 1998 with the support of the Parliament of the Autonomous Community of the Basque country. Its current president, Juantxo Domínguez, directed a commission of enquiry on sects within the Basque Parliament during the term of 1994-1998.

- Redune (association for the prevention of sectarian manipulation) is a private association, created in 2005, and has delegations in almost all of the autonomous communities. Its current president is Juantxo Domínguez (also president of Largantza) and its vice-president is Mercedes Montenegro Gómez, former president of the AIS delegation in Madrid, and herself authors of several books on sects.

The aim of Redune is to unite the efforts of all professionals and former followers in the combat against sectarian organisations and to launch a large-scale campaign aiming to extend awareness in Spain. The association particularly suggested the creation of a "Standing observatory of groups using mental manipulation" to the Congress of deputies and the General council of Spanish judicial power (proposal issued by the European Parliament for many years); training and awareness campaigns relating to Spanish judicial power; the training of psychiatrists and legal psychologists in this field and creation of a specialist attorney general. None of these proposals has currently been, as yet, implemented.

Sweden has a very liberal approach to sects, based on a general interpretation of freedom of opinion and association. No law expressly sanctions sectarian aberrations, and although a parliamentary report from 1998 highlighted system loopholes, all of the individual political initiatives taken since that time have failed. The main legislation which indirectly refers to sects is the law on religious communities of 1998, whose first article prohibits any forced membership. The Swedish legal framework therefore makes it relatively difficult to identify the victims of sectarian movements, at least in judicial and legal terms. No official statistics are available from the police.

Care for the victims of sectarian aberrations is primarily provided by associations.

The most active private association is Foreningen Radda Individen (FRI Sverige/Association to save individuals), founded in 1984 and led by eleven volunteers. This private association is particularly focused on the international dimension of the combat against sectarian aberrations. This association has joined the European FECRIS network. FRI also carries out preventive work by distributing information on sectarian movements and by organising training sessions.

With the support of the National Education Agency (Skolverket), FRI has prepared teaching material including videos and fascicules on the different sects. Its subsidiary Sesam offers assistance to the victims of sectarian organisations or "manipulating movements" and their families. Depending on the availability of its volunteers, Sesam creates "help groups" in the presence of former victims, where they particularly insist on the understanding of the process of mental manipulation. They also offer publications to victims and can organise contacts with lawyers and psychologists, or even priests.

Another private association, Radgivning Om Sekter (ROS/ advice on sects) can also offer support for the victims of sectarian aberrations. Just like FRI, this association organises discussion groups with its volunteers. ROS also offers a support hotline, helps the victims of sectarian aberrations to create "self-help groups", including five to eight individuals having faced similar experiences, and organises meetings for its members several times each year. ROS also organises preventive campaigns in schools.

More specific private associations also exist, such as Hjalpkallan, which provides assistance to former Jehovah's witnesses.

Finally, the total number of victims of sectarian aberrations assisted in Sweden by private associations is complex to establish. This figure is estimated at between fifty and one hundred victims per year and per association.

No public structure exists for the specific handling of the victims of sectarian aberrations, whether at national or local level. Assistance is proposed by the sanitary services and more specifically the psychiatric services, within regional councils or municipal social services. Victims are assisted in coordination with the above private associations and, possibly, the Churches or the rare medical specialists in the field.

System loopholes were highlighted in a parliamentary report in 1998. This report criticised the inadequacy of the sanitary and social services in terms of assisting the victims of sectarian aberrations. The report proposed a series of measures, including the creation of a "Research centre on religious and spiritual issues", and the distribution of brochures to professionals in the education, medical and social sectors. The report also recommended the revision of provisions governing private schools, and the sanctioning of the mental manipulation of people.

Further to the inadequacies highlighted in this report, several politicians took action to ensure that appropriate care is provided for victims of sectarian aberrations within psychiatric services. Three liberal members of parliament – Barbro Westerholm, Liselott Hagberg and Lars Tysklind – submitted a bill on sects. In October 2007, one of these bills (2007/8: SO486), aiming to assist the "victims of sects and manipulating movements" and mainly planning for the organisation of psychiatric support, was rejected; therefore no action has currently been taken. The "liberal party", minority member of the government coalition, is the main political actor in the combat against sectarian aberrations and its 2007 program on psychiatry provided for the creation of a centre specialised in providing assistance for these victims.

In Italy, although the State created a Task Force, a team of experts and specialists known as the SAS (anti-sects team) within the central operating service of the Anti-crimes division of the State police, with which the associations cooperate, the latter are the only entities to provide assistance for the victims of sectarian aberrations. Several secular private associations provide assistance for these victims and their families and other private social/religious associations operate in the form of an association for research and information, mainly focusing on the sectarian phenomenon. These associations are present in the largest dioceses of the Catholic Church. All of these private associations comprise specialists in the sectarian phenomenon, and cooperate with doctors, psychotherapists, jurists, criminologists, etc.

The Association for Research and Information on Sects (ARIS) Veneto and ARIS Toscana are Italian associations and members of the FECRIS; FAVIS (National association of the families of the victims of sects) and the Study centre for psychological abuse (CESAP) are FECRIS correspondents.

Several of these associations which combat sectarian aberrations and attempt to help the victims of sectarian aberrations and their families, work closely with the Catholic Church, such as FAVIS and "FAVIS Rimini" which aids victims to submit complaints and whose logo is "Stop mental manipulation"; the Research and Information Group on Sects (GRIS), studies the sectarian phenomenon with particular focus on Jehovah's witnesses (Watchtower association); and the Association of the community of Pope John XXIII, a private international association of followers of pontifical law, focuses on, among other things, the combat against sectarian aberrations, and coordinates with the services of the Ministry of the Interior.

Other associations are secular, such as the Association for Research and Information on Sects (ARIS); the CESAP and the "CESAP-FRIULI" (Study centre for psychological abuse), created to combat aberrations by sectarian organisations in Italy; the International Crime Analysis Association (ICAA); the Italian committee of former Jehovah's witnesses; SOS antiplagiarism; the anti-plagiarism hotline and the anti-sect hotline are freefone numbers – Occult anti-sect service.

Secular associations comprise volunteers, have no political bias and are non-profit. These associations are generally listed on the regional register of volunteers for the home province. In real terms, associations providing help for the victims of sectarian organisations, in addition to ensuring psychological aid for the victims, coordinate with the police forces and denounce sectarian-type abuse, while bringing the attention of the local authorities to the phenomenon. They also encourage law suits, support the victims of sectarian aberrations in legal processes and provide general advice in legal proceedings. Cooperation between the different associations is entirely coordinated as those in charge of these organisations know each other and exchange information. Finally, the consular authorities in Italy have no contact with the local authorities Combating sectarian aberrations, as the rare cases managed by these services are solved by the rapid repatriation of those concerned following consular action.

Finally, on the other hand, the Study Centre for new religions (CESNUR) considers sects as new religious movements and organizes fully-fledged national and international campaigns against associations or governmental bodies defending the victims of these movements.

In Bulgaria no public structure provides help for the victims of sectarian aberrations. As is the case in the other former communist countries, the democratic transition in Bulgaria was accompanied by religious liberalisation, which is barely compatible with the creation of a state structure Combating sectarian aberrations.

At the current time, one single private association, the Research Centre for new religious movements (CRNMR), organises preventive campaigns against sects in the form of conferences and interventions targeting the Bulgarian media. Created in 2006 and comprising fifteen members, this association manages a hotline aiming to obtain statements from the victims of sectarian aberrations or their family and friends, and to provide psychological and legal support.

This association is a member of the FECRIS. This would appear to be its only contact with a similar foreign association. After networking by the French embassy in Sofia with Miviludes, the CRNMR organised a conference last March – with the support of the Centre of culture and cooperation of the embassy – on the issue of French policies against sectarian aberrations, during which a member of the Miviludes office took the floor.

The CRNMR works closely with the Division of religious affairs, part of the Council of Ministers (Services of the Prime Minister), which occasionally requests reports on recent developments in the sectarian landscape in Bulgaria.

The legal framework in Finland reconciles respect for major principles and upstream administrative control, in the "registration" phase, in a very consistent manner, making downstream inspections unnecessary. This avoids specific accusations relating to sectarian aberrations. Following their official recognition, religious organisations benefit from legal protection and therefore a wide scope of action.

Freedom of religion and conscience are some of the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Constitution, which also prohibits religious discrimination; the penal code provides for legal prosecution in case of blasphemy and the prevention of religious expression. The Ministry of Education and Culture is responsible for monitoring all religions. The State recognises two Churches; the Evangelical – Lutheran Church, part of the Porvoo Church, theoretically presided over by the French President, whose organisation and administration are governed by a law drafted by the Church itself, and the Orthodox Church, autocephalous, answering to the Ecumenical patriarch of Constantinople. These churches can claim 82% and 1% of the Finnish population respectively, with the other 14% considering themselves "without religion". These churches have official registrar status and are entitled to tax benefits.

According to the law on religious freedom of 1 August 2003, all other religious communities, which meet the two criteria of "respect for fundamental rights and Human rights" and "non-profit making" may register with the National office of patents and registrations. Their organisation is governed by the law of associations of 1989. Finally, they may also register as "simple associations". In this way, they will not benefit from recognition as a "religious organisation". Individual membership of several "associations" is naturally possible, although this is prohibited for "religious communities". At the current time, around sixty communities are officially recognised as "religious" organisations.

This category particularly includes the Jehovah's witnesses (18,000 followers) whose beliefs are integrated in the educational system and by the armed forces, the free Evangelical church of Finland, the Catholic Church, the Jews, Sunni Islam, etc. Only twenty adults are required to found a "religious community". Registration enables the community to organise religious teaching, to hold marriage ceremonies (without registrar status), and, subject to certain conditions, manage cemeteries. Since 2008, religious communities with more than 200 members may receive State funding. Finally, if the religious community does not declare its activities to the National office of patents and registrations, the group will be removed from the register after a ten-year period.

The Church of Scientology failed to register as a "religious community" in 1998, but exists legally as a simple "association". They claim one thousand members. The main success of these "new religious movements" is mainly within the Protestant landscape. Organisms such as Sahaja Yoga, Hare Krishna, Tibetan or Japanese Buddhism, Baha'i, etc., are ultra-minority movements; however the "new spiritualities" are less marginal: anthroposophy, New Age, theosophical societies, disciples of Steiner; and manage a large network of schools, crèches and institutions for the disabled, not to mention a teacher training centre and a centre of biodynamic agriculture in Helsinki. A certain interest in neopaganism has also been noted, often based on the rediscovery of ancient Finnish beliefs and Satanism, qualified as an epiphenomenon, brings together a maximum of a hundred individuals, most of which are minors.

In this liberal context, the public authorities consider that individual decisions are none of their business. Associations are therefore responsible for distributing information to the general public and handling any aberrations. Care for the victims of sectarian aberrations is therefore exclusively provided by private associations. Several private entities offer assistance to the victims of sectarian aberrations. Two non-governmental organisations are responsible for helping sect victims. The main NGO, Uskontojen Uhrien Tuki (UUT/assistance for the victims of religions) is a general organisation. The second NGO, JT-Tuki (assistance for Jehovah's witnesses), focuses on this confession only, which is legally recognised in Finland. The Evangelical - Lutheran Church and the Association of Finnish sceptics (SKEPSIS) distribute information on these aberrations from more aggressive, and mutually opposite, angles.

The UUT is an independent association, registered in 1993, and has provided "assistance and support for those who feel they have been abused, mistreated or let down by an authoritarian religious community or "sect" since 1987. According to its declaration of intent, the UUT fights for transparency by religious communities, particularly with regard to the rules and obligations which they apply to those wishing to join them. It calls on religious communities to obey laws and comply with the standards of the United Nations in terms of Human rights, and to not limit the individual freedoms of their members, or contact between members and the "outside world".

According to the UUT, members should not be driven to abandon their property, jobs or occupations and should be able to leave the community without fear or reprisals. The UUT is partially self-financed by its members, and receives an annual subsidy paid by the Finnish lottery, which is generally around 15,000 euros. UUT personnel are all volunteers and liaise with the different institutions. The UUT can also provide psychological or legal support for victims if required. UUT also distributes information on some religious movements on its web site (English version): Adventists, Scientology, Hare Krishna, Sahaja Yoga, Prabhupada, Laestadianisme, etc. ; together with testimonies. The most recent press releases on-line relate to the Mormons and Jehovah's witnesses.

The UUT has maintained limited cooperation with other associations and governmental institutions in the past, with just a few exchanges with Swedish authorities. On the other hand, contact was made with the FECRIS, for which UUT acts as a correspondent, and with the ICOSA based in Florida, United States. Its web site proposes links to other organisations, in particular the Study centre for new religions (CESNUR), the Evangelical - Lutheran Church, the Student help centre (NYYTI), SKEPSIS, the FECRIS, and British, American and northern sites, and to the JT-Tuki site.

JT-Tuki develops a similar approach, which it qualifies as "critical" exclusively for Jehovah's witnesses. JT-Tuki assists former members, the families of members and members wishing to partially or totally leave the community. Its web site is available in Finnish only and includes links to official sites – Finnish and US – for the Jehovah's witnesses and to the UUT and British/American sites distributing critical information on Jehovah's witnesses.

Finally, a web site has been created by one individual, a former Mormon who remains anonymous, and has provided extensive critical information on the Mormons in Finnish since 1998.

In Ireland, the phenomenon of sectarian aberrations is considered by the public authorities as a private problem. Mental manipulation cannot be used as a basis for prosecution if the victims are adult, on the grounds that an adult is able to resist psychological pressure. For this reason, no public structures provide help for the victims of sectarian aberrations. No Ministry is responsible for this problem and no observatory on sects has been created by the public authorities. Social services and universities do not feel overly concerned. In view of this situation, a few private initiatives were born in the form of associations providing help for victims.

The oldest of these associations is Dialogue Ireland Trust, and was created in 1992. The director, assisted by a committee of eight individuals, aims to provide psychological aid for victims of sectarian movements, but also to provide legal advice if prosecution is an option. This Trust also aims to ensure awareness of the dangers inherent to sectarian organisations by organising sessions in schools. The Trust was heard by the Ministers of Justice twice last year. The association receives no State funding and operating costs are covered by private donations. This structure appears to have a fairly solid network of contacts as it can claim regular dialogue with the FECRIS, the Dialog Centre International (Denmark), the UNADFI and the International Cultic Studies Association (ICSA) based in Florida, in the United States. Finally, it must be noted that the director of Dialogue Ireland Trust, who declared his disappointment with the indifference of the Irish public authorities in terms of sectarian aberrations despite its warnings, hopes for action by France targeting certain governments, including the Irish government, in view of highlighting the usefulness of the work of associations similar to the Trust.

The second private association was created more recently, and concerns the Irish branch of Anonymous, which focuses its efforts on denouncing the activities of The Church of Scientology and organises a public gathering around the head office of the Church of Scientology in Dublin one Saturday each month. Around a hundred individuals participate at these sessions on good months.

These two associations maintain good relations, the director of Dialogue Ireland Trust regularly attends the gatherings organised by Anonymous.

Therefore, despite a few private initiatives with limited resources, assistance for the victims of sectarian aberrations remains limited in Ireland.

Assistance for the victims of sectarian aberrations in Poland is not available via any public authority or State structure. Only private associations, all of which have relations with the Catholic Church, pay any attention to this problem and carry out local action while encouraging the creation of a national body to combat these aberrations, as no national structure or body currently exists either. All of the current associations act exclusively at local or regional level.

The Dominican Friars appear to have the most developed organization in terms of the combat against sectarian aberrations in Poland. They are present in all of the large towns and, although not centralised, maintain a 24h hotline and an active network, enabling them to direct victims to the nearest source of help. The association is closely linked to the Catholic diocese and obtains most of its financing from the Catholic Church.

The Centre against mental manipulation, based in Lublin, proposes "psychological, legal and theological support" for victims and their families, but also information sheets in the form of questions/answers, such as "When your group is labelled a sect" or "When you're a former sect member". This organisation operates on the basis of volunteers. Volunteers run the hotline or organise training courses in high schools for pupils, teachers and parents to better detect dangerous behaviour and know how to react. As is the case for most structures providing assistance for the victims of sectarian aberrations, which are often simple "information distributors", the organisation is not an "association" and therefore has no legal status, and, like most of these organisations, it is dependent on the local church, at the very least due to premises provided.

The Information centre on sects and psycho-manipulating groups in Silesia was created in 1995 in Katowice. The activity report for this centre for 2005 mentions 204 letters and electronic mails requesting information and assistance, 420 telephone calls to the centre and 267 interviews. 180 classes on "prevention & information" were also organised targeting 3,000 pupils. These classes aimed to ensure that the pupils acquired "resistance to brainwashing". Training courses are also proposed for parents and teachers, relating to the knowledge of the symptoms of sect membership and means of communicating with the victims of these organisations.

Finally, the organisation Effatha, based in Torun, obtained "association" status – and therefore became a legal person – in 1998. Effatha organises information campaigns targeting high schools and is present on Catholic and regional radio stations. The association receives grants from the Catholic Church, but also obtains financing thanks to the service contracts concluded with schools ordering training courses. The peak period for the association in terms of prevention is just before the summer school holidays, which is the high-risk period for potential victims of sectarian organisations.

The Sekty I Fakty magazine has been published by the Maternus group since 1999, and focuses on sectarian phenomena.

No formal collaboration exists between the private organisations Combating sectarian aberrations, however, they know each other and frequently send the victims which contact them to the nearest organisation. The web site of the Centre against mental manipulation therefore has links to the different associations which exist in each region of Poland. The director of the centre plans to create a confederation of centres providing assistance to the victims of sectarian aberrations.

All of these organisations are appalled by the lack of action taken by public authorities. The director of the Centre against mental manipulation accorded an interview with the conservative Catholic newsletter, *Nasz Dziennik*, last July, and called on the Polish state to "not make the same mistakes as France 15 years ago". The article also criticises the total lack of interest shown by the current Minister of the Interior in the "sect problem". The Minister apparently replied "Sects? What's a sect? ". In 1997, an interdepartmental commission responsible for "new religious movements" had been created by the Minister of the Interior at the time and, after one single report in 2001, the commission was dismantled and has not since been re-created by subsequent governments.

Despite the inexistence of relations with the central government and the absence of a coordination structure, private organisations have succeeded in establishing contacts with local authorities to varying degrees. The Centre against mental manipulation declares that it receives no support from local authorities, however some organisations, especially *Quo Vadis* in Olsztyn and *Effatha* in Torun, receive municipal grants.

The Dominican Friars appear to have established the most substantial collaboration with public authorities. Their employees (teachers, psychologists) are in fact subsidised by the local town hall: the centres submit their requirements and receive subsidies on the basis of these elements. They also organise conferences, and local civil servants voluntarily participate in the organisation of these events. Finally, these centres cooperate with the local police services.

In the Czech Republic, support for sect victims can be resumed as the initiatives of one single association whose main aim is to study new religious phenomena rather than assist victims. The small size of the association clearly prevents the organisation of large-scale initiatives or a role with public authorities beyond providing informal advice on sectarian phenomena.

These same public authorities (Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs) do not assign specific financial or human resources to assisting the victims of sectarian aberrations.

Founded in 1993, the Society for the study of sects and new religious movements (*Spolecnost pro studium sekt a novych nabozenskch smeru*) has less than twenty members, mostly from academic sectors. Financing is globally from private sources.

The Society holds archives which are open to researchers and frequently organises seminars on sects and minority religious movements. The Society organises information campaigns on sects and minority religious movements targeting the general public; provides advice for the families and friends of the victims of sectarian organisations and advice and assistance for members of sects or religious movements wishing to leave the movement.

The Society regularly cooperates with the public authorities (Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Justice) which consult with the group on sectarian phenomena. The group also holds a public information session one morning each week. This cooperation is not however made formal via any type of agreement, or with the presence of a representative of the association within a governmental advisory structure. The public authorities accord no financial aid for the association, although the group has received grants for specific operations in the past.

The association maintains ad hoc links with equivalent associations in other countries – Germany, Denmark, Ireland, Slovakia, the United Kingdom – although contacts appear closer with the two latter countries. No formal cooperation is established, relations are based on ad hoc contacts and meetings. This association has its own web site in Czech only.

In the Czech Republic, support for victims of sectarian aberrations can be resumed as the initiatives of one association whose main aim is to study new religious movements rather than assist victims; this association has no relations with the Czech government and has little international involvement.

Cyprus has no specific legislation on sectarian aberrations, or prevention system or public structures providing assistance for the victims of these aberrations. Only the Orthodox Church and a local private association study the problem of sectarian aberrations and attempt to help victims.

In view of a problem which was, until now, considered to be marginal, Cyprus has never passed legislation in this field. The main initiatives to prevent and combat sectarian aberrations are taken by the Orthodox Church of Cyprus, which studies the phenomenon and provides its followers with information on the risks of the mental exclusion of a sect member or follower of a satanic group.

In addition to Satanist groups, and next to the Church of Scientology, the Unification Church of Moon and the Jehovah's witnesses, other soul groups such as Silva Mind Control and Success Dynamics, etc. can be found in Cyprus not forgetting neopentecostal groups – Mormons, the Church of God, the Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ, etc. – and a range of other organisations – Sri Chinmoy, Sathya Sai Baba, Ananda Marga, Maharisi Mahesh Yogi and Harmonious Life (by Robert Nadjemi).

The strong influence of the Orthodox Church in society in Cyprus was until recently considered sufficient protection against potential sectarian aberrations. With the extensive reduction in the role of the Church in the daily lives of Cypriots, conditions appear more favourable for the possible strengthening of existing sectarian movements and the appearance of new groups.

After gradually realising the risks relating to the development of this phenomenon, the Cypriot authorities now support the Orthodox Church and a private association specialised in providing assistance for the victims of sectarian aberrations, the Pan-Cypriot Union of parents for the protection of Greek Orthodox culture, families and the individual (PPU).

Created in Cyprus in 1994, the aim of the PPU is to search for, and constantly study the presence of sectarian organisations and religions in Cyprus and abroad, and the distribution of real time operational information to all of the groups and individuals concerned. Its web site is regularly updated. The PPU also organises seminars on sects. The 22nd Inter-Orthodox congress of the PPU, on the issue "Who penetrates into the mind of your child? the risks of sects and minors", was held in July 2008 in Cyprus. The victims of sectarian aberrations, which can present clear personality disorders, and their families, can contact the Advisory centre of the PPU by telephone or e-mail. Specialist personnel can provide information and immediate assistance in this context. Finally, the PPU closely cooperates with the Orthodox Church and the authorities and maintains relations with parent associations and other foreign groups active in the combat against sectarian aberrations, such as the FECRIS, of which it is a member.

Assistance for victims of sectarian aberrations, which is mainly provided by the Pan-Cypriot Union of parents for the protection of Greek Orthodox culture, families and the individual (PPU), could until now be considered as adequate, but may, in the future, show its limits. The Orthodox Church also recognises the urgent need for the greater involvement of public authorities in handling this problem.

In Denmark, a Ministry of religion is responsible for religious issues, which take account of the sectarian phenomenon. This Ministry is, in fact, responsible for the classification of the different cultural movements which turn up as religions. This classification as a religion has significant effects in terms of legal and fiscal rights. Over and beyond these administrative considerations, the Danish state offers the same help to victims of sectarian aberrations as that available to any victim of acts subject to common law.

In Denmark, assistance for the victims of sectarian organisations is mainly provided by the private association Dialogcentret whose head office is in Aarhus, but which has offices in all large towns. Dialogcentret aims to denounce the dangers inherent to sects. This association organises publications on a regular basis. The group is actually a Christian movement itself and was founded around thirty years ago. The group is not a member of the FECRIS, but is part of a Christian network established in several European countries, Dialog Center International.

In Lithuania, no public structure responsible for preventing sectarian aberrations or assisting any victims of abuse of weakness by sectarian organisations exists. The public assistance service towards which any future victims of sectarian aberrations could be directed is the Family support service within the Ministry of Social Affairs, which is a general psychological help service and is assigned to handle this type of problem when necessary. This service admitted that it had never received any calls from victims of sectarian aberrations.

In fact, assistance available for victims of sectarian aberrations is next to zero as only a few associations act sporadically and have relations with foreign NGOs. Two private associations focus on sectarian aberrations, but only carry out preventive initiatives. One NGO based in Kaunas, the second largest town in the country, known as the Cult Prevention Bureau, published a report in 2005 on the prevention of sectarian activity involving minors. This report is specific as it adopts the definition of sects used by the UNADFI, despite this concept not having been sanctioned by any legal text in Lithuania. In addition, this association organises prevention seminars for kids and teenagers at holiday camps. The Cult Prevention Bureau is supported by a Russian association.

Another organisation, the New Religions Research and Information Centre (NRTIC), based in Vilnius, aims to "distribute objective information on the new religious movements in Lithuania to Lithuanian society". This organisation publishes articles and studies drafted by Lithuanian or foreign academics on the new religious movements present in Lithuania. It must be noted that this organisation, which has its own web site full of documentation (www.religija.lt), is managed by certain members of the department of religious affairs within the Ministry of Justice. This organisation does not aim to provide actual help for the victims of sectarian aberrations. The group above all defends the notion of religious freedom and refuses to use the term "sect" to refer to a religious movement. This organisation is the best source of available information on religious movements in Lithuania.

The NRTIC maintains several partnerships with foreign associations. They collaborate with the English organisation INFORM based at the London School of Economics and founded in 1988 by the sociology professor, Eileen Barker. The NRTIC participates at seminars organised by INFORM on "new religious movements" twice a year. The NRTIC is also a member of the Centre for Studies on New Religions (CESNUR) based in Italy. Here again, the two organisations mainly cooperate in the context of conferences on religious movements. Finally, the NRTIC maintains a partnership with the international network, Habitus, which aims to distribute information on Christianity.

Lithuanian authorities state that, to date, no religious movement or sect has disturbed public order and that no victims of sectarian aberrations exist in Lithuania. Despite the low level of success of sects and the clear dominance of the Catholic church, with 60 to 80% of the population calling themselves Catholic according to surveys, associations are starting to take action to prevent any abuse of weakness by new religious movements, demonstrating the seed of growing awareness of the actual nature of these dangers.

**Portugal, Monaco, Hungary, Latvia, Estonia, Iceland,
Slovenia, Croatia, Norway, the Netherlands, Luxembourg,
Macedonia, Greece, Romania and Malta**

No public or private structure in Portugal exists to provide assistance for the victims of sectarian aberrations and the main Portuguese association providing help for victims, Apoio a vitima (APAV) handles all types of victims with no specific distinction for victims of sectarian aberrations. Founded in 1990, this association had not detected any cases with a victim of a religious movement, whether a sect or otherwise. In fact, no criminal activity incriminating a sect or religious movement has been identified by Portuguese authorities at the current time. No legal definition of a sect exists and Portugal is a secular State (Constitution of 1976), which applies extensive "religious" tolerance. According to the "Commission of religious freedoms", supervised by the Ministry of Justice and chaired over by the former Portuguese President, Mario Soares, law 16/2001 on "religious freedoms" does not define the concept of a sect, and this concept is therefore purely sociological.

The freedom of conscience and religious practices is an undeniable fact in a highly tolerant society, globally structured with still-present-but- discreet Catholic values. With extensive migration from the former colonies (Angola, Mozambique, Cap-Vert, Brazil), Churches of all sorts are accepted. Public opinion in Portugal prefers to ignore their particularities and associates a highly pejorative meaning to the term "sect" which is generally considered to mean "any group of individuals with suspect activities".

In Monaco, no specific structures exist to combat sectarian aberrations or assist the victims of these aberrations, as the sectarian phenomenon is marginal; no sect is actually established in the country and the few rare residents who are members of a foreign group raise no threat to local public order.

No specific structures providing help for the victims of sectarian aberrations exist in Hungary either. These victims must use services which provide assistance for all types of victims. This assistance is, in principle, offered by the Victim aid service of the Justice office of the Ministry of Justice and the Police, created recently on 1 January 2006. This office has created a cooperation network with local authorities, health organisms, and private associations providing assistance for the victims of any type of crime or offense.

The main and most known of these associations is Feher Gyuru (the white lamb), a charity registered in 1989. The charity is a national operation and has been a member of Victim Support Europe (formerly the European Forum of Victim Services) for the last thirteen years. Feher Gyuru has more than 900 members, with 63 legal persons including the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Health, Social Affairs and Families, the Directorate General of the national police, the attorney general and several town halls, including that of Budapest. The charity provides psychological support, care, legal, financial or administrative assistance. No victim of sectarian aberrations has been reported since the creation of this association.

In Latvia, no specific structure exists for the protection of individuals against sectarian aberrations. The Latvian state has not created a public structure for this purpose and no private association with a similar objective has been created in Latvia.

In the same way, in Estonia, one service with two civil servants, created in 1991 within the Ministry of the Interior, represents the department of religious affairs and is in charge of sectarian movements. These two civil servants are responsible for monitoring, regulations and prevention. This service is responsible for religious and cultural movements at national level. Estonia has adopted an ultraliberal approach in this field, with priority accorded to the freedom of religion and association. No definition of sects exists, only "religious movements" are recognised. Article 40 of the Constitution specifies that "All individuals are free to practice their religion, alone or with others, in public or in private". Article 154 of the penal code provides that "any person interfering in the religious practices or associations of another person may be fined or subject to a prison sentence of up to one year, unless these practices or associations are morally harmful for the rights or the health of other individuals, or breach public order".

The combat against sectarian aberrations must therefore necessarily be indirect: victims must therefore submit complaints before any action by the government services. One single prevention campaign was organised in Estonia, between 1993 & 1996, via the Estonian media. However, the Ministry of the Interior, via its specialist departments, remains in permanent contact with schools, universities, State bodies, the other ministries and foreign authorities. Finally, it must be noted that only 30% of the Estonian population consider themselves to follow a religious movement.

In Iceland, the government has not adopted any specific action for the study or control of the sectarian phenomenon. No specific public or private structure exists which provides assistance for the victims of sectarian aberrations and no Icelandic association is a member of the FECRIS.

In Slovenia, a decisively majority Catholic community and strong family ties appear to prevent the infiltration of sects. No government structure or private association specialised in providing assistance for the victims of sectarian aberrations exists, however some structures can provide aid for victims of domestic violence, assaults on minors, discrimination and the trafficking of human beings; these structures can offer support and cooperate with the public authorities. According to the National office for the monitoring of religious minorities, no plans are underway to create a specialised service for the victims of sectarian aberrations, and the Ministry of the Interior does not appear concerned by the phenomenon.

In Croatia, no public body or private association provides assistance for the victims of sectarian aberrations and the Ministry of the Interior has no contact with international organisations handling this problem.

However, if a criminal investigation unveils illegal acts relating to sectarian aberrations, the police advise the victims and their family and friends to obtain psychological help from the medical services or private associations offering aid for the victims of the various criminal acts. However, in the case of children/minors, article 108 of the law on families obliges the police to immediately notify the social services for the area. These services must send a team comprising a social worker, a psychologist and a jurist to help the minor and the parents or guardians.

Several private associations provide assistance for the victims of crimes and offenses. These associations cooperate closely with the police and their actions are coordinated. This especially applies for the associations which handle family violence and the trafficking of human beings.

In Norway, there is no public entity responsible for Combating sectarian aberrations, or private associations dedicated to sect victims. The Constitution guarantees religious freedoms and religions are not obliged to register their activities with the authorities, unless they wish to receive State grants. These grants are assigned prorata to the number of followers. No sectarian movement currently receives State grants in Norway, although several are present. The Church of Scientology recently attracted the attention of the media and public opinion with the suicide of a young Norwegian woman, aged twenty two, daughter of a member of parliament, in Nice, France, on 28 March, following contact with a Scientology group.

The Netherlands has no public structure specifically dedicated to monitoring the activities of sectarian organisations or providing assistance for their victims. This issue is not specifically monitored within the Ministry of the Interior. The national judicial police service (KLPD) has one single agent who monitors operational information or cases underway to identify any traces of facts which may relate to aberrations of this type.

Finally, the Ministry of Justice has not specifically listed organisations liable to be considered as sects and penal policy guidelines, defined in coordination with public prosecutors, do not refer to the sectarian phenomenon. No criminal proceedings have as yet been launched against a sect.

Nor do any private associations or other structures exist offering assistance to the victims of sectarian aberrations. Several web sites refer to a private consultant who offers advice and therapies for victims of sectarian aberrations, at a cost.

No specific legislation on sectarian aberrations exists in Luxembourg. With regard the victims of these aberrations, they are covered by the general services which provide assistance for all victims and may use the help desks available for all forms of delinquency, offenses or crime.

In Macedonia, no legislation or regulations cover sectarian organisations, while religious freedoms are guaranteed by the Constitution whose provisions are implemented by the law of 20 September 2007 and by the "National Religion Commission". No private entities offer assistance to the victims of sectarian aberrations either.

In Greece, the same applies, no public or private services exist providing assistance for the victims of sectarian aberrations.

No public services or private associations exist or have been created for this purpose. The "Heresy office" of the Saint-Synod of Greek bishops observes and lists cultural associations.

The Constitution recognises the dominant position of the Orthodox Christian religion, and legislation provides that proselytising is an offense (article 13 of the Constitution and article 4 of law 1672 of 1939). The status of religious minorities is still globally governed by decrees dating back to Metaxas. The 1st article of law n°1363 of 1938 and the royal decree of 20 May 1939 state that prior authorisation is required for the construction of a temple or place of worship, or the use of an existing building for this purpose. These legal provisions have long been considered as protection for the Orthodox religion. The constitutional principle of the freedom of conscience (article 13 of the Constitution of 1975) currently not only applies to "acceptable religions", but also to "known religions", providing the practices and rituals of the religion do not threaten public order or morality. In this context, the provisions included in the texts not abrogated from 1938 and 1939 apparently only act to repress groups which resemble a "sectarian movement", however, in Greece, this notion has no legal or judicial definition.

The Ministry of national education and religions recognises the status of "known religion" and, in theory, issues the authorisation for the creation of places of worship to any legal person so requesting.

Romania lacks a legal framework for sects, and the law on victims of criminal offenses remains silent on the victims of sectarian aberrations. No public structure or private association or NGO with a specific mission to protect these victims exists. With regard minors, any damages caused by sectarian movements are taken into consideration by the departmental child protection services (DGASPC) and the National Authority for the protection of children's rights (ANPDC). A few situations have occasionally been reported with children deprived of medical care due to the beliefs of their parents. The child protection services acted to ensure the children received care, without actually considering sectarian phenomenon as such, and no general study has been published on this issue.

In Malta, no specific provisions relate to assistance for the victims of sectarian aberrations, or public or private structures to handle these victims. Even the Church, despite its extensive presence in a society where the Catholic church is the official religion, has not created or encouraged any specific structure in this field.

In view of the different approaches to the sectarian phenomenon and assistance for victims, reinforced European legal cooperation must be encouraged. This is one of the recommendations made by Georges Fenech, magistrate in the Prime Minister's office, in his report further to the mission entrusted by the Ministry of Justice in view of sectarian aberrations: consideration and evaluation of legal tools for the combat against sectarian aberrations. The following is an extract from chapter VII of this report "Targeting the construction of European legal cooperation":

"The leading sects know no borders. The pyramid shaped organisation allows them to act anywhere in the world. Within the European Union, the removal of borders simplifies the criminal or illegal activities of some of these groups. This ability to escape sanctions is particularly poignant due to the absence of any specific agreement between the States in this field. Vigilance within the European Community is made even more difficult by differences in approaches to the sectarian phenomenon depending on the country.

France presided the European Union from 1st July 2008. This provided an opportunity for France to drive for new police and judicial cooperation based on the Europol and Eurojust institutions.

This aim had previously been made by the first parliamentary investigatory commission in 1996, which had expressly wished for agreements to be adopted at European level for the "study of the phenomenon and the exchange of information, mainly via a data base; the coordination of control systems to take account of the different types of legal systems; search for individuals facing prosecution or administrative non-compliance; search for disappeared individuals".

This same aim was also expressed on many occasions by the European parliament or by the parliamentary assembly of the Council of Europe, which was rapidly concerned by the consequences of the sectarian phenomenon. In particular:

1) The resolution of 22 May 1984 further to the report by Richard Cottrell (European parliament), which recommended the need for the Ministers of the Interior and the Ministers of Justice to meet in the context of European legal cooperation.

2) The resolution of 29 February 1996 in which the committee of Civil Liberties, Justice and Home affairs of the European parliament proposed that the corresponding commissions of the national parliaments hold a joint meeting dedicated to the question of sects, to ensure the exchange of information on the organisation, operation and behaviour of these communities in each member state, and to reach conclusions on the best means of curbing their harmful activities and on the appropriate strategies to be applied to warn the general public.

3) The report by Maria Berger dated 11 December 1997 (European parliament). The European parliament had declared a global failure for the European Union when faced with sectarian aberrations: "The European Council and Commission were invited to indicate the actual action launched in view of the requirements of the European parliament. When replying, the Commission only mentioned one of the points raised, and did not refer to any actual action. The Council simply returned the position taken by the current president during a European parliament debate from 28 February 1996, listing several initiatives. It is evident, that we have not moved forward since then".

4) The Nastase report of 20 February 1998 (Council of Europe) concluded the same global failure: "The States have often refrained from taking action to ensure that the fundamental freedoms of individuals are respected... Sects have globally profited from this tolerance and flooded through this loophole".

5) Finally, on 4 September 2003, a new resolution of the European parliament was adopted under "freedom of thought, conscience and religion": "The European Parliament once again alerts the member states to the dangerous activities of sectarian groups which threaten the physical and mental integrity of individuals, and invites them to apply themselves, on the basis of their ordinary penal and civil legislation, to Combating illegal practices and abuses within these sectarian groups".

The president of the European Court of Human Rights, Jean-Paul Costa, himself stated: "The Court must continue to effectively protect freedom of belief and religious pluralism. However, the Court will also almost certainly need to consider abuse committed in the name of religion (in the most noble sense of the word), or in the name of pseudo-religions which don the cappa magna solely to facilitate the achievement of their harmful, or even abominable actions. In the same way, the freedom of association must not allow those guilty of illegal or criminal actions performed in the name of this freedom to go unpunished".

The pressure applied by several sectarian organisations at European level, and which must be counteracted, must be taken into consideration in parallel to this failure. The Miviludes chairman reiterated his concerns laid down in the conclusions to his annual activity report of 2007.

It has indeed been detected that the sectarian movement attempted to discredit France via the action of Miviludes at the conferences organised by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the OSCE (ODIHR) held in September 2007 in Warsaw. To conclude, to compensate for this European loophole, France could launch a hard hitting initiative by proposing the following to its partners: 1) the creation of a European legal space with a legal framework targeting the illegal activities of sectarian organisations; 2) the preparation of a European code of ethics applicable to any non-profit association or community; 3) the creation of a European Observatory of sects, responsible for ensuring compliance with these common rules; 4) the creation of a body for the standardisation of legislation in the member States within the legal affairs or human rights committees of the European Parliament.

Recommendation 12: encourage the creation of a European Observatory of sectarian aberrations and the standardisation of the legislation of member States".

Conclusion

The above observations lead to the conclusion that, globally, transnational sects are a source of concern for authorities responsible for protecting the most vulnerable sections of their populations. Public structures providing assistance for these victims are often created, however the obligation to ensure prevention and information and then to assist the victims of sectarian aberrations, can also be met by the private sector. Private initiatives are often more effective, or quite simply the only help available. In view of the threat represented by certain groups with regard the vulnerable, States having chosen to avoid legislation on this issue – each for their own traditional reasons – often encourage and provide grants for the private associations offering this assistance.

In addition, the need for improved coordination between states with the same values in terms of the protection of human rights and the dignity of the individual, and private associations offering assistance for the victims of sectarian aberrations, is currently increasingly evident. In the absence – in many European States – of legal tools to combat the fraudulent abuse of weakness and the exploitation of the vulnerable, the increased cooperation of associations providing assistance for the victims of sectarian aberrations with consular authorities, and, with associations with the same objective in other countries, appears indispensable. This cooperation is necessary, whether it occurs between private associations in different States or in the context of a pan-European organisation such as FECRIS.

Even today, all of the democratic states in Europe have noted the difficulty inherent to combining the free exercise of individual liberties with respect for each individual's fundamental right to safety. This right necessarily implies the need to create adequate structures – be they government or private – providing assistance for the victims of sectarian aberrations.

Section 3

Close-up: health risks



The misuse of psychotherapeutical practices for sectarian purposes

Martine Maurer, in her publication on *Comment choisir son psychotérapeute, attention risque de pratiques déviantes* (How to choose a psychotherapist, watching out for the risk of aberrant practices) published in October 2001 by *Hommes et Perspectives/Martin Media*, notes that psychotherapy, in terms of mental care, is a permanent feature of human development. Suffering, madness and aberrant behaviour have long been considered as religious, or even magical practices.

Towards the end of the XIX century, hypnosis and the introduction of the unconscious in mental care with the arrival of Freud revealed two new types of professionals, the doctor or psychiatrist and the psychoanalyst. This dual existence in the field of psychology was followed by the appearance of a new boy (or girl) on the block during the XXth century and more decisively from the 1970s, the psychotherapist.

The rapid success of psychotherapists was based on the demand of individuals preferring a non-medical means of dealing with their mental discomfort, the search for individual and professional performance or the quest for new values.

In view of the difficulties faced by contemporary societies and the reduced roles of certain social institutions, such as families, psychological support is now increasingly in demand for vulnerable publics (the ill, the young facing difficulties, the dependent, job seekers, etc.) and for groups to manage crisis situations (natural catastrophes, air crashes, etc.) or to handle social plagues (urban violence, road violence, drug addiction, delinquency, the prevention of suicide, etc.).

These developments coincide with the constant spreading of practices and methods, currently estimated at between 200 and 400. This has led to a substantial increase in the number of professionals in the psychotherapy sector.

However, the explosion of the "psy" bubble, which is very much inadequately controlled by the different public and professional actors and by associations, is a source of concern due to the many aberrations accompanying this trend. These aberrations include sectarian aberrations, which can claim top ranking status as the sectarian movement has flooded the health sector.

The Fédération française de psychothérapie et de psychanalyse (FF2P - French federation of psychotherapy and psychoanalysis), raised the crucial issue of the misuse of psychotherapy and consequently the protection of the public in an open letter to the parliament dated 29 January 2007: "The ultimate common aim is to protect both the public and qualified professionals against the actions of some undertrained charlatans and some sects which brazenly usurp both our titles and some of our techniques. "

The sectarian movement uses these techniques to destroy the psychological state of the victim and create a state of dependency.

Jean-Marie Abgrall, psychiatrist, criminologist and former expert with the court of appeal of Aix-en-Provence, noted, in chapter 8 of his publication under the title *La mécanique des sectes* (How sects work) published by Payot et Rivages in 1996: "Mental manipulation or conditioning or brainwashing is the basis for sectarian recruitment".

This link between mental manipulation and sectarian recruitment has been confirmed in most dangerous situations reported to Miviludes.

Increased supply + increased demand = increased risk in the care sector

Observations:

- A rapid rise in the need for "psy" support.
- Extended and more wide-ranging psychotherapeutic services.
- Lack of regulations for the qualification of psychotherapist.
- Lack of assessment of methods and practices.

- Rising number of users

The day prior to the general assembly of psychotherapy in Paris in 2001, the French Federation of psychotherapy, in collaboration with the magazine *Psychologies*, mandated the national survey institute, BVA, with an enquiry on a sample of 8,069 French homes, undertaking psychotherapy and aged over 15.

According to this federation, this enquiry revealed that at the beginning of the century "in France, 5.2% of the population had or was undertaking psychotherapy, representing more than three million individuals. This number increases regularly due to current lifestyles and is therefore a national concern. This initial large-scale enquiry – targeting users rather than professionals – led to the observation that, despite the considerable importance accorded to psychoanalysis in the French media, it only actually represents around 30% of therapies while non analytical therapies, which are far less well known, represent a total of 70% of therapies:

20% of cognitive behaviour therapies, 12% of humanistic-existentialist therapies, 12% of family or couple therapies... and 26% of therapies which users have difficulty defining – reflecting the lack of information held. Two thirds of users are women, 50% consult for depression, sleeping disorders, anxiety or major stress; 22% consult following the death of a loved one, an abandon or a psychological traumatism; 21% consult to handle phobias or panic attacks... Despite inadequate information, psychotherapy is slowly but surely gaining ground with the French population, not only with senior management (23%) and middle management (21%), but also with white collar workers (13%), blue collar workers (15%) and even farmers (2%)".

The family and friends of someone undergoing psychotherapy are extensively involved, and the study assessed the impact of this type of care at around 8 to 10 million individuals rather than 3 million. A few years later, and in view of the rise in supply and demand in this field, it would be reasonable to estimate the impact of psychotherapeutic practices at approximately 12 million individuals, which is far from insignificant out of a total national population of 64 million people. This study also concluded that 84% of beneficiaries were satisfied, which reflects the serious nature and quality services provided by most psychotherapists.

However, 16% of those surveyed declared themselves dissatisfied or having felt threatened, which is high, if we consider that these cases involve risk and even danger for the patient and family and friends.

- A labyrinth of offers

The psychotherapeutic sector is also flooded with a wide and every increasing range of offers:

- Therapy for mental disorders and psychic suffering.
- Individual support, (personal, professional, school, family, etc.).
- Help to solve miscellaneous crises in the work place, society, etc.

Therapies targeting minors and young adults, among others, have recently caught the attention of Miviludes.

The treatment of hyperactivity and educational support (school and university level) are just ripe for picking with the concerns, or even anxiety, of those concerned or their families, when looking for excellence and strategies to simplify their career story.

The appearance of new "products" has also been detected, such as "psy vouchers", a bit like luncheon or gift vouchers.

These services were launched around two years ago and are intended for employees facing psychic difficulties. Employers pay 83% of these vouchers. The vouchers are prescribed by occupational doctors, and the services are provided by a network of 200 professionals, mainly including psychologists with some psychiatrists and psychotherapists. Those launching this plan are expecting the vouchers to be successful due to the current economic crisis with its impact on working conditions and employment.

This new idea to deal with discomfort in the work place has raised criticism, particularly with the French board of doctors (Ordre des médecins), who reiterated that "medicine is not a trade" and fear that respect for medical secrecy will not be guaranteed.

In addition to these reserves, the potential misuse of the system must be considered: handling of beneficiaries (who are volunteers) to simplify dismissals, or even a change of position in trades relating to sects.

The activities concerned are precisely those performed by psychotherapists, but also those of distributors of complementary health products, which are monitored by Miviludes, particularly in the form of pyramid sales organisations.

- Diversity and multiplication of approaches

a) FF2P includes around sixty bodies and 3,000 professionals, using thirty eight methods:

Bioenergetic analysis	Short psychotherapy
Analysis of dreams	Egocentric psychotherapy
Psycho-organic analysis	Integrative psychotherapy
Transactional analysis	Psychocorporal psychotherapy
Art therapy	Transpersonal psychotherapy
Dance therapy	Relaxation
Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR)	Waking dream
Gestalt therapy	Sex therapy
Haptonomy	Somatotherapy, psycho-somatotherapy
Traditional hypnosis	Psycho-somato analysis
Ericksonian hypnosis	Sophia analysis
Therapeutic postural integration	Sophrotherapy
Psychotherapeutic massage	Breathing techniques
Music therapy	Cognitive behaviour technique
Therapeutic neuro-linguistic programming	Analytical family therapy
Psychodrama	Systemic and family therapy
Psychogenealogy	Primal therapy
Motivation psychology	Vegetotherapy
Psychosynthesis	
Analytic psychotherapy	

b). Alternative care and well-being organisms offer a wider range of techniques, including frequently used and tested psychotherapeutic methods, but also unproved practices or practices based on theories with an inherent danger for the "patients".

The site (Mieux-être.org), focusing on natural and alternative care and wellbeing in France and Belgium illustrates this conclusion with a collection of 45 sites and 138 categories, including the following sections:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1) Food-nutrition therapy | 31) Massage |
| 2) Bioenergetic analysis | 32) Anti-age medicine |
| 3) Cellular re-information and analysis | 33) Family mediation |
| 4) Transactional analysis | 34) Méthode de libération des cuirasses (MLC) |
| 5) Egocentric approaches | 35) ESPERE method |
| 6) Alignment therapy | 36) Tomatis method |
| 7) Aroma therapy | 37) Music therapy |
| 8) Astrology | 38) Naturopathy |
| 9) Ayurveda | 39) Numerology |
| 10) Biodanza | 40) Guidance (professional, school, psychotherapeutic) |
| 11) Total biology and biological deprogramming | 41) Clinical teaching |
| 12) Glaudian catharsis | 42) Therapeutic neuro-linguistic |
| 13) Coaching | 43) Psychogenealogy |
| 14) Non violent communication | 44) Quantum psychology |
| 15) Family constellations | 45) Integrated corporal psychotherapy |
| 16) Natural contraception | 46) Reflexology |
| 17) EMDR | 47) Reiki |
| 18) Flower remedies | 48) Somnotherapy |
| 19) Bach flower remedies | 49) Suggestopedia |
| 20) Emotional freedom technique | 50) Supervision |
| 21) Energetic | 51) Tai Chi and Qi Gong |
| 22) Eutony | 52) Psychological tarot |
| 23) Feng sui | 53) Alexander technique |
| 24) Gestalt | 54) Short therapy |
| 25) Experiential Gestalt | 55) Short systemic therapy |
| 26) Haptonomy | 56) Somatic therapy for traumatism |
| 27) Hypnosis | 57) Breathing therapy |
| 28) Postural integration | 58) Vocal techniques |
| 29) Fasting | 59) Visual techniques |
| 30) Kinesiology | 60) Yoga |

The breadth and mixed nature of the above list illustrates the difficulty for institutions and even more so for the general public to make an intelligent decision for the technique and practitioner. This list highlights the "psy" trend of alternative care services.

This observation applies for widely used methods and also for more confidential, more recent, practices.

- The different backgrounds of psychotherapists

Three types of professionals come into play in psychotherapies. According to different, but matching estimates, this population represents approximately 15,000 practitioners and is constantly growing.

This population includes:

- 10 to 15% doctors of medicine, mainly specialists in psychiatry.
- 25 to 30% psychologists trained in human sciences and holding a masters in clinical psychology.
- 15 to 20% psychoanalysts supervised and regulated by their peers.
- 25 to 30% professionals calling themselves psychotherapists, specialists in various disciplines with a wide range of training backgrounds.

However, training in psychotherapies gives cause for concern with regard the content of programs and the level of future professionalism of some of these new practitioners.

These open universities, free faculties and higher institutes under diverse names are not subject to any type of control by public authorities when it comes to program content, mainly due to the principle of freedom recognised by the law of 12 July 1872 on private higher education. They may register with regional education authorities, however this is voluntary and left to the initiative of the heads of these bodies. No guarantee therefore exists as to the quality of the training courses or the value of the qualifications earned. None of these qualifications, irrespective of the psychotherapeutic discipline in question, is currently recognised by the public authorities.

These vocational courses are also provided by organisms registered under professional and continuous training. No mandatory registration is required in this field, and the means of public services and the regulatory framework for their action are inadequate to guarantee the quality of training courses and effectively prevent sectarian risks.

700 structures exist of differing sizes and training courses, not to mention undeclared structures.

- Regulations for the qualification of psychotherapist: an incomplete system

Article 52 of the law of 9 August 2004 on public health policy was introduced by amendment by the deputy Bernard Accoyer, to protect the victims of serious professional negligence by certain practitioners or the misuse of practices in view of manipulation. This protection is based on the obligation to register with the Departmental division of sanitary and social affairs, subject to compliance with the conditions applicable to the title psychotherapist.

The text specifies: "The title of psychotherapist is reserved for professionals who are enrolled on the national register of psychotherapists.

Those registering are entered on a list drafted by the representative of the State in the department of their professional residence. This list is updated, accessible to the public and published regularly. This list indicates the training of the professional. If the professional moves to another administrative department, they must register with the new department. The same obligation applies if professionals cease practice for two years and then wish to practice as a psychotherapist again.

Registration on the list mentioned in the above sub-paragraph is automatic for doctors in medicine, those authorised to use the title of psychologist according to the conditions of article 44 of law n° 85-772 of 25 July 1985 which includes various social provisions, and for psychoanalysts duly registered with a professional directory.

A decree by the State council specifies the details of the enforcement of this article and the conditions for theoretical and practical training in clinical psychopathology to be satisfied by those listed in the second and third sub-paragraphs. "

This text represents great hope for victims, families, defence associations and professionals having observed the damage caused by sectarian groups or individuals. Unfortunately, in the absence of an enforcement order, this hope is currently in vain¹.

- Rare independent assessment

Self-declared and extravagant assessments abound and are used as convincing advertising. Web sites promoting new Germanic medicine multiply their stories of cancer healing and other similar red herrings. These tall tales are presented as testimonies proving the effectiveness of their "theory", and hinting at magical possibilities. On this basis, any failure of the theory is attributed to the lack of faith of the patient, who did not entirely believe in the self-healing process.

The only example of methodical and strict assessment is the study by the INSERM from 2004 focusing on three psychotherapeutic disciplines. At that time, the conclusions caused violent controversy.

In this context, the protection of patients, the identification of trustworthy therapists and the prevention of the risk of manipulation leading to direct or indirect severe prejudice appears somewhat random, although most psychotherapists practice their trade in an entirely satisfactory manner.

¹ - Two amendments were adopted at first reading by the National Assembly, with the approval of the bill reforming hospitals and, for patients, health and territories in March 2009. These provisions concern the modification of article 52 of the law of 9 August 2004 on conditions for the theoretical and practical training of psychotherapists wishing to sign up with the national register and provides for sanctions applicable to professionals exercising or authorising therapeutic practices with inherent serious risks for human health.

Psychotherapeutic aberrations and sectarian hold

According to Delphine Guérard, a clinical psychologist, several elements enable the identification of psychotherapeutic sectarian practices. According to her article which was published in *Le Journal des psychologues* in December 2008 and January 2009, five characteristics can be picked out:

- "– almightiness and seemingly God like abilities of the therapist: in an inquisitive approach using suggestion and persuasion, the therapist searches for the truth in view of healing. The therapist adopts an interventionist position seeking out justice and proposing solutions.
- The use of rupture with the family as a misuse of the concept of independence.
- Theoretical indoctrination: "The Theory" is not to be considered as a collection of hypotheses to be tried and tested, but as a sacred concept which explains everything and which works in all events.
- Attack on the mental integrity of patients: the therapist invades the psyche of the patient rapidly, urgently, insisting, without precaution or care.
- Establishment of control: the therapist brings the patient into a singular and destructive process in a sort of merger, with no way out. The patient becomes an object and finds him or herself in an exclusive dependency. "

This analysis removes any ambiguity over the sectarian nature of many of the psychotherapeutic aberrations as such or when combined with other "theories. Miviludes has also detected the creation of unified fronts including the leaders of practices with underlying "at-risk hypotheses" and organisations from the sectarian landscape, directly or via their partner organisms. These fronts focus on sensitive issues such as psychiatry, drug addiction, psychotropic drugs, and the systematic criticism, or even rejection, of traditional medicine.

Miviludes has paid particularly close attention to some worrying statements relating to two types of aberrations in the health sector in recent months:

- New Germanic medicine and derived forms

This first category relates to the new Germanic medicine movement.

Its founder, the doctor Ryke Geerd Hamer, following personal trauma, developed the theory that any illness, and cancers in particular, are the fruit of serious psychological conflict which remains unsolved because this conflict is unidentified and buried deep in the unconscious of the patient. This conflict can be decoded, leading to healing as the illness is only the symptom of the body's defence against an unsolved event in the past of the patient or a member of the family.

This hypothesis is disputed by German scientists in the absence of any tangible proof and due to the potential dangers inherent to this hypothesis. This approach however led to the development of a large network of therapists, despite Dr. Hamer being found guilty of endangering individuals, not assisting a person in danger, fraud and the illegal exercise of medicine.

Derived forms of this hypothesis such as the biological decoding of living entities are also developing in a worrying manner and are supported by a dynamic international network of coaches and conference leaders.

The identification of the event having triggered the illness as a symptom of the body's defences, and the use of the self-healing capacities of the patient naturally lead to the use of psychotherapeutic tools and the exploration of the unconscious.

The qualifications of these practitioners mentioned in web site directories are numerous. The methods and techniques most frequently mentioned relate to psychogenealogy, hypnosis, sophrology, family constellations, kinesiology, rebirth, etc.

In addition, this unconventional therapeutic practice, to use a term recently proffered by the Ministry of Health, is supported by other sectarian groups searching for the "authentic ego" of the follower, the release of emotions and the road to happiness, or even eternity. This movement which, acting cautiously, no longer in theory rejects tried and tested therapies as complementary care, has extended its field of "expertise" over time to provide help for the individual as a whole.

- False "refound" memories

The second category, according to many testimonies, initially appears to involve the misuse of psychotherapeutic methods and practices.

Further analysis reveals that, in fact, this category has many similarities with many movements, including the New Age movements. This category mainly appeals to the young facing difficulties or whose differences lead their parents to adopt marginal solutions involving one or several psychotherapeutic tools. However these tools are directed to achieve the goals of the group.

More generally, this category concerns all age groups. The Miviludes report from 2007 considered therapeutic and sectarian aberrations in the form of false buried memories, also known as the "induced false memories syndrome". In the months following this publication, Miviludes and associations helping victims received an avalanche of testimonies and requests for help, mainly denouncing intrusive "psychotherapeutic" techniques whose pre-determined diagnostic systematically focused on mistreatment or sexual aggression committed on the patient during their childhood, in the family context.

The serious nature of these "revelations" evidently leads to the destabilisation of the patient and a rupture with the usual environment, particularly as the practitioners of this pseudo-therapy will suggest that the full consequences of this discovery should be assumed.

The rapid development of psychotherapies over the last few decades has not been accompanied by the adequate regulation of these activities. The current situation is subject to multiple factors of risk, starting with the total impossibility for the patient to make an informed decision as to which professional to select.

This alarming situation implies the extension and intensification of public policies for vigilance, prevention and the combat against sectarian aberrations induced by the misuse of psychotherapeutic practices. Public services have a duty to protect individuals, and to ensure that the general public can trust these professions, whose useful role is undeniable and which must meet an ever growing demand in the near future. These services have several recommendations to make:

- Methods and practices: draft a precise and regularly updated inventory of at-risk services, assess the content, limits and level of danger of non-conventional therapeutic practices, including psychotherapies and regularly provide information for the general public².
- Training: list the wide range of offers available, inform the public, including professionals, of the risks of certain programs, and intensify the inspections provided for by current regulations.
- Intensify and develop awareness programs for civil servants to improve the detection of dangerous situations and trigger the appropriate administrative or legal action.
- Protect the qualification of psychotherapist via the rapid publication of enforcement provisions for article 52 of the law of 9 August 2004.
- Reinforce sanctions against therapists using non-conventional therapeutic methods, implying a danger for their customers.
- Increase the number of experts working with legal bodies.
- Intensify coordination and cooperation between Government services in the identification of at-risk behaviour, particularly in the field of domestic security based on the risk of public disorder (fairs, colloquia and conferences in public or prestigious venues). These initiatives must also relate to financial flux due to the easy dissimulation of income by these practitioners.
- Improve the defence of victims and the social integration of former followers by reinforcing means, particularly via associations.

These guidelines must be covered by multi-annual programs with a precise phasing of implementation. The reinforcement of public action in this field is urgent under all circumstances.

² - Since 2007, the Ministry of Health has implemented a multi-annual action plan on non-conventional therapeutic practices. This plan includes the creation of a monitoring body, the creation of an inter-institutional technical support group intended to provide complete and in-depth information for services, and the launch of collaboration with INSERM to assess its methods, identify sectarian aberrations in the health sector and organise information campaigns targeting the general public.

Contribution of the Ministry of Health

General division of Health

In view of the characteristics of a certain number of non-conventional therapeutic practices (PNCATs), the Ministry of Health considered it necessary to create a pragmatic connection between the fight against sectarian aberrations in the health sector and therapeutic aberrations relating to PNCATs, whether or not they occur in a sectarian environment.

This connection is justified by the fact that some PNCATs imply risks and have characteristics which are similar to sectarian aberrations: esoteric or mystic foundations, blind attachment to the founder-promoter of the method, networking, commercial structure based on ever more expensive phases for the "customer", proselytising.

Many PNCATs clearly have no sectarian links, such as practices based on traditional Chinese medicine. However, these practices do include some which can imply public health risks, particularly in terms of the loss of opportunity for users, when they are persuaded to drop the tested and scientifically proven methods of conventional medicine. This risk is particularly worrying when the pathology is serious or terminal.

Action taken by the General division of Health in 2008

Preparation for the creation of a technical support group

The plan for the combat against sectarian aberrations signed by the Minister of Health on 18 March 2007 announced the creation of a technical support group within the General division of health (DGS) to analyse the most at-risk practices implying danger or loss of opportunity for users.

In 2008, this line of thought was extended to specify the actual role and composition of this group. Several preparatory meetings were organised to this end with the different institutions designated to participate in this working group.

It was therefore decided that this group, working under the authority of the General director of health, would have the following missions:

- Assistance with the identification and classification of dangerous or promising PNCATs.
- Assistance with the design, implementation and monitoring of policy against dangerous PNCATs.
- Organisation of the distribution of information to the general public via a web site.

Monitoring of the cooperation agreement on traditional Chinese medicine

In parallel, in the context of the cooperation agreement on traditional Chinese medicine between the French government and the Chinese government, signed on 1 March 2007 by both States, the General division of Health continued to participate on the Steering committee mandated with launching calls for projects to assess the products and practices of this traditional medicine.

In fact, many PNCATs claim to apply a "energetic" or "holistic" approach based on the spiritual foundations and therapeutic methods of traditional Chinese medicine.

To give an example, in France, there are currently approximately two thousand acupuncturists, with university training in this field. However, a far higher number of practitioners with no medical qualifications practice various types of care, including acupuncture, after training sessions of various durations, often very short, with one of the forty or so private institutes which provide training claiming to be based on traditional Chinese medicine in France.

Assessment of mesotherapy

Mesotherapy is an un-assessed empirical practice. Recent infections caused by mesotherapy carried out for beauty purposes led the General division of Health to question, not only the conditions of the use of this method, but also its physiological foundations.

Mesotherapy is currently listed on the common classification of medical acts (CCAM), under "mesotherapy for analgesic purposes", and is not covered by the French national health service. However, indications on the web site of the SFM (French Society of mesotherapy) are far more general, including the treatment of asthma, chronic bronchitis, sinusitis and aesthetic considerations, which are accorded an extensive role. Mesotherapy has never been assessed, particularly by the Supreme Health Authority (HAS).

The DGS therefore launched a study agreement with INSERM in December 2008 to assess the benefits of mesotherapy.

The aim is to assess the therapeutic benefits of mesotherapy:

- Clarification of the claims of "mesotherapists".
- Identification of the risks inherent to these practices.
- Assessment of the therapeutic plausibility of these practices on the basis of expertise by physiologists.

This study will involve the collection of information from national and international scientific medical reviews and from all publications intended for professionals and considered as expertise. In view of the intended results, this study may lead to the reconsideration of mesotherapeutic practices in view of qualitative assessment based on case studies and, if necessary, scientific study of the effectiveness/efficiency of care (random testing or epidemiological studies).

Aims of the General division of Health in 2009

Creation of the technical support group (GAT)

After the creation of the technical support group pursuant to an order issued by the general director of health, the first meeting of this group should occur during the first half of 2009.

The following institutions will be contacted to be members of the GAT: Miviludes, INPES, HAS, AFSSAPS, DHOS, DSS, DGS (PP1 and MC4), the National Academy of Medicine, INSERM, the Ordre des medecins (French board of doctors), the Ministry of Justice and Central office against environmental damage and public health risks (OCLAESP). The GAT will also include three expert practitioners: a cancerologist, a rheumatologist and a psychiatrist. These specialities actually correspond to the fields which are the most frequently invaded by PNCVATs.

In addition, depending on circumstances and requirements, the GAT may request ad hoc contributions from other institutions and associations concerned by PNCVATs, which include: the IGAS, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of National Education, professional health bodies, other than the French board of doctors, the Interassociation health group (CISS), UNADFI, the Centre against mental manipulation – Roger-Ikor centre (CCMM), etc.

The main mission of this group will be to contribute to the preparation of objective information on non-conventional practices for the general public, with initial focus on the most frequently found practices (mesotherapy, acupuncturists, homeopathy, osteopathy, etc.).

Organisation of a legal framework

The current legal situation cannot control these practices, but can control the individuals which conceive and use them, on the basis of endangering others, the illegal exercise of medicine, advertising under false pretences, etc. Experience has shown that the complaints made against these individuals rarely lead to results. In this way, just like the legal framework introduced for aesthetic acts (bill on the reform of hospitals and on patients, health and the territories, n^o 1210 rectified, submitted on 22 October 2008), a similar framework is envisaged with the help of the technical support group, aiming to control "promising" practices and prohibit those considered dangerous.

Section 4

Administrative activities in 2008



Ministries in 2008

Contribution of the Ministry of Foreign and European affairs (MAEE)

The MAEE provides Miviludes with a standing diplomatic advisor. The advisor for religious affairs (CAR) also represents this Ministry within the Executive Operational Control Committee (CEPO) of Miviludes, with the deputy director of security (ASD/SEC).

Organisation of missions abroad for Miviludes members

In view of its responsibilities in terms of the monitoring of changing risks and the prevention of sectarian aberrations, Miviludes is required to consider the international scope of these issues due to the "transnational" nature of sects. Miviludes is also responsible, in liaison with the MAEE, for informing the partners of France of its activities in terms of vigilance and the combat against sectarian aberrations and to explain French legislation in this field as well as the context of its mission.

In this context, MIVILUDES carried out the following missions in 2008:

- Comparative approaches to public policies in the combat against sectarian aberrations in Quebec - 18 - 20 March 2008.

18 - 20 March 2008, two Miviludes members, including the Secretary General, visited Quebec (Canada).

This second investigation, in collaboration with the General French consulate in Quebec, aimed to meet with the associations and professional actors responsible for helping victims in general, and minors in particular. The investigation focused on the mental recovery of the victims and compensation for their prejudice monitored by the Help centre for victims of criminal acts (CAVAC).

A meeting with former followers of closed movements was particularly worthwhile and provided new information.

- Round table on the emergence of the sectarian phenomenon in Croatia – 1 March 2008.

A round table on the emergence and development of the sectarian phenomenon in Croatia was held at the initiative of the daily newspaper, Novo List, on 1 March 2008.

Psychologists, psychiatrists, journalists and jurists, including one professor of penal law, took the floor in turn and presented their approach to the phenomenon in a country where this was the first event of this type.

The representative of Miviludes described the main institutional framework in France, and the legal, administrative and judicial framework available to the Interministerial mission for vigilance and the combat against sectarian aberrations.

- Annual human dimension implementation meeting of the OSCE – 6 - 8 October 2008.

A Miviludes delegation, led by its Chairman, Georges Fenech, travelled to Poland for the Annual human dimension implementation meeting organised by the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) – within the OSCE – held in Warsaw in the autumn of 2008. This meeting of experts (international civil servants and qualified representatives) is open to NGOs and many attend. The European Federation of Centres of Research and Information on Sectarianism (FECRIS) participated for the first time.

Miviludes members attentively listened to the speeches made at the working sessions on questions of intolerance and discrimination, and on freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief.

In response to attacks by certain NGOs concerning the policy of vigilance and the combat against sectarian aberrations (criticism of subsidies accorded to associations, Miviludes initiatives, etc.), the French delegation, represented by the advisor for religious affairs, justified the attitude of France, notably regarding the protection of victims. The advisor also criticised the law suits launched against the new Miviludes chairman.

Study of Satanism in Europe

At the request of Miviludes, forty or so of our diplomatic correspondents in Europe were contacted in 2008 to provide information on events relating to Satanism in their home countries, and on any legal provisions which may apply to these movements. The results of these enquiries were transmitted to Miviludes, which integrated the data into its own observations in the first section of this report.

Study on the assistance of victims of sectarian aberrations in Europe

At the request of Miviludes, forty or so of our diplomatic correspondents in Europe were contacted in 2008 to provide information enabling the comparison of assistance provided for victims of sectarian aberrations in Europe. The results of these enquiries were integrated in the second part of this report by Miviludes.

French policy and international bodies

The MAEE states, within the bodies concerned, that the initiatives of Miviludes fully respect the international conventions ratified by France in this field, in particular the United Nations International Treaty on Civil and Political Rights of 1966 and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of 1950. The MAEE emphasises the fact that the policies applied in France are not aimed at limiting the freedom of religion and conscience, but preventing the risk of sectarian aberrations and informing the public on this subject. To support this statement, the MAEE insists on three points with partners :

- Types of criminal behaviour are monitored rather than specific movements.
- Criminal activities will be prosecuted by common law courts.
- Miviludes exists because the victims of sectarian aberrations expect support and assistance from public authorities.

Consultations for the appointment of experts

The Chairman of Miviludes and the advisor for religious affairs jointly re-appoint the French experts on the “group on the freedom of religion and beliefs” of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) of the OSCE.

Use of diplomatic channels for the transmission of Miviludes documents

The MAEE is responsible for the transmission, via diplomatic channels, of documentation published by Miviludes, to the various diplomatic posts and consulates. In particular, this is how the 2007 report was transmitted in February 2008.

Contribution by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fishing

The services of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fishing (MAP) are responsible for many missions, mainly concerning:

- food quality and safety;
- agricultural training and employment in rural areas;
- rural development and planning;
- the quality and availability of water;
- the protection of the environment and the management of natural areas.

The 35,000 civil servants participating in these missions work throughout France. 50% of personnel work in agricultural training. 2,000 members of personnel are based on Paris and 400 in Toulouse, handling central administration for the Ministry. All other personnel are assigned to regional services or dependent public establishments in mainland France or the Dom-Tom.

The MAP has been represented on the Executive Operational Control Committee (CEPO) of the Miviludes since early 2007.

After an introduction to the institution, this contribution to the Miviludes activity report is the first made by the Ministry of Agriculture.

In view of the works of the CEPO, in which its representatives participated, the following decisions or actions were taken:

- Establishment of an electronic link between the MAP web site and the Miviludes web site.

This link was created by the information and communication delegation to allow access to information on the Miviludes web site. The decision to create a link via the MAP web site was based on the fact that the Intranet networks are not entirely compatible between the agricultural training sector and other employment sectors handled by the MAP; however, the aim is to allow all MAP personnel (and those of its dependent public establishments) to access this information. In parallel, the General directorate of education and research (DGER) has also created a link to the Miviludes site from its Intranet site, which is particularly used by personnel in the agricultural training sector. Further advertising on the new links was planned for early 2009 via internal media.

- Participation in documentary monitoring.

The plethora of information transmitted by Miviludes led the DGER to select initial priority issues for the personnel which are the most involved. This selection is then transmitted to the services distributed throughout the country.

- Request for information from Miviludes targeting regional actors in permanent training for personnel, during the seminar in May 2009.

This information had been requested for the seminar in October 2008, and was only actually scheduled in May 2009. The aim is to ensure the awareness of the relays of the human resources service, i.e. these regional delegates, of the potential risks inherent to certain bodies offering training in personal development. The MAP, with the Ministry of Ecology, Energy, Sustainable Development and Territorial planning (MEEDDAT), is one of the first administrations to have tested the reform of government services, by merging the Departmental divisions of agriculture and forestry (DDAF) and the Departmental divisions of equipment (DDE) from 1 January 2007, in eight administrative departments. The changes induced by this restructuring program, later amplified by the decisions taken by the modernisation committee for public policies, clearly upset personnel, and this situation could act to the benefit of some ill intentioned actors or organisations.

- Activities in the sector of agricultural training.

Agricultural training is the second most popular system of education in France with 175,000 pupils, 13,000 students, 30,000 apprentices and many trainees in more than 850 establishments in the country. More than 13,000 members of personnel work with these publics to ensure the five missions assigned to this sector, including social, educational and professional integration. The academic year 2007-2008 provided the opportunity to ensure the awareness of those working in education of the importance of the prevention of sectarian aberrations based on three lines: obtaining information and being vigilant, providing supervision and support, applying the law. Several initiatives were launched on this basis:

- Request for the participation of MAP representatives, who sit on the Interministerial committee, at the annual training and information seminar for academic correspondents of the Ministry of National education.
- Support for personnel facing situations possibly involving sectarian phenomena on two points: dialogue with families and preparation of reports for the State prosecutor. A case was reported to the prosecutor: a young girl wished to leave school to go "back to nature" and join her mother who lived in a yurt and was part of an association possibly considered as a sect.
- Speech by a member of the General secretariat of Miviludes on 18 December 2008 in the context of the initial training of 140 members of personnel having passed internal and external entrance exams (teachers – educational counsellors – technicians – nurses) to bring their attention to all forms of sectarian activity.

– Creation of a working group on points to be monitored when seeking out an actor or consultant, particularly for courses in health & prevention and personal development. This work is organised via the network, RESEDA which unites actors working in the field of health education. This brainstorming will be extended to the sector of the continuous training of personnel, particularly as a suspicious case has been reported concerning a course on "people management" in north east France, by the general inspector in charge of veterinary services in this region. This case was reported to the Secretary General of Miviludes by the office of continuous training and the development of skills. MAP representatives also make extensive demands for support, which could now be provided by Miviludes within this brainstorming process.

Contribution of the Ministry of the Budget, public accounts and civil services: General directorate of public finances

During the year 2008, the General directorate of public finances (DGFIP) contributed to the creation of new legal provisions liable to be implemented, as necessary in the context of the combat against sectarian aberrations : the extension of the right to transmit information to certain data held by operators on the Internet, the definition of the conditions for the processing of requests from associations requesting the recognition of their cultural status, and the lifting, in certain exceptional cases, of fiscal secrecy for some information services.

- The extension of the right to transmit information to certain data held by operators on the Internet.

The scope, easy access, and rapid exchanges of the Internet may prove a breeding ground for occult or partially declared activities, providing individuals and professionals with the ability to offer products or services for sale under the cover of nicknames.

The development of trade on the Internet is also likely to encourage an increase in the risks of sectarian aberrations, mainly via the advertising of non-conventional therapeutic methods and the sometimes parallel sale of illegal or dangerous products without a medical prescription, or the undeclared sale of publications or individual or group training sessions.

The tax services are mainly responsible for Combating fraud and undeclared economic activities and do not hold the legal resources necessary to obtain the information required to detect and identify regular but undeclared vendors from operators.

To rectify this situation, the amendment to the law of finances of 2008 extended the right to transmit information to the personnel of fiscal services to data retained and processed by electronic communication providers, Internet access providers, server operators and on-line service providers, such as the identity of the vendor or service provider, and, when applicable, the type of goods or services sold and the amount of the sale or the services provided.

- The processing of applications from associations requesting the recognition of their cultural status.

In accordance with the provisions of article 200-1 e) of the general tax code, all donations made to cultural associations lead to a tax benefit.

Until the effective date of order n^o 2005-856 of 28 July 2005 on the simplification of the processing of contributions made to associations, foundations and congregations, for some of the mandatory administrative declarations required by associations and modifications to the obligations of associations and foundations relating to their annual financial statements, this tax benefit was accorded for payments made to cultural associations authorised to receive donations and legacies by prefect-level authorities.

Order n^o 2005-856 of 28 July 2005 removed the need for this prior administrative authorisation.

According to the provisions of article 910 of the civil code, modified by this order, cultural associations and charities no longer need administrative authorisation to receive donations and legacies.

However, these organisms must declare each donation and legacy to the administrative authorities, which may oppose the act¹ if the beneficiary is not able to use the contribution in accordance with its statutory purpose.

In this new legal context, a circular, drafted with the contribution of the Ministries of the Interior, Justice and Budget, Public Accounts and the Civil Service, will specify the terms and conditions for the processing of applications from associations requesting cultural status, in the context of the advance ruling procedure provided for in article L 80 C of the Register of fiscal procedures (LPF).

- The lifting of professional secrecy requirements with regard certain information services.

In view of the mental hold which sects tend to develop over their followers, these movements are likely to imply risk by entering business spheres and penetrating public authorities, and may thereby pose a threat to State security in exceptional cases.

Behaviour of this type is likely to be covered by provisions on the lifting of fiscal secrecy provided for in article L. 135 S of the LPF, which states that, "In view of the identification and prevention of breaches of the fundamental interests of the Nation in terms of public security and state security, the members of personnel individually appointed and duly authorised by specialised information services, and placed under the authority of the Ministers of Defence and the Interior, may request that administrations in charge of revenue, tax recovery or inspections and custom's duties of all types, transmit all relevant documents for the exercise of their missions, without breach of professional secrecy obligations.

1 - According to the conditions specified in decree n^o 2007-807 of 11 May 2007.

An enforcement order, prepared jointly by the Ministries of the Interior, Defence and the Budget, Public Accounts and the Civil Service, will specify the scope and the procedures for the implementation of this provision.

Contribution of the Ministry of Justice Division of criminal affairs and pardons

The magistrate in charge of "sectarian aberrations", within the Division of criminal affairs and pardons of the Ministry of Justice, following the year 2007, was informed of sixteen new civil suits, in addition to the cases underway on 31 December 2008.

• Criminal activity

It may be useful to mention several civil suits in order to reflect the activity of the penal jurisdictions in the combat against sectarian aberrations.

• The Grail movement

In addition to the information given in the previous annual reports in 2006 and 2007, it is worth mentioning that this case was due for appeal on 26 - 28 February 2008. The sitting was deferred to 17 February 2009.

Let us remember that, following the death of Évelyne Maraleix, who had breast cancer, two doctors were sued for non-assistance to a person in danger and manslaughter. The charges were dismissed for the second accusation, but they were however sentenced to a 2 year suspended prison sentence and banned from practicing medicine for non assistance to a person in danger.

The Court of appeal of Douai discharged the doctor who had appealed, apparently a senior member of the Grail movement in France, in an order issued on 17 February 2009.

• The Order of the Solar Temple

In an order dated 20 December 2006, the Grenoble Court of Appeal confirmed the acquittal of Michel Tabachnick, sentenced on 25 June 2001 by the penal jurisdiction of first instance in Grenoble. This person has been prosecuted for association with criminals, subsequent to the judicial enquiry opened in December 1995, following the discovery of 16 burnt bodies in a forest in Vercors, belonging to people connected with the Order of the Solar Temple.

In an order dated 16 May 2007, the Court of cassation dismissed the appeal of the prosecuting parties.

• "The Patriarch" association »

In addition to the information communicated in the annual report of 2007, it must be specified that, on 30 April 2008, the court of appeal of Toulouse, in view of the above decision, took note of the ceased prosecution of Lucien Engelmejer, subsequent to his death. This court also confirmed the full dismissal of four accused parties and confirmed or increased the sanctions awarded by the court of first instance.

Five appeals are currently being handled by the Court of cassation.

• Training on sectarian phenomena

In 2008, a permanent training session was organised by the National School of Magistrates, co-directed by the magistrate in charge of "sectarian aberrations" and an attorney general.

This session focused on two new points this year: sectarian aberrations from a financial delinquency view point and a comparison with other institutional and legal approaches to the concept of sects in Europe.

The magistrate in charge of "sectarian aberrations" spoke on several occasions to the administrations as part of training provided on sectarian phenomena, notably to the judicial police officers of the national Gendarmerie.

• Technical support for the consideration and assessment of judicial provisions for the combat against sectarian aberrations

On 22 April 2008, the Prime Minister entrusted Georges Fenech with the consideration and assessment of judicial provisions for the combat against sectarian aberrations. The person in charge of sectarian aberrations provided logistic and documentary support for Georges Fenech and attended the hearings organised.

The Director of criminal affairs and pardons, interviewed by Georges Fenech, presented the initiatives taken by his division, and the types of cooperation organised between referral magistrates on sectarian aberrations in general courts, and other State services.

Division of prisons

In 2008, the prisons' office reported attempts to make contact with inmates. The following instructions apply:

- Give the letter to the inmate with a warning.
- Display a warning poster in family meeting areas.
- Inform the attorney general according to the instructions in circular JUSD98 30145C of 1 December 1998.

A meeting was organised on 13 November 2008 between Miviludes and the Division of prisons in view of the growing number of demands from prison institutions relating to sectarian movements (distribution of brochures, correspondence, call for training courses for inmates).

This growth is probably due to the application of the principle of precaution by prison directors, but also improved knowledge of sectarian risk.

Division of legal protection for minors

- **Joint action within the Ministry of Justice concerning questions on sects**

In 2008, the Division of Legal Protection for Youth (DPJJ) continued its works in partnership with the mission on sects of the Division of Criminal Affairs and Pardons and with the magistrate in charge of "sectarian aberrations". In this framework, the Division regularly monitored certain dossiers involving educational assistance for minors who are tracked by juvenile court judges, and for whom there is a direct or indirect link to a sectarian problem. A dozen "active cases" were monitored in 2008.

These cases were updated, in parallel with the summary for the minors concerned and more general brainstorming of working strategies liable to be used during 2009. The launch of a further enquiry targeting juvenile court judges and the legal protection services for minors and initial and/or continuous training for teachers of all types, would appear a key priority.

- **Training**

Over the final quarter of 2008, the Division of legal protection for minors appointed a "sectarian aberrations" correspondent in each interregional division of legal protection for minors (PJJ). These correspondents, which will be the priority contacts for specialised courts and the cells of vigilance, participated in the annual training session specifically organised on this topic by the Paris branch of the National School of Magistrates in December 2008.

Division of civil affairs and chancellery

On civil terms, two decisions could be mentioned. In both cases, in terms of parental authority, the only criterion guiding jurisdiction on the terms and conditions of the exercise of parental authority is the interests of the child.

This appraisal is based on the analysis of the actual circumstances of each case, and not on general considerations relating to the assumed harmful influence of the movement which either or both parents have joined on the child. The issue of sectarian aberrations is not therefore raised as such for the family court judge. Only the impact of the chosen lifestyle of the parents on the organisation of the daily life of the child is taken into consideration, if applicable, as the role of magistrates is to ensure that the action proposed appears compatible with the mental and emotional development of the child.

Therefore, in its order of 9 April 2008, the court of appeal of Paris confirmed the decision of the family court judge in the first instance, declaring that the children would live with the mother, a follower of the Reiki doctrine. The court highlighted that the social services had observed the children's intelligence and maturity, who were old enough (age range from 12 to 18) to tell the difference between a sect and a belief, and that no element which threatened the priority interests of the children had been raised by the father; the school grades of the children were satisfactory.

On the other hand, in a decision dated 16 April 2007, the court of appeal of Rennes considered that it was in the interest of the children to order that the two older children move to live with the father. Magistrates considered that the religious practices of the mother had harmful consequences for the children. They took note that the mother, follower of a spiritual group, had used non-family involvement in an excessive manner, and the children had, in particular, been physically reprimanded by a member of this group. In the same way, the mother took the children to long and tiring prayer sessions, depriving them of sleep and time to do their homework. Magistrates also took note of the non-renewal of educational assistance, previously ordered by the juvenile court judge, due to the mother's attempt to escape the involvement of the education authorities. Finally, they took the conclusions of the social enquiry into consideration. These conclusions declared that the children were calmer when they were with their father, and that the oldest child, facing difficulties at school, regularly stated that he would prefer to live with the father.

At international level, an order issued by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) dated 29 November 2007 attracted attention (*Ismailova c./Russia*). In the context of a dispute over the residence of children whose mother had become a Jehovah's witness, the Court reiterated that national jurisdiction had not breached articles 8 & 14 of the ECHR by according the guardianship of the children to the father, as the decision has not been taken on the basis of the religious beliefs of the mother, but on the basis of the negative effects produced on the children by her education.

Contribution of the Ministry of Health, Youth, Sport and Associations (youth, sport and associations branch)

Activities of the vigilance unit "youth, sport and associations" in 2008

The vigilance unit "youth, sport and associations" of the Ministry of Health, Youth, Sport and Associations (MSJSVA) continued to coordinate, warn, inform and liaise with Miviludes and the national associations UNADFI and CCMM in 2008.

Initiatives by services

- Youth, mainstream education and associations

When it comes to vigilance, the Division of youth, mainstream education and associations (DJEPVA), continued to monitor sectarian aberrations in centres hosting groups of minors, with or without accommodation. No report of risks of sectarian aberrations was transmitted in 2008 by regional/departmental services, associations or parents.

The representative of the DJEPVA participated at the monthly meetings of health, social and employment correspondents.

- Employment and training

The review of diplomas and training in the field of youth, mainstream education and sport provides for professional references and certification. In all specialised subjects and grades at level IV (Vocational diploma of youth, mainstream education and sport), level III (State diploma of youth, mainstream education and sport) and level II (Higher state diploma of youth, mainstream education and sport), the emphasis is placed on the respect of the physical and mental integrity of individuals.

For non-professional diplomas: certificate of competency for youth activity managers and certificate of competency for the management of centres hosting groups of minors (BAFA and BAFD), the review of regulatory provisions in 2007 re-specified the competences required to ensure respect for the physical and mental integrity of minors. For directors (BAFD), partnership and communication programs have been extended, by explicitly providing for the communication of educational aims and the regular distribution of information to applicants and families.

Finally, applications for the authorisation of training bodies for the BAFA-BAFD were modified in 2008 to reinforce the information provided by authorities on educational goals, teaching methods and the content of the training courses proposed and to identify any kind of discrimination.

- Sport

An instruction issued by the Division of sport notified prefectures and the regional services of youth and sport concerned of the "health crusade" organised the association "Nature et Partage" connecting Bordeaux to Paris. This event involved a trek from La Réole in Gironde (France) to Paris (500 km) from 16 to 29 July 2008, while fasting, with the final destination being the Ministry of Health. The Division of sport issued a negative opinion for this event and reiterated the rules for the declaration of events based on biomedical research in its instruction, together with the recommendations issued by the National program of nutrition & health (PNNS).

Regional services informed the Division of sport of the organisation of the event, which was held without incident.

- The training of personnel

In the context of the national training plan for 2008, a course was organised for around twenty members of personnel. The departmental correspondents responsible for "Sectarian aberrations" and coaches in the field of high level sport contributed to this action.

In addition, trainee inspectors for youth and sport were made aware of this issue in their mandatory training course on public policies in the sector of youth, sport and associations.

2008 was the year of one very original and specific initiative. A training program was launched targeting sports managers (sports teachers active within the sports movement), covering all issues relating to the "combat against abuse & sport". One of the four topics covered relates to mental manipulation. This issue, which develops elements relating to aberrations in teaching, also covers mental manipulation in terms of sectarian aberrations in the sports environment, and particularly at competitive levels.

In 2008, a trial training session was organised for the seventy five sports managers in the Midi-Pyrenees region. A training course for sports teachers was organised on the basis of this trial session, for the final quarter of 2008. "Sectarian aberration" correspondents were integrated in the teams of the teachers trained.

The content of this training course will be passed on by these teachers to all sports managers (1,700 members of personnel) during 2009.

- Transmission of administrative documents (law no. 76-753 of 17 July 1976)

No request for the transmission of documents on associations whose purpose is to assist the victims of sectarian aberrations was received in 2008 by the services responsible for youth, sport and associations.

Contribution by the Ministry of Labour, Social relations, Families and Solidarity

The General Directorate of social action (DGAS) is in charge of the prevention and handling of sectarian aberrations, in the context of the multi-disciplinary provision covering the entire Ministry of Social Affairs and defined in circular DGAS/2A/2006/241 of 1 June 2006, ensuring the protection of individuals. Increasing numbers of aberrations, which could be qualified as sectarian, target the vulnerable, people facing difficulties, living on the margins of society, or requiring protection.

Three main fields are monitored and analysed by the DGAS and guidelines are issued to regional services and other actors.

Issues affecting professional training

The interest paid by certain groups and organisations in economic and social matters is particularly clear in the field of professional training, which can be a source of massive volumes of cash. In addition to this financial benefit, these groups attempt to find a form of legitimacy or credibility, enabling them to come into direct contact with job seekers and employers...and companies (individual training leave, individual training rights, training plans, etc.). The field of professional training is therefore ripe for the development of training offers with inherent sectarian aberrations. These offers only include professional role-play as a secondary element and are not part of continuous professional training courses. They continue to blur the line between training and therapy and do not use theoretical or practical contributions which could assist in a better understanding of a professional or social situation. They trivialise their presence in business services via training and personal development (coaching, testing, profile management, improved performances, communication, change management, etc.).

Breaches of the labour code

The parliamentary report on sects and financial considerations indicated that the primary need of a sect is to recruit as many followers as possible, and then to use its members to create cash.

"Sects will seek out any means possible to reduce the personnel costs, which all employers must normally pay, to a minimum, or skip them totally". They will use volunteers abusively, engage in illegal labour and downgrade their activities, or quite simply not declare them". These situations often breach the labour code.

Solidarity

In terms of solidarity, and above all issues relating to childhood, the presence of sects in sectors relating to minors must be strongly emphasised: pre- and postnatal monitoring, adoption, childminding, extracurricular activities, aid and care provided for vulnerable children and the actual child protection sector. Single parents, teenage mothers, post-natal depression, domestics, and the list goes on – are all areas which imply a risk of sectarian hold. The same applies more generally for all proposals relating to help for parents, particularly when we consider the confusion faced by parents in some areas: drugs, the sexuality of teenagers, etc.

Almost 60,000 children live in a sectarian type environment, and this situation is likely to work against these very children. The DGAS has extended its initiatives in this field and is particularly ensuring the awareness of professionals in the child protection sector: the Counsel for the defence of minors, the association of juvenile court magistrates, the French Association of Information and Research on Abused Children (AFIREM), social workers within departmental councils, etc. Despite the organisation of specific training in this field by the National Centre of Territorial Civil Servants (CNFPT), departmental councils remain little invested in this area. The completion of a methodological guide for professionals in charge of child protection issued by the DGAS should fill the gap.

The elderly also require specific attention, due to semi-veiled situations (home help) which are difficult to control. In recent times, "the abuse of the elderly" has become a focal point for some of these sectarian groups.

We could also mention the presence of sects in the field of the disabled. Some groups have developed forms of proselytising targeting deaf-mutes. More recently, the same conclusion has been reached for the mentally disabled, particularly children. Professional training is also used as an entrance channel in these situations. Over and beyond individual situations, the networking of the "professionals" liable to organise these training courses, or even to propose care must be noted. Specialist establishments exist, with links to sects.

We have also witnessed the development of aberrations targeting the State in the medical/social field. One of the "branches" of the Church of scientology, the Citizens' Commission for human rights (CCHR), addressed a guide for visits to a psychiatric hospital to Departmental divisions for sanitary and social affairs. The CCHR even proposed its services to the Ministry of Health and Solidarities, offering to "support" them in their inspections. Other sectarian groups have developed initiatives along the same lines.

To conclude, it must be emphasised that, in view of the vulnerability of the targets, the awareness of the reality of sectarian aberrations is important. These aberrations take many shapes, from "simple" proselytising to the creation of sectarian structures in the above fields. This is particularly concerning as these practices are often applied in the context of one to one relationships.

The Ministry of Labour, Social Relations, Families and Solidarity has continued to face prosecution by some groups accused of sectarian aberrations. The confusion provoked in this field by these groups, such as the systematic manipulation of certain topics bringing the debate onto the ground of freedom of belief, must be highlighted.

The procedure relating to the transmission of administrative documents is used for purposes other than simple transmission of the documents. A request for explanations on a Ministerial position against one of these groups was based on a request for the transmission of administrative documents, while, in fact, the texts on the transmission of administrative documents relate to the transmission of these documents alone, and no explanations are required as to the actual content of the documents transmitted. It would therefore appear urgent to identify the divisions and services likely to be targeted by these requests to avoid such situations. This situation also requires full coordination with the judicial services, which are in contact with the CADA for our Ministries.

The goals of the ministries in 2009

Ministry of Foreign and European affairs (MAEE)

Ministry of Foreign and European affairs
The Minister

French Republic
PARIS, on
-5 FEB.08 000770 CM

Dear Chairman,

Further to your letter dated 13 December 2008, in which you requested information on the working objectives of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs in terms of vigilance and the combat against sectarian aberrations.

The contribution proposed by this Ministry is as follows:

1/ Continued availability of one member of MAEE personnel as a diplomatic advisor for MIVILUDES.

2/ Representation of the Division on the Executive Operational Control Committee (CEPO) of MIVILUDES by the Counsellor for religious affairs (CAR) and by the sub-director of Security (ASD/SEC).

3/ Support for the missions of MIVILUDES abroad after assessment of the diplomatic context of these missions.

4/ Assistance for the enquiries organised by MIVILUDES abroad (routing of questionnaire to diplomats by fax, tracking of feedback, etc.)

5/ Explanation and defence of French policy to international bodies

This Ministry continues to state, within the bodies concerned, that the initiatives of Miviludes fully respect the international conventions certified by France in this field, in particular the United Nations International Treaty on Civil and Political Rights of 1966 and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of 1950. The MAEE emphasises the fact that the policies applied in France are not aimed at limiting the freedom of religion and conscience, but at preventing the risk of sectarian aberrations and informing the public on this subject. To support this statement, the Ministry insists on three points with partners:

- types of criminal behaviour are monitored rather than specific movements ;
- criminal activities will be prosecuted by common law courts;
- MIVILUDES exists because the victims of sectarian aberrations expect support and assistance from public authorities.

6/ Use of our means of communication for the provision of information by Miviludes for embassies and consulates (links on our web sites, routing of annual reports via diplomatic channels).

Yours Sincerely.

Bernard KOUCHNER

Georges FENECH
Chairman of the Interministerial Mission of Vigilance and Combat
against sectarian aberrations
66, rue de Bellechasse
75007 Paris

Ministry of National Education

The Minister

Paris
25 MARCH 2009

Dear Chairman

Further to your letter dated 13 December 2008, in which you specified the new organisation of the Interministerial Mission of vigilance and combat against sectarian aberrations (MIVILUDES).

To reply to your request, and in view of the preparation of the Annual report to the Prime Minister, I take pleasure in presenting the objectives of the Ministry of National Education in the field of vigilance and the combat against sectarian aberrations.

To begin with, the Ministry addresses a young public, vulnerable by definition, and the importance of constant vigilance in the field of national education is self-evident. The Ministry has therefore developed initiatives relating to both the activities of teaching personnel and the risks which some of their pupils may face. Children and young adults educated in non-state schools or receiving home schooling are also concerned, and administrative personnel working under this Ministry must inspect the education provided and the knowledge acquired.

My Ministry will take action in 2009 to ensure the prevention of sectarian aberrations on the basis of the decisions made in 2008, focusing on three main lines:

1- Better knowledge of the actual situation for home schooling

The option selected for these children by their families actually corresponds to the exercise of a freedom (right), and must not be suspected simply by principle. While it is important to dismiss any type of confusion between home schooling and the risk of sectarian aberrations, we must be aware that this form of education can prove ripe for the emergence of these risks. For this reason, I feel that it is important to obtain more extensive knowledge of the current situation for home schooling. The general division of education addressed a request for an enquiry to the regional education services on 23 January 2009. The results of this enquiry are currently being prepared and will provide a first overview of the situation per department (region) and per regional education service:

- number of pupils concerned;
- reasons given by the families;
- the role of registrations with distance learning schools, be they private or public, when operative for the children;
- the number of, results of and follow-up to inspections by regional education services.

We intend to define the action to be taken in more detail based on this improved data, notably in coordination with judicial authorities, in view of focusing on situations which actually involve risks.

2-Improved checking up on home schooling

Article 9 of law n°2005-380 of 23 April 2005 provides that "mandatory schooling must at least guarantee that each pupil acquires a basic grounding including all indispensable knowledge and skills required to complete schooling with success, continue training, construct a personal and professional future and ensure social integration".

This is along the same lines as decree n° 2009-259 of 5 March 2009, which amends articles D 131 – 11 to D 131-16 and D 442-22 of the Code of Education. The application of these provisions to checking up on home schooling would improve the control of inspections by national education authorities.

3- Improved awareness of the Internet

Finally, a third opening for prevention targets all pupils and appears vital to me: their protection with regard the use of the Internet and the sectarian risks at large on this network. Increasing numbers of sites allow youngsters to make themselves heard, to express their personality, hence potentially allowing untrustworthy individuals to identify vulnerable kids and suffering teenagers. I feel that it would be beneficial to introduce sessions on breaches of fundamental freedoms, as threatened by sectarian aberrations, in Internet awareness courses.

Action by the national education administration to combat sectarian aberrations would clearly benefit from coordination with Miviludes.

Yours Sincerely.

Xavier Darcos
Unreadable

Georges Fenech
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Ministry of Justice

Ministry of Justice

CABINET
OF THE KEEPER OF THE SEALS, MINISTRY OF JUSTICE

DIRECTOR OF THE CABINET

Dear Chairman,

Further to your letter of 13 December 2008 addressed to the Keeper of the Seals, I take pleasure in informing you that, after coordination with the different divisions of the Ministry of Justice concerned by sectarian aberrations, the Minister approved the following targets for 2009.

- **development of continuous training for magistrates at regional level**

You submitted this request at the Executive Operational Control Committee on 26 November 2008; the details are part of a project implemented by the Division of criminal affairs and pardons with the National School of Magistrates.

The National School of Magistrates proposed training sessions for magistrates from courts of appeal in 2009 for this purpose.

These sessions will complete the continuous training session organised at the National School of Magistrates in Paris, directed by the referral agent on sectarian aberrations of the Division of criminal affairs and pardons, to be held from 30 November to 2 December 2009.

- **development of the training of personnel in judicial protection for minors and the prisons' office**

The Division of legal protection for minors and the Division of prisons aim to develop the training of their personnel on sectarian aberrations in the context of both continuous training and initial training.

- **ensure that the referral staff of regional divisions for the judicial protection of minors is operational**

In accordance with recommendation n°8 in your assessment report on judicial provisions, Mr CARBOURDIN, director of judicial protection for minors, appointed a referral agent for sectarian aberrations within each of the nine regional divisions of judicial protection for minors at end-2008. Some of these staff was able to attend the continuous training session organised at the National School of Magistrates from 8 to 10 December 2008.

For 2009, the Division of legal protection for minors is planning to make these referral staff operational by defining and coordinating their action.

- **repeat the enquiry targeting juvenile court judges and the judicial protection services for minors to identify the number of cases relating to sectarian phenomena**

In addition, pursuant to recommendation n°7 of your report, the Division of legal protection for minors planned to repeat the enquiry mandated in 2003 in 2007.

- **boost exchanges between the Interministerial mission of vigilance and combat against sectarian aberrations and magistrates in charge of criminal enquiries**

For many years now, the referral magistrate for sectarian aberrations within the Division of criminal affairs and pardons has been mandated to create synergies between the judicial authorities and administrations liable to handle sectarian phenomena.

The Division of criminal affairs and pardons aims, with due respect for the confidential nature of the enquiry and judicial investigations, to make the development of working meetings between magistrates in charge of enquiries on sectarian aberrations and the advisors of the Interministerial Mission of vigilance and combat against sectarian aberrations obligatory, to allow the expertise of this often unknown structure to be shared, particularly in relation to mental manipulation.

In addition, the Minister intends for the Ministry of Justice to be informed and involved in the planned statutory modifications for the Interministerial Mission of Vigilance and Combat against Sectarian Aberrations.

Yours Sincerely.

Kind regards

François SENERS

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MIVILUDES chairman
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Ministry of Health and Sport

Ministry of Health and Sport

The Minister
CABJ BLJ/FR – M. A. 08-43862 / D. 09-804

PARIS, 03 MARCH 2009

Dear Chairman,

Further to your letter of 13 December 2008, enquiring as to the goals of my ministerial department in the combat against sectarian aberrations for 2009.

I particularly aim to ensure the organisation of a wide-spread information campaign for the general public for all activities involving sectarian aberrations, and more specifically, those which target the mentally vulnerable or those facing severe illness or handicap in a given context. The aim is to ensure that everybody can spot the significant difference between promises made and actual action.

Customers/patients must be able to access information based on facts and science as far as possible via a government web site, as is currently the case in other countries. I have selected this approach as an activity plan for 2009.

The General director of health therefore plans to create and chair a technical support group with three assigned tasks.

Firstly, contribute to the preparation of criteria enabling the appraisal and sorting of risks, to establish an order of priority and create an informative web site.

Subsequently, play an advisory role with the General division of health, and assist with the design, implementation and monitoring of policy against dangerous PNCATs.

Finally, participate in the preparation and monitoring of information and prevention campaigns targeting the general public.

This support group will also monitor the works mandated to other institutions, such as INSERM, which accepted to assess certain practices, such as mesotherapy, from a scientific point of view.

The General director of health was able to present this key goal on behalf of my Ministry at the meeting of the Executive committee of the Interministerial mission of vigilance and combat against sectarian aberrations on 28 January 2009.

Yours Sincerely.

Roselyne BACHELOT-NARQUIN

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Ministry of Labour, Social relations, Families and Solidarity

Ministry of Labour, Social relations, Families and Solidarity

The Minister

PARIS, 27 JAN 2009

CAB/FM/FDB/Scop O 09001394

Dear Chairman,

Further to your letter of 13 December 2008, in which you informed me of your intention to prepare an annual action plan for the Interministerial Mission of Vigilance and Combat against Sectarian Aberrations, which you chair. You have requested my agreement, in principle, to the idea that the combat against illegal labour should be one of the lines of this plan, to be presented at the next meeting of your Executive committee on 28 January.

I take pleasure in confirming that your concerns match those of the Ministry of labour. In fact, the combat against illegal labour, generally speaking, is one of our priorities. Guidelines are defined in the National plan to combat illegal labour 2008 – 2009, and in the law on finances for 2009 ("Effective action against illegal labour" is one of the five goals of program 111 of the Ministry of labour). For 2008-2009, the four targets of the national plan are: national fraud, the use of special statuses (false intermittent workers, false trainees, etc.), undeclared employment in at-risk sectors (mainly construction, agriculture, theatre work and catering) and the employment of foreign staff without a work permit.

Sectarian movements may currently be prosecuted for breaches of labour law; to give a few examples: moral harassment, excessive duration of the working week, employment without pay, or even employment without a contract (TGI of Paris, 10 July 1986, SCC ECOOVIE). In addition, if followers work for sects on a pseudo-voluntary basis, the groups can be prosecuted for undeclared labour, if they do not submit any social or fiscal declarations (TGI of Lure, 22 June 2001, HERB).

For the above reasons, I remain at your disposal to study any additional action you may wish to take. In-depth brainstorming could provide an opportunity to integrate your concerns in the targets of the labour inspectorate, particularly for the upcoming period 2010-2011.

Yours Sincerely.

Brice HORTEFEUX

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MIVILUDES
03 FEB. 2009

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Interministerial delegation of families

Miviludes and the Interministerial delegation of families (DIF)

The "Prospects for 2009" section offers a new space for public services which have not always, until recently, been considered as the natural partners of Miviludes, despite the fact that they share many of its sources of concern. The Interministerial delegation of families listed the actions it plans to take in collaboration with Miviludes in this section, to pass on information about prevention and the combat against sectarian aberrations to the attention of families:

- Distribution of information on sectarian aberrations and on initiatives organised by public authorities targeting associations and families: creation and distribution of posters and documents intended for the general public, either for a specific event or for general purpose; creation and distribution of a practical guide for the family network, on the same principle as those previously published for civil servants and companies, and a specific guide on the protection of childhood from sectarian aberrations.
- Reinforcement of the protection of the vulnerable: creation and leading of two small working groups, one on sectarian risks, the Internet and the protection of children, and the other on the protection of vulnerable adults (people under guardianship, the accident prone).
- Training for professionals in contact with families (social investigators, family assistants, maternal assistants, etc.) in sectarian risk with three objectives: ensure that families are aware of the sectarian threat, avoid any manipulation of personnel, and identify worrying situations.
- Reinforced collaboration and the exchange of information with Miviludes and associations specialised in the Defence of victims of sectarian aberrations in the context of operations and partnerships led or sponsored by the DIF.

Overview of Miviludes 2008

Accessible documentation on sectarian aberrations

Until 2006, documentation was collected and organised to the best of the possibilities of Miviludes. A document research manager was recruited early 2007. This manager is aided by a document research assistant, and is mainly in charge of the organisation of collections of publications and journals, and the mass of documents of all types which has accumulated since the creation of the Interministerial observatory of combat against sects (1996).

Library management software was installed on two PCs in April 2008, and around 1000 publications from our document store have been entered and indexed.

This task is currently almost complete, and books have been sorted based on the topics and matters focused on by Miviludes and relating to sectarian aberrations. The filing plan adopted reflects the very specific nature of the field covered.

The rest of our document store must however now be organised. This is a far vaster task, and will cover thousands of media articles, scientific publications, reports, doctorates and dissertations, audiovisual documents, etc. all of which make up the documentary heritage of Miviludes.

If we ignore the strictly library-based questions in the organisation of our document store, the analysis of journals, the creation of an Opac (on line public access catalogue), and the partial/total scanning of texts, our document collection must be accessible to a wider public.

The processing of primary documents in a data base is only of any benefit if the public can then use this data base: this means an internal public, but also a more specialised public, jurists, administrations, lawyers, members of associations defending victims, etc.

Summaries of publications, bibliographies and topical collections could be made available to the above. The library will be open for consultation on appointment in a location yet to be set on its feet.

The changes are based on the experience of the Centre for information and advice on harmful sectarian organisations (CIAOSN) in Brussels, and the new documentation centre of Miviludes will represent a key tool for monitoring movements likely to imply a risk of sectarian aberrations.

The new centre will establish links between the different trends, provide documents on the messages sent out by movements, provide access to the testimonies of former followers, or even judicial documents, or, to cut the story short, to the keys to understanding the many facets of the situation for sectarian aberrations.

The web site

2008 was the first full year of service for the new web site, launched in mid-2007. A substantial number of publications hit the site, and many visitors came to the site looking for these publications. In addition, internal Miviludes news, including the appointment of Georges Fenech as Chairman, led to an increase in the number of visitors.

- 2008: an exceptional year for on-line documents

Miviludes made its new documents accessible to web visitors in electronic format to complete its printed distribution. This free form of distribution meets the specifications of the web site: i.e. to provide information for the public, but also to provide researchers, journalists and specialists with complete documentation on sectarian aberrations. In addition, this type of document format has financial and environmental benefits.

All of the documents available on line have been reworked to ensure they are readable on the screen, and completed with an electronic contents page and hypertext links to allow for quick and easy browsing. What's more, a plain text search engine is available. Visitors can search for key terms actually within the documents. Publications available on-line in 2008:

- Report to the Prime Minister 2007 by the Miviludes in French, English, German and Spanish.
 - Local and regional authorities and sectarian aberrations.
 - Justice and sectarian aberrations, report mandated to Georges Fenech by the Prime Minister.
- Two documents were also made available on-line at end-December 2007:
- Companies and sectarian risk.
 - Thesis by Armelle Guivier, doctor in medicine: "Risks of assault on physical integrity faced by sect members".

- Web site figures for Miviludes in 2008

The Miviludes web site has been part of the Internet landscape for many years now. This can be proved by the ever-climbing visitor numbers. According to Xiti, the online intelligence service, the site received 81 124 visitors in 2008, up 22.9% from the previous year. 295,166 pages were opened. All records were broken on 3 April 2008 with the release of the report for 2007. The on-line availability of the report triggered 4,754 connections and visits to 17,645 pages. 1,113 reports were downloaded that very day.

The global figure for all documents downloaded is estimated at over 20,000. The reports for 2006 and 2007 represent more than half of this total alone. Visitors also focused on the sections updated in 2008, mainly covering French judicial provisions and official texts on health.

- Referencing of the Miviludes web site

Several tools can be used to check the popularity of a site. The Google ranking is frequently used, and is based on the number of web sites which mention the site in question. In 2007, the Miviludes web site obtained a ranking of 5/10. In 2008, the ranking has climbed to 6/10 which is a great claim to be able to make. (Just to compare, the ranking of the Prime Minister's web site is 7/10). Simply type the word "Miviludes" in your browser's address bar to go directly to our web site.

Simply typing "sectarian aberrations" into the popular search engine, Google, will bring Miviludes (<http://www.miviludes.gouv.fr> or <http://www.miviludes.fr> or <http://www.miviludes.org>) up at the top of the list, whether you try it in English or French. We can consider these results as the acknowledgement of the role played by Miviludes in this environment, as, in previous years, non-official sites, opponents to action by the French state, took the top slots. Several elements can explain this rise in figures:

- 1) The modifications made to the web site in 2007. The addresses of each of the 200 articles on the site now include the terms of the title of the article.
- 2) The creation of relevant key terms for the most critical pages of the web site by our webmaster.
- 3) The rewriting of many article titles, to include the key terms in the text, making relevant indexing easier by the spiders of search engines.
- 4) The on-line availability of new documents with each and every word in the text opens for indexing by search engines.

- Projects for 2009

The Miviludes web site now contains a set of texts and references providing information for members of the public with questions on conformity with French laws and the possible levels of danger associated with movements and practices.

However, progress can still be made to advertise the action taken by the French state in the field of sectarian aberrations.

– "News": the on-line availability of news will be completed with the electronic version of the Miviludes newsletter, which is currently on the drawing board.

– Improved links on official sites: while many ministerial sites currently include links to the Miviludes web site, the same cannot be said of all services which would benefit from such a link. These topical sites are often the first port of call for web visitors in difficulty. The same applies for the web sites of prefectures and regional and local authorities. The possible on-line availability of the Guide to sectarian aberrations by local and regional authorities published by Miviludes in 2007 on these web sites is under consideration.

Finally, the referencing and impact of the web site must remain a key point. While clear progress has been recorded for referencing under some key terms such as "sect", non-official sites are listed above the Miviludes, web site, which comes up way down the list with Google (in French; English results are less positive).

In addition, while specialists can also access many documents for use in their research, some of which have never been printed, specific information is not available for all at-risk groups. This particularly applies for teenagers, a vulnerable public which treats the Internet as daily bread, could be offered adapted information and documents under "At-risk fields".

2008: an overview

The Interministerial Mission presents a report of its initiatives aiming to encourage the coordination of prevention and repression by public authorities each year.

The impact of the report of the Interministerial Mission in 2007, the publication of two guides intended for public authorities and companies during the reference year, and the increasing impact of the web site, have all contributed to enhancing the visibility of Miviludes.

Increasing the visibility of its work in terms of the observation and analysis of sectarian phenomena has had an impact on the relations of the Interministerial Mission with Government offices and on the definition of a new framework for joint action with the three civil services.

These developments have led Miviludes to launch new types of action, either independent initiatives or action in response to requests for advice and assistance from many institutions, not forgetting the traditional coordination of action by services in view of the development of sectarian risk.

Miviludes is "responsible for encouraging the coordination of prevention and repression by public authorities targeting the actions of sectarian movements which breach Human rights and fundamental freedoms, laws or regulations, or which disturb public order, while maintaining respect for public liberties" and has set itself the target of answering any request put forward by services in the context of its entrusted tasks.

The organisation of Miviludes has adapted to the transformation of the "Departmental cells of vigilance" (1997-2005) into "departmental councils for the prevention of delinquency, aid to victims and the combat against drugs, sectarian aberrations and gender violence" with the option for prefects to define the fields actually covered by this departmental council, meaning that the actual tasks of these councils vary between the different departments. With regard the combat against sectarian aberrations, prefects may organise specialised working groups, according to the circular issued by the Prime Minister on 27 May 2005 relative to the combat against sectarian aberrations.

According to information held by Miviludes, around twenty departments assessed the situation for sectarian phenomena based on factors which could be observed within reason within their respective scopes in 2008 (often in the presence of a representative of Miviludes).

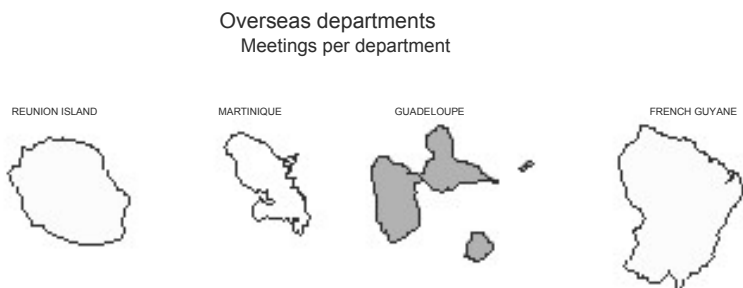
This assessment of the situation integrating both observation and analysis encouraged commitment to inspections and verifications of compliance with procedures and regulations and led to administrative or judicial action in certain cases.

The circular issued by the Prime Minister on 27 May 2005 specified the intended meaning of "vigilance", which must be "applied in view of changes to the sectarian landscape, which have left the list of movements enclosed with the parliamentary report of 1995 less and less pertinent. The formation of small structures, difficult to identify and constantly changing shape has been noted. These structures take specific advantage of the distribution options inherent to the Internet. "

This vigilance is particularly critical for some groups based on a totalitarian and occult foundation, whose actions may have irremediable consequences. This pragmatic approach was decisively confirmed by the circular of the Ministry of the Interior dated 25 February 2008, asking prefects to organise a meeting of these working groups once per quarter, ensuring active collaboration and the coordination of prevention and combat initiatives in this field, and the consolidation of relations between central administrations, regional services and Miviludes. This pragmatic approach led to progress, but still inadequate results:

- ever increasing requests for the training of civil servants and magistrates.
- commitment by personnel in the field to many hands-on cases relating to one-off events (seminars, training courses, acquisition of real estate, financial transfers) and to the regular activities of movements which may be breaching laws and regulations or implying risk for participants (hygiene, nutrition, healthcare, etc.).
- questions from miscellaneous services in the three civil services.

The map shown below reflects a slowdown in the increased presence of Miviludes in regional State services and the specific situation caused by this two-year transition period. Growth should, however, continue in 2009 in view of the many requests received in the second half of 2008, which were unable to be satisfied, and particularly in view of the new circular of 23 January 2009, the Minister of the Interior, which once again insists on the enforcement of these provisions as a priority in 2009.



These are mainly used to identify targets for 2009, a year which will be marked by the implementation of consistent provisions harmonised at national level, according to the wish expressed by all of the Ministries concerned.

Miviludes around the world

29 February - 2 March 2008 – Rijeka, Croatia : round table on the emergence of the sectarian phenomenon in Croatia: "Sects: current situation, legal and psychological solutions and the involvement of associations".

A round table on the emergence and development of the sectarian phenomenon was held in Rijeka, Croatia, at the initiative of the daily newspaper, Novo List. Psychologists, psychiatrists, journalists and jurists, including one professor of penal law, took the floor in turn and presented their approach to the phenomenon in a country where this was the first event of this type. The representative of Miviludes described the main institutional framework in France, and the legal, administrative and judicial framework available to the Interministerial mission for vigilance and the combat against sectarian aberrations.

18 - 20 March 2008 – Quebec, Canada: comparative approaches to public policies in the combat against sectarian aberrations in Quebec.

The Secretary general of Miviludes visited Quebec for a second time in the company of an advisor. This second investigation, in collaboration with the General French consulate in Quebec, aimed to meet with the associations and professional actors responsible for helping victims in general, and child victims in particular. The investigation focused on the mental recovery of the victims and compensation for their prejudice monitored by a body, the Help centre for victims of criminal acts (CAVAC). The meeting with former followers of closed movements was a high point of these meetings.

27 - 29 March 2008 – Sofia, Bulgaria: a colloquium was organised by the Centre for Research into New Religious Movements (ECRNRM BULGARIA) with the French Institute of the French embassy in Bulgaria.

Miviludes was represented at this colloquium on: "The French experience in vigilance and the combat against sectarian aberrations: interaction between the public authorities and associations defending victims".

11 - 14 April 2008 – Pisa, Italy: colloquium organised by the associations ARIS Toscana and Veneto, Associazioni per la ricerca e l'Informazione sulle sette (Association for research and information on sects) and the Annual conference of the European Federation of centres of research and information on sectarianism (FECRIS).

The Secretary general led a delegation of four Miviludes advisors to Pisa to participate in a colloquium on: "State responsibility for the protection of citizens from destructive sects: analysis of current models and possible future models" and the annual conference of the FECRIS.

4 - 5 September 2008 – Hamburg, Germany: colloquium organised by a Scientology work group at the Chamber of trade in the port of Hamburg.

Miviludes was represented at this colloquium on: "Key witnesses for US scientology: the organisation of and internal changes to the Church of Scientology by former directors".

The conference of 4 September focused on recent developments in the Church of Scientology in the United States. Three former followers in the United States with high ranking functions were invited to this colloquium.

The conference of 5 September was not intended for the general public. It led to a more in-depth discussion with US guests.

At this colloquium, organised by Ursula Caberta, who directs the Scientology Working Group of the Office of Domestic Affairs of the town of Hamburg, former Scientology members Larry Brennan, Mark Headley, the actor Jason Beghe, and the lawyer from Los Angeles, Graham Berry, took the floor and explained how they had experienced Scientology in the United States. A representative of the Federal Ministry of Justice and a representative of the Land of Baden-Württemberg also took the floor. The European Federation of Centres of Research and Information on Sectarianism (FECRIS) also participated at this colloquium.

29 September - 10 October 2008 – Warsaw, Poland: The Annual human dimension implementation meeting organised by the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), an institution of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

A Miviludes delegation, led by its Chairman, Georges Fenech, went to Poland for this meeting of experts (international civil servants and qualified experts), which is open to NGOs. Many Non-Governmental Organisations accept the open invitation.

Miviludes members attentively listened to the speeches made at the working sessions on questions of intolerance and discrimination, and on freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief.

In response to attacks by certain NGOs concerning the policy of vigilance and the combat against sectarian aberrations, the permanent representative of France for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe responded firmly to justify the wilful attitude of France, notably regarding the protection of victims. He also criticised those who reverse roles by positioning themselves as victims of religious discrimination, and confirmed the conviction of the authorities regarding the initiatives carried out by MIVILUDES under the "democratic control" of the parliament.

4 December 2008 – Brussels, Belgium: exchanges with the Centre for information and advice on harmful sectarian organizations (CIAOSN) - Belgium).

The MIVILUDES chairman, Georges Fenech, led a delegation to Brussels to the Centre for information and advice on harmful sectarian organizations (CIAOSN).

This mission is part of the regular exchanges between Miviludes and the partners and allies of the Belgian Federal centre for information on sects.

The Chairman, Georges Fenech, met with Henri de Cordes, President of this independent centre created within the Federal public service of Justice. Miviludes particularly observed the operation of the multi-disciplinary research service (at office level) and its documentation centre.

8 - 10 December 2008 – Wendgräben, Germany: seminar assessing changes to the sectarian phenomenon in Germany.

Miviludes, represented by a member of the general secretariat, was invited by the Dialogzentrum in Berlin to participate at a seminar to assess changes in the sectarian phenomenon in Germany, organised by the Protestant Church of Germany, and which was held at the Federal training centre for CDU managers in Wendgräben, in the Land Sachsen-Anhalt.

Prospects for Miviludes 2009

The day-to-day tasks of Miviludes

In view of the growing number of requests for information, from individuals, civil servants and politicians, particularly those in regional and local authorities, Miviludes must continue to modernise its documentation in 2009. The Miviludes office will also be modernised to optimise the tracking of cases. The publication of a bimonthly newsletter will be launched, mainly targeting the administrations concerned and politicians, but also available on-line on the Miviludes web site, to reinforce existing relations with contacts from all horizons.

In addition, the flood of requests for interventions and training, targeting a wide range of different publics throughout France, and even abroad, represents a challenge for the small permanent office. However, Miviludes has set itself the target of answering all requests received in its field of competence and corresponding to its assigned mission as far as possible. The sharing of resources with the members of its Orientation Council and the Executive Operational Control Committee, accompanied by the rational processing of demands (extension of the target public to the regional sphere rather than the departmental sphere, opening of sessions to local partners concerned), should enable us to continue to meet this ambitious objective.

Miviludes also intends to propose legislation, in fields subject to its competence. To this end, 2009 should be filled with opportunities, on the issues which are the heart of current concerns, such as the regulation of non-conventional therapeutical practices or personal development/self-achievement programs, coaching practices and vocational training.

In January 2009, Miviludes and the TV channel LCP-AN signed a partnership agreement in view of improving the information provided for the public on the risks of sectarian aberrations and advertising the initiatives of Miviludes more generally. In this context, the co-production of an educational film on the role and tasks of Miviludes is under consideration.

The signing of this agreement is a clear sign of the unfailing interest shown by LCP-AN in sectarian issues, with the organisation of several talk shows on the matter and the repeat broadcasting of the interviews from the last parliamentary investigatory commission on "Minors, victims of sects".

Finally, the Chairman and Secretary general of Miviludes were interviewed in the context of the consideration and assessment of judicial provisions designed to combat sectarian aberrations, entrusted to Georges Fenech, magistrate, and more recently the new Miviludes Chairman.

The report transmitted to the Prime Minister in the second half of 2008 contains twelve recommendations, some of which have already been applied and others of which are integrated in current works:

- Recommendation 1: equip Miviludes with decision-making and operational competences in a new legal framework.

- Recommendation 2: distribute a judicial guide on the "Combat against sectarian aberrations for magistrates".

- Recommendation 3: integrate a module on "sectarian aberrations" in teaching courses on legal psychiatry.

- Recommendation 4: create a major in illegal sectarian finances within economic and financial teaching institutions.

- Recommendation 5: create task forces on sectarian aberrations in each department.

- Recommendation 6: specialise two family court judges per district court for family disputes with a sectarian factor and specifically train two social investigators to support these judges.

- Recommendation 7: update the enquiry of 2003 to identify the actual number of reports of minors affected by sectarian phenomenon.

- Recommendation 8: create a correspondent for sectarian aberrations within each of the nine regional divisions of legal protection for minors.

- Recommendation 9: define the starting point for the prescription of public action from the point at which the victim reaches age 18.

- Recommendation 10: create an initial training course for future magistrates and develop the continuous training of magistrates, particularly for correspondents on sectarian aberrations.

- Recommendation 11: create a working group on sectarian aberrations within each departmental council for the prevention of delinquency, including qualified associations, in accordance with the guidelines laid down in the circular of the Prime Minister dated 27 March 2007.

– Recommendation 12: encourage the creation of a European Observatory of sectarian aberrations and the standardisation of the legislation of member States.

The implementation of these recommendations is not the exclusive task of Miviludes, however the NGO does hold a decisive position in their success, and intends to provide leverage in 2009.

Reforms

A statutory reform of Miviludes is currently under consideration. This reform would not substantially modify current methods used to monitor and combat sectarian aberrations, however this reform would satisfy three specific requirements:

- The inspection organised by the auditor general for the period 2003 - 2007, whose conclusions were published on 11 September 2008, highlighted the need to ensure closer collaboration between the orientation and management bodies of Miviludes, which are considered as too excessive to allow optimal effectiveness. The statutory reform aims to initially replace the Current Executive Operational Control Committee with a smaller Operational Council, and to replace the current Orientation Council with a smaller Executive board, without any real change in the assigned tasks or composition of these bodies. These bodies are indeed the tools needed for real Interministerial work at central level, but also the across-the board expertise of Miviludes and its action in the field, and ensure direct contact with the concerns of our fellow citizens. They are also precious tools to prove the legitimacy of Miviludes as a contact point in international relations.

- The second line of the reform is also based on the search for effectiveness: the creation of a team of operational experts in the field, whose services could be used by investigators and magistrates handling cases which appear to involve sectarian factors.

It has indeed been noted that, irrespective of the efforts made to ensure the training of investigators and magistrates, this subject remains tricky to grasp.

Therefore, to give an example, texts based on the law of 12 June 2001, the so-called About-Picard law, are rarely implemented, including in cases which, according to Miviludes, they should apply.

In addition, sectarian aberrations do not always have a focal point. They are often identified by comparison with other cases, handled by various authorities at different points throughout France or even abroad. A central observatory is therefore an indispensable component of the enquiry.

Finally, the victims of sectarian hold are not like other types of victims. They must be interviewed with care, and their position has serious technical particularities. In addition, and above all, the enquiry may once again destabilise these victims, or even put them in danger, and public authorities must accept responsibility for these aspects. For this reason, a specialised support team for the enquiry would make an indispensable contribution.

- Finally, to come back to improving effectiveness, this project plans for the reinforcement of provisions for the distribution of information between the public authorities and Miviludes.

Other prospects

Two of the priority working lines envisaged are worth mentioning specifically:

- Minors

In fact, this issue is not new in itself for Miviludes. However, it must be recognised that the full consequences of the parliamentary report submitted in December 2006 on Minors, victims of sects, have not yet been reached.

It must also be said that the partnership between Miviludes and the Counsel for the defence of minors, the Interministerial delegation of families, the Department councils responsible for the protection of minors, and National education authorities of all types, may and must be reinforced. These are also priorities for 2009.

- Economic factors in the sectarian phenomenon

Traditionally speaking, movements based on religious or philosophical beliefs involving sectarian aberrations almost always have an economic branch of some size, and gurus, regardless of their importance, rarely forget to live off the amounts paid by followers, preferably in luxury. The use of these funds, their actual destination, has rarely been closely assessed.

With the rise in profit making companies with no or marginal connections to beliefs, but which involve sectarian aberrations ("therapeutic" practices, "training" or "personal development" bodies, "educational" support or help with schoolwork, etc.), the identification of the actual destination of the funds extracted unscrupulously by individuals making no attempt to hide behind a system of thought, but simply aiming to obtain mental domination over their fellow humans and thereby a comfortable source of income, takes on a whole new meaning.

In addition, sectarian systems are often tempted to combine their mind control activities with miscellaneous types of fraud intended to increase overall profits even more: illegal labour, tax evasion, false declarations to obtain state benefits and public grants in particular. This will be a new line of work for Miviludes in the coming years, particularly with the upcoming international conference on "Sectarian aberrations and financial flux".

Conclusion

On 11 December 2008, Georges Fenech, accompanied by two advisors, visited Chaussin, and a community known as "Amour et Miséricorde" ("Love and Mercy"). He met with the founder, Éliane D., several former members, the archbishop of Dijon, the Prefect and media.

This trip was organised to launch a new type of field procedure for Miviludes, and was no lucky shot.

Since 2002, if not earlier, the public authorities – prefectures, judicial authorities – had been regularly warned by letters and individual contacts from the general public and families feeling concern, or even completely overwhelmed by panic. The facts reported were often precise and detailed, but random, and difficult to qualify for adults, and, taken individually, did not provide grounds for a reaction by the public authorities. In addition, these reports were spread over the entire country: Brittany, Île-de-France, Bourgogne, leaving centralisation out of the question.

Only Miviludes was able to collect in and centralise these different elements. Over a four-year period, from 2004 to 2008, Miviludes received a substantial number of testimonies which matched, all accusing Éliane D. The facts reported by either families and friends or by former members and supporters mainly mention the strong hold held over individuals which were mistreated, humiliated, and sometimes physically brought to their knees, changes in behaviour followed by lifestyle, often sudden ruptures with family with no way out, new couples or breakups which surprised family and friends, and even exorbitant financial demands by the founder. Some reports even imply the transfer of assets to the prejudice of the vulnerable ².

In addition, according to the information held by Miviludes, the ecclesiastic authorities, despite being contacted by families requesting their support to convince mistreated members of the group to leave, do not appear to have either understood the extent of the suffering caused and the dangers in question, or been able to take action.

In this context, the Chairman of Miviludes travelled to Chaussin, asked to visit the community, and met with various actors and the civil and ecclesiastic authorities. Following this trip, which was widely reported on in the media, the association "Amour et Miséricorde" ceased to exist. This decision, which only concerns the members of the group, has not been explained, and clearly does not guarantee that any abuse has ceased.

² - Note: Miviludes has no investigatory power. After receiving testimonies or complaints, Miviludes sorts per group and checks apparent reliability and then informs the competent authorities. Miviludes is not authorised to determine if the facts reported are actually true.

This approach, which was entirely based on a wish to talk and ensure coordination, will have helped to ensure further awareness of the options open to victims and their families, the media, the different authorities and public authorities in the combat against sectarian aberrations.

In other words: "Sectarian aberrations exist, and victims exist, and many types of tools exist to fight back; not all elements can be handled exclusively at local level and from a judicial point of view due to the particularities of the phenomenon. Therefore, as we can act, then let us act, each in our own roles and with due respect for individual liberties and French law".

From this point of view, what better way to end the annual report for 2008 than with the letter addressed to the Chairman of Miviludes on 6 January 2009, following his trip to Dijon, by a friend of victims controlled by "Amour et Miséricorde":

6 January 2009

Dear Chairman,

I would like to say how grateful I am for your trip to our region to visit "Amour et Miséricorde". Your action changed things considerably after a period of stagnation over the last decade.

Suffering families now see light at the end of the tunnel thanks to you, and hope that things will turn out all right. This may take time, but we hope that the current initiative will have positive results.

This group must appear small compared to the main groups you monitor, and yet you selected them for your first trip, and we are very grateful for your attention.

As the new year takes shape, I hope that Miviludes obtains the resources it needs to effectively limit the sectarian phenomenon.

Kind regards.

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Law no 2008-1187 of 14 November 2008, relating to the status of witnesses before parliamentary investigatory commissions

LAWS

Law no 2008-1187 of 14 November 2008, relating to the status of witnesses before parliamentary investigatory commissions (1)

NOR: PRMX0908513L

The National assembly and the Senate adopted.

The President of the Republic promulgates the law, with the following content:

Article 1

The following sub-paragraph is inserted after the second sub-paragraph of article 41 of the law of 29 July 1981 on the freedom of the press:

"No comments or texts submitted to an investigatory commission launched by and in the context of the National assembly or Senate, by an individual bound to submit these comments or texts, may give rise to law suits claiming slander, injury or defamation, unless the comments or texts in question are not relevant to the purpose of the investigation. This also applies to the reports of the public meetings of the investigatory commission drafted in good faith."

Article 2

The third sub-paragraph of paragraph II of article 6 of order n° 58-1100 of 17 November 1958 on the functioning of parliamentary assemblies is completed with a phrase drafted as follows:

"The provisions of the third sub-paragraph of article 41 of the law of 29 July 1883 on the freedom of the press apply."

This law will be enforced as French law.

Paris, 14 November 2008.

Nicolas Sarkozy

By the President of the Republic

Prime Minister

François Fillon

*Minister of the Interior,
of overseas and territorial authorities,
Michèle Alliot Marie*

Keeper of the Seals, Minister of Justice

Rachida Dati

(1) *Preparatory works*: law n° 2008-1187

National Assembly:

Bill n° 325;

Report by Jean-Luc Warsmann, on behalf of the Law commission, n° 740;

Discussion and adoption on 3 April 2003 (TA n° 118);

Senate:

Bill adopted by the National Assembly n° 260 (2007-2008);

Report by René Garrec, on behalf of the Law commission, n° 371 (2007-2008);

Discussion and adoption on 10 April 2008 (TA n° 106);

National Assembly:

Bill, modified by the Senate, n° 950;

Report by Jean-Luc Warsmann, on behalf of the Law commission, n° 1147;

Discussion and adoption on 4 November 2003 (TA n° 203);

1

Circular issued by the Ministry of the Interior, Overseas and territorial authorities, dated 25 February 2008 on the "Combat against sectarian aberrations"»

MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR, OF OVERSEAS AND TERRITORIAL AUTHORITIES,

General secretariat

*DIVISION OF MODERNISATION AND TERRITORIAL ACTION
SUB-DIVISION OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS AND ASSOCIATIONS*

PARIS, 25 February 2008

**Minister of the Interior,
of overseas and territorial authorities**

to the attention of

**Prefects
Police of Paris**

NOR/INT/A/08/00044/C

OBJECT: Combating sectarian aberrations

Action against sectarian aberrations requires strict methodologies and discipline if the facts prove a breach of public order, or an assault on property or individuals. The purpose of this circular is to reiterate the legal weapons available and ensure you carry out coordinated action against sectarian aberrations.

In view of the changing landscape for sectarian aberrations, it is important to constantly boost action by public authorities and adapt the methods used to combat these changes. The legal weapons available in this combat appear adequate in terms of both texts and case law. The difficulty lies in the enforcement of these weapons, based on criminal and proven facts.

1. The principle: Freedom of opinion and belief

The term sect, although regularly used, is a de facto concept rather than a de jure concept. In legal terms, membership of any movement whatsoever is considered as freedom of opinion and protected by the constitution.

Founding texts:

- article 10 of the Declaration of Human Rights and Citizens of 26 August 1789 states that *"Everyone is entitled to hold their own opinions, religious or otherwise, unless this disrupts the public order described by law"*;
- article 1 of the Constitution of 4 October 1958: France, a secular state, *"guarantees that all citizens are equal when facing the law, without discrimination based on origin, race or religion. The State respects all beliefs"*.

In the same line, article 9 of the European Convention of Human Rights stipulates that: *"Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance. Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs shall be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of public safety, for the protection of public order, health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others."*

In accordance with the principles of French law, the combat against sectarian aberrations does not aim to stigmatise certain beliefs. This is confirmed by article 1 of the law of 9 December 1905 on the separation of the Church and the State, which reiterates that *"The French Republic guarantees freedom of conscience. The State guarantees the free practice of religions subject only to the restrictions prescribed (...) to ensure public order"*.

The law of 9 December 1905 (art. 19) specifies that a cultural association must be exclusively dedicated to the practice of a religion. The State council has also specified, in the form of case law, the notion of cultural association. In addition to criteria based on the number of members and territorial scope defined in the law of 1905 and the decree of 16 March 1906, the State council identified three key criteria for the recognition of this status: the practice of a religion, the exclusive nature of the cultural object of the association, respect for public order.

However, the field of sectarian aberrations cannot be limited to cultural associations.

In the absence of the definition of a sectarian movement, the notion of public order prevails. The determination of facts breaching public order, or assaulting property or individuals, must be used as the basis for the combat against sectarian aberrations. Case law has established that restrictions made in view of protecting public order must be applied on a case by case basis according to the actual circumstances and duly proven facts.

2. Judicial weapons to combat groups threatening public order

France has an extensive range of judicial weapons to combat sectarian aberrations. Different measures may be taken against movements which behave in a manner which threatens public order.

1*) Administrative dissolution

The law of 10 January 1936 *on guerrillas and private armies* enables the French President to dissolve some groups or associations by decree via the Council of Ministers, based on a threat to the French State, collaboration with the enemy, provocation of racial hatred or terrorism.

This provision is, however, rarely applied for groups involved in sectarian aberrations.

2*) Judicial dissolution

Article 3 of the law of 1 July 1901 on contracts of association provides that "*all association based on a cause or object which is illicit, illegal or immoral, or which aims to threaten national territory or a republic form of governance is null and void*". The dissolution of an association of this type may be ordered by a District court.

In practice, this provision is rarely applied for sectarian movements operating as associations, who ensure that illicit activities are not explicitly mentioned as a statutory object.

The law of 12 June 2001 (About-Picard law) provides for a further context for judicial dissolution. Article 1 of this law provides that "*the dissolution of any legal person, regardless of legal status or object, may be ordered if the activities of this person aim to or have the effect of creating, maintaining or exploiting the psychological or physical control of the participants in these activities, if final criminal sentencing has been dictated against the legal person or its de jure or de facto directors*". Details are indicated in this article (including voluntary or involuntary assault on the life or physical or mental integrity of the person, endangering of a person, the illegal practice of medicine, advertising under false pretences, fraud, and the fraudulent abuse of ignorance or weakness).

Repeat criminal sentencing must enable the dissolution of a sectarian group. However, no dissolution procedure has as yet been launched in application of this law.

3) Criminal sanctions

Several examples of criminal offences covering sectarian aberrations exist.

a) Assaults on natural persons

- *Non-assistance of an individual in danger* (art. 223-6 of the Penal code). On 3 June 2005, the Quimper Court of Assizes, sentenced parents, followers of a sectarian movement and guilty of exercising an unregulated therapeutic practice, to 5 years imprisonment, with a suspended sentence of 52 months, and to probation for failure to render assistance to a person in danger.

With regard the refusal of blood transfusions by adults, I reiterate that the State council, in a decision on 16 August 2002, stated that "the refusal to receive a blood transfusion is the exercise of a fundamental right" (1) and that the Kouchner law of March 2002 reinforced the right of an adult patient to discuss treatment. This right was previously part of case law for the State council.

With regard children and blood transfusions more specifically, I reiterate that in case of an emergency, sub-paragraph 5 of article L 111-4 of the law of March 2002 provides that "*The consent of the minor or adult under guardianship must be systematically requested if the former is able to indicate their preference or participate in the decision. Should a parental figure or legal guardian decide to refuse treatment, and should this refusal imply potentially serious consequences for the health of the minor or the adult under guardianship, the medical practitioner will administer essential treatment*".

(1) *Valérie Feuillatay and Isabelle Feuillatay, CE 16 August 2002.*

Consequently, the law is clear, the child has the right to give his or her opinion, however the health of the child prevails, even if the parents oppose treatment. The law of 2002 therefore allows doctors to provide treatment without need to ask the judicial authorities to order educational assistance provisions prior to taking action, on the contrary to the case previously. In emergency situations, doctors are legally empowered to legitimately assume parental authority.

- *Sexual assault on minors* (article 27-25 of the Penal code). Some directors of movements have been found guilty of sexual assault on minors, with the lifestyle within the group sometimes implying aggravating circumstances due to rape by a person with authority – (Cass. crim 9 December 1998 and TGI of Versailles of 2 December 2005);

- *Abuse of weakness*. Article 223-15-2 of the Penal code sanctions the fraudulent abuse of ignorance or weakness in minors or particularly vulnerable people (age, sickness or disability). Since the About Picard law of 12 June 2001, law now protects individuals which are mentally or physically controlled due to the effect of serious or recurrent pressure or techniques intended to alter judgement (e.g. purification sessions, extended periods of fasting, recurrent initiation sessions, etc.). Sentencing of the founder of the Neo phare movement in Nantes having encouraged one of the followers to commit suicide (TGI of Nantes, 25 November 2004).

- *Family Law*. Many disputes arise when couples separate due to the "sect" membership of one of the spouses. The ECHR in Strasbourg interprets article 8 of the European Convention of Human Rights as prohibiting a court from removing parental rights from an adult exclusively on the grounds of membership of the Jehovah's Witnesses (ECHR, 23 June 1993, *Hoffman c/Austria*. In the same way, article 2 of additional protocol one of the ECHR indicates that the State (...) shall respect the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions".

b) Assaults on property frequently handled by courts

- Fraud (article 313-1 of the Penal code). We could mention the example of a doctor who uses his qualifications in homeopathy to encourage some of his more mentally vulnerable patients to join a doctrine, or spiritual trend which could ease their suffering (Court of appeal of Besançon, 7 May 1997).

- Abuse of trust (article 314-1 of the Penal code). These assaults on property are regularly reported in some movements offering personal development services or means to substantially and rapidly improve the potential of customers or members. We could also mention breaches of the code of Public Health (illegal practice of medicine; sentencing by the Court of Appeal of Chambéry on 1 July 2004 for fraud and complicity in the illegal practice of medicine), the construction code, the general tax code (particularly for fiscal fraud as defined in article 1741 of the CGI), or the labour code (excessive or illegal nature of work), or legislation on schooling obligations, or custom's obligations, notably with regard the declaration of international movements of capital (article 464 of the customs' code).

c) Extension of the penal liability of legal persons to some penal offenses

The law of 12 June 2001 extended the liability of legal persons to several offenses generally committed within sectarian movements. This covers:

- *The illegal practice of medicine* (article L 372 and subsequent of the code of Public Health). Sentences were subject to aggravating factors;
- *Fraud and falsification* (articles L213-1 to L213-4 of the Consumer's code);

- Threats (articles 222-17, 222-18 and 222-18-2 of the Penal code). Threats are made by directors of sects and target members or former members who wish to launch legal proceedings against the group;
- *Non-respect for the dead* (articles 225-17, 225-18 and 225-18-1 of the Penal code) within so-called Satanic sects;
- *Attempted murder* (article 221-1 and subsequent of the Penal code) such as poisoning, killing, assassination, etc.) ;
- *Torture and barbaric acts* (article 222-1 of the Penal code);
- *Rapes and sexual assaults* (articles 222-23 and 222-22 and subsequent of the Penal code);
- *Abandon of family* (article 227-3 of the Penal code);
- *Prevention of assistance and non-assistance* (articles 223-5 and 223-7-1 of the Penal code).

In addition, article 19 of the law of 12 June 2001 restricts the possibility for sects found guilty of an offense to publicise their activities.

Finally, the law of 15 June 2000, reinforcing the presumption of innocence and the rights of victims, had added an article to the code of penal procedure, enabling the defence associations working against sectarian movements to position themselves as plaintiffs in the context of certain offenses breaching Human rights (article 2-17 of the code of penal procedure).

Texts and case law therefore provide the public authorities with adequate judicial weapons to sanction sectarian aberrations.

Difficulty arises when it comes to the enforcement of these judicial provisions, which requires the establishment of proven facts representing a breach of public order, property and individuals. Therefore, the establishment of proof is often confounded by the absence of complaints, the rare testimonies, variations in versions of events over time, the complexity of legal proceedings and the difficulty to determine from which point a member of a sect suspected of sectarian aberrations loses their free will and becomes a controlled victim (Cass. crim 19 September 2000). In the same way, victims launching law suits often drop the case half way through.

The circular of the Prime Minister dated 27 May 2005 relative to the combat against sectarian aberrations clearly indicated the need to abandon any reference to lists in the search for sectarian aberrations. Priority should be accorded to logical facts. This approach has the benefit of extending the field of investigations without limiting cover to groups which have already been identified.

I therefore ask you to boost State action in the combat against sectarian aberrations and, to this end, to bring together the services concerned within a small working group. In fact, in the context of the simplification of regional commissions, the combat against sectarian aberrations has been transferred to the Department council for the prevention of delinquency, the combat against drugs, the combat against sectarian aberrations and assistance for victims. However, to ensure effectiveness, a specific working group should be created. I would like this group to take inspiration from regional task forces when determining its working methods, as these groups have proved their efficiency. This working group will be used to centralise and compare information on any sectarian aberrations likely to be subject to prosecution after reporting to the State prosecutor.

I bring your attention to the importance of legal guarantees for the action taken to combat sectarian aberrations. The authors of sectarian aberrations often benefit from legal proceedings which lead to the dismissal of the claims of State services due to a lack of evidence, or, worse still, the services are sentenced.

Please report back to me on the creation and works of this working group before 15 April. This group must meet regularly as required and at least once each quarter.

MICHELE ALLIOT-MARIE

Circular issued by the Ministry of the Interior, Overseas and territorial authorities, dated 23 January 2009 on the "Guidelines by the Ministry of the Interior on the combat against sectarian aberrations in 2009"

MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR
OF OVERSEAS
AND TERRITORIAL AUTHORITIES

DIVISION OF CIVIL LIBERTIES
AND LEGAL AFFAIRS
Sub-division of civil liberties

PARIS, 23 JAN 2009

MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR
OF OVERSEAS
AND
TERRITORIAL AUTHORITIES

to the attention of

POLICE OF PARIS
PREFECTS
(for attribution)

PREFECT, SECRETARY GENERAL
DIVISION OF CIVIL LIBERTIES
AND LEGAL AFFAIRS
GENERAL DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL POLICE
GENERAL DIRECTOR OF THE MILITARY POLICE
(for information)

NOR: INTD0900022C

OBJECT: Guidelines for the Minister of the Interior on the combat against sectarian aberrations in 2009

Ref.: Circular NORINTA0800044C of 25 February 2008.

Circular NOR INT A 0800044 C of 25 February 2008 on the combat against sectarian aberrations reiterated the judicial weapons available for a coordinated battle against sectarian aberrations. This circular requested that you boost State action in this field on this basis, by rapidly bringing together the different services involved within small operational working groups.

The analysis of your reports on the application of this circular and the need to apply a strict methodology to repress any form of sectarian aberrations led to the issue of the following guidelines for 2009.

1/ The circular of the Prime Minister of 27 May 2005 on the combat against sectarian aberrations clearly indicated the need to switch from references to lists of movements liable to commit sectarian aberrations to a logic aiming to identify and qualify facts which can be prosecuted in judicial terms. Please guide the action of your services in this direction and launch initiatives based on the provisions defined in my circular of 25 February 2008.

2/ Compliance with these guidelines is a priority for 2009. To this end, a specific working group, similar to regional task forces, should meet regularly to enable centralisation, comparison and exchange relating to any sectarian aberrations which are liable to be prosecuted, subject to the authority of the State prosecutor. This specific working group must only bring together the State services concerned to allow the group to be fully operational.

Vigilance in the field of sectarian aberrations is now part of the assignments of the Departmental council for the prevention of delinquency, the combat against drugs, the combat against sectarian aberrations and assistance for victims. This will provide a context for dialogue with associations helping victims, with reference to specific points on the agenda when necessary.

3/ The application of these guidelines will ensure the judicial framework and effectiveness of action taken in the combat against sectarian aberrations.

You will therefore base your future action on the circular of 25 February 2008, which reiterates all judicial action which may be taken against groups threatening public order. The services assigned to the central administration of the Ministry of the Interior relate to advice, training and assistance. These services will attempt to provide any support you may need, in coordination with the other Ministerial departments concerned, such as the Interministerial Mission of Vigilance and Combat against Sectarian Aberrations, when necessary.

I am convinced of your personal commitment to the enforcement of these instructions, which represent the guidelines of the Ministry of the Interior in the combat against sectarian aberrations for 2009.

MICHELE ALLIOT-MARIE

Parliamentary activities

- 1 – Law no 2008-1187 of 14 November 2008, relating to the status of witnesses before parliamentary investigatory commissions, voted at second reading on 4 November 2008 (Official journal of 18 November 2008)

The parliament unanimously adopted this text, intended to protect witnesses from judicial threats for defamation, insult or slander, by guaranteeing them immunity, providing their comments are relevant to the object of the enquiry. This bill proposed by the President of the National Assembly, Bernard Accoyer, followed on from legal action launched by some sectarian movements against witnesses, institutional actors and former followers, who had spoken out before the investigatory commission on "Minors, victims of sects".

- 2 – Written questions

During the last 12 months, up to the end of December 2008, just over sixty written questions relating to the sectarian problem have been received, of which about forty were answered. These statistics show the sustained interest of MPs in this field.

Many of these questions related to the report by the parliamentary investigatory commission on "Sects and minors" and were answered in 2008. In addition, the media controversy over the handling of the sectarian problem, triggered in February 2008 by the comments of the director of the cabinet of the French President, led to more than twenty questions on the policy applied for vigilance and the combat against sectarian aberrations and the future of Miviludes. The report Justice and sectarian aberrations, submitted in July 2008 to the Prime Minister by Georges Fenech, now the Miviludes Chairman, was the subject of six questions, as yet unanswered. Finally, a dozen MPs, trapped by regular lobbying by a sect well known for its criticism of psychiatry, contacted the Minister of Health on the issue of hospitalisations without consent.

Readers can find a selection of questions below, whose answers are reproduced in full or partially, and reflect an innovative topic:

- A - Policy of vigilance and combat against sectarian aberrations

- MIVILUDES

Question 1: Jean-Pierre Kucheida brought the attention of the Minister of the Interior, Overseas and Territorial authorities to the announcement of the dissolution of Miviludes (Interministerial Mission of Vigilance and Combat against Sectarian Aberrations). The Government, in application of a strict and partial reading of the law of 1905 on the separation of the Church and the State, intends to guarantee absolute cultural freedom, which would benefit sectarian lobbying. However, "an official and highly specialised sectarian structure is required for the sectarian question, to study changes in the sectarian landscape in view of the prevention of sectarian initiatives targeting French citizens", which is precisely the mandate of Miviludes. Associations defining the victims of sects are concerned by the possible disappearance of Miviludes, or the restriction of its mandate, as the preventive action of Miviludes is far more effective than the only other alternative apparently available today: repression. The financial demands of sects must not be heard under any circumstances. They use these tactics to obtain some kind of credibility within our society. We must not forget that the finances they use to obtain religious status are obtained by abusing the vulnerable, unsettled or even totally desperate. These funds are collected via manipulation and give no honour to the causes or metaphysical ideals proclaimed by these organisations. These funds endanger the lives and survival of contained "disciples". The groups take advantage of weakness and create a particularly profitable trade on the backs of the vulnerable. France cannot simply repress and police these groups in the context of the combat against sectarian aberrations. Miviludes has committed itself to this assigned task, and should not now be stripped of its functions: providing objective and complete information on the activities of sects to prevent aberrations. Consequently, it is essential to extend the activities of Miviludes, as this body protects a fundamental and constitutional right for each and every citizen: the safety and security of individuals and property.

Answer 2: *the risk of sectarian aberrations is a source of concern for the Government. These risks do not only relate to religion, but also arise in a wide range of sectors throughout society. In this context, the Prime Minister has confirmed the need to approach this issue within an Interministerial context and reiterated the benefit of maintaining the existence of the Interministerial mission of vigilance and combat against sectarian aberrations. He also highlighted the need to reinforce the effectiveness of this policy for vigilance which cannot be limited to prevention. With this in mind, Georges Fenech, magistrate and former chairman of the investigatory commission on sects and minors, was entrusted with the assessment of the judicial weapons available in the context of the combat against sectarian aberrations for the authors of aberrations and their victims. This mission particularly enabled him to draft a report on the application of the About-Picard law of June 2001, to analyse the training of magistrates and their awareness of sectarian aberrations, to make proposals, and to consider the role of associations. In this same line of thought, Mr Fenech was recently appointed as Chairman of Miviludes, demonstrating the importance which the Government accords to this structure and its work.*

1 - Question n° 19841, by Jean-Pierre Kucheida, deputy for Pas-de-Calais (Official Journal of 1 April 2008, pg. 2802).

2 - Answer published in the Official Journal of 11 November 2008, pg. 9736.

Question 3: Bernard Cazeneuve brought the attention of the Prime Minister to fears on sectarian aberrations. A certain number of associations have expressed their strong attachment to the Interministerial Mission of Vigilance and Combat against Sectarian Aberrations (Miviludes) which exists since 2002. They fear that this structure will now disappear and be replaced with one single structure for the defence of all rights. Mr Cazeneuve reiterated that the State must continue to monitor sectarian behaviour and encourage the coordination of prevention via Miviludes. Finally, the action of Miviludes provides general information on the sectarian phenomenon, at a time when complaints from victims demonstrate that sects are no longer keeping to the religious landscape, but are increasingly targeting the health, personal development, and humanitarian sectors, not to mention education, sport and culture. Consequently, he would like the Government to specify its intentions with regard the future of Miviludes (Interministerial Mission of Vigilance and Combat against Sectarian Aberrations) and what provisions could be adopted to improve and encourage its initiatives.

Answer 4: *The Prime Minister recently confirmed the benefits of maintaining, or reinforcing, the Interministerial mission of vigilance and combat against sectarian aberrations and its assigned tasks. No provision of decree n° 2002-1392 of 28 November 2002 implies that this vigilance must be restricted to religion.*

Question 5: Jean Grellier notified the Secretary of State responsible for relations with the Parliament of the publications on psychiatry recently received by MPs. A few weeks ago, a glossy brochure with a high-impact DVD on the diagnosis of the "merits" of psychiatric practices was distributed to all MPs. The legal text for the brochure clearly indicated the source as the Church of Scientology. According to parliamentary report n° 2468, the Church of Scientology is undeniably identified as a sectarian movement. Sects may therefore freely proselytise in our institutions where the concepts of secularity and intelligent rationalism are prerequisites for our republican principles. Mr Grellier asked for an explanation on this situation, which would appear to be an extremely upsetting paradox to say the least.

3 - Question n° 19451, by Bernard Cazeneuve, deputy for the Manche (Official Journal official of 25 March 2008, pg. 2494).

4 - Answer published in the Official Journal of 22 April 2008, pg. 3429.

5 - Question n° 16493, by Jean Grellier, deputy for Deux-Sèvres (Official Journal of 12 February 2008, pg. 1117)

Answer 6: Positive law includes no definition of sects and therefore no judicial consequences for sects. article 10 of the Declaration of Human Rights and Citizens of 26 August 1789 states that "Everyone is entitled to hold their own opinions, religious or otherwise, unless this disrupts the public order prescribed by law" and therefore clearly lays down the principle of State neutrality towards religious opinions. For this reason, all philosophical approaches may freely express their opinions within the context of the law. However, while the French Republic guarantees the freedom of conscience and religious practice, it represses the aberrations performed by some groups, which can be prosecuted as multiple criminal offences under current French law. The title of the "Mission of vigilance and combat against sectarian aberrations" created pursuant to the decree of 28 November 2002, resumes the position of public authorities in the field; this same position also led to the preparation of law n° 2001-504 of 12 June 2001, which aims to reinforce the prevention and repression of sectarian organisations breaching human rights and fundamental freedoms.

- Provisions: prefecture working groups, regional task forces and judicial correspondents

Question 7: Véronique Besse brought the attention of the Minister of the Interior, Overseas and Territorial authorities to the Interministerial Mission of Vigilance and Combat against Sectarian Aberrations (Miviludes). In fact, despite growing awareness of this problem facing society, thanks to which a number of solutions have been found, sectarian aberrations are not an exclusive feature of the religious environment, and religion is often used as a mask to hide behind. The sectarian phenomenon is currently also widespread in the sectors of health, personal development, business training, science and culture. The State must ensure vigilance and prevention via Miviludes, which must continue to constantly monitor sectarian behaviour. She asked what provisions could be adopted to improve the impact of Miviludes.

Answer 8: The Interministerial Mission of Vigilance and Combat against Sectarian Aberrations (Miviludes), founded by the decree of 28 November 2002, reports to the Prime Minister. With regard its assignment, on 25 February 2008, the Minister of the Interior, Overseas and Territorial authorities addressed a circular to prefects, reiterating that information collected in the monitoring of movements whose actions may be prosecuted, must be compared by the services on the working group dedicated to sectarian aberrations within the Departmental councils for the prevention of delinquency, assistance for victims, the combat against drugs, the combat against sectarian aberrations and domestic violence, in a similar manner to regional task forces. Action taken at department-level, in close collaboration with public prosecutors, must lead to the collection and distribution of information on sectarian aberrations which is as complete as possible and contribute to Interministerial action in this field.

6 - Answer published in the Official Journal of 20 May 2008, pg. 4230

7 - Question n° 19845, by Véronique Besse, deputy for Vendée (Official Journal of 1 April 2008, pg. 2803).

8 - Answer published in the Official Journal of 18 November 2008, pg. 9982.

Questions ⁹: Éric Ciotti questioned the Minister of the Interior, Overseas and Territorial authorities on the proposal made in the report under the title Justice and sectarian aberrations submitted by Georges Fenech to the Prime Minister relating to the creation of regional task forces on sectarian aberrations in each department. He asked for the Minister's opinion on this proposal and if further details on implementation were available.

Pierre Morel-A-l'Huisser brought the attention of the Minister of the Interior, Overseas and Territorial authorities to the restructuring of general information services and the Division of territorial surveillance (DST). He asked if the creation of a regional task force on sectarian aberrations in each department was planned.

Answer ¹⁰: The police services and the gendarmerie have long been invested in work against sectarian risks. Within the national police force, movements of this type likely to breach public order are monitored by the general information services for public security while the Central Division of domestic information contributes to the monitoring of organisations liable to threaten national security. In Paris, these cases are handled by the Information Division of the Paris police service. The Central division of judicial police, including the Central office for the repression of violence against individuals, includes an investigatory group for sects, which is competent for brainwashing practices representing criminal offenses. The gendarmerie contributes via its technical service for judicial research and documentation, which analyses sectarian aberrations based on information collected locally, while judicial enquiries are organised by the different units. The police and the gendarmerie also benefit from "sect referral agents" within the Interministerial Mission of Vigilance and Combat Against Sectarian Aberrations (Miviludes) which reports to the Prime Minister. The Minister of the Interior, Overseas and Territorial authorities has decided to boost the actions of the security forces in this field and to adapt the methods used to face these ever-changing challenges, relating to more general initiatives (training, personal support, paramedical activities, etc.) This Minister therefore organised a meeting in February 2008, bringing together Prefects, General directors of police services and the national gendarmerie and the Head of the Paris police force, to ensure that these forces increase their vigilance and investment in this field by reinforcing their observation, information and systematic reporting methods, and reminded these forces of the need to ensure the proper treatment of victims. This Minister asked the judicial police to pay close attention to these issues to ensure that legal proceedings are launched whenever sectarian initiatives are liable to be qualified as criminal offenses. To this end, the Minister also decided to implement a global approach to the combat against sectarian aberrations, based on the regional task forces, particularly to enable the reporting of fiscal or financial breaches of obligations. The different State services will henceforth be invested in each department by Prefects, in coordination with State prosecutors, to combine their actions with those of the security forces and approach the phenomenon in a coordinated Interministerial framework.

9 - Question n° 33133 by Éric Ciotti, deputy for Alpes-Maritimes (Official Journal of 21 October 2008, pg. 8953) and question n° 32586, by Pierre Morel-A-l'Huisser, deputy for Lozère (Official Journal of 14 October 2008, pg. 8738).

10 - Answer applicable for questions n° 33133 and 32586 published in the Official Journal of 24 February 2009, pg. 1856.

A circular was addressed to Prefects on 25 February for this purpose, particularly reminding the Prefects of the need for judicial discipline when handling cases in this field. In addition, the monitoring of movements whose actions are liable to lead to prosecution must now be centralised, together with the comparison of information by the State services concerned, in a small working group dedicated to this issue, within Departmental councils for the prevention of delinquency, assistance for victims, the combat against drugs, the combat against sectarian aberrations and domestic violence. This Minister requests that this group should use working methods based on those of regional task forces. While the creation of actual regional task forces as such on sectarian aberrations in each department is not planned, a new method will be launched to combat this type of aberrations, with innovative operating modes, globally based on those of regional task forces.

Question ¹¹: Éric Ciotti questioned the Keeper of the Seals, Minister of Justice, on the proposal made in the report submitted by Georges Fenech to the Prime Minister under the title Justice and sectarian aberrations involving the creation of a sectarian aberrations correspondent within regional divisions for the legal protection of minors. He asked for the Minister's opinion on this proposal and if further details on implementation were available.

Answer ¹²: *This question brings the attention of the Keeper of the Seals, the Minister of Justice, to the proposal made by Georges Fenech relating to the creation of a correspondent for sectarian aberrations within the Interregional divisions for the legal protection of minors. This recommendation is useful and complements the circular of 1 December 1998, in which the Ministry of Justice established a referral magistrate responsible for coordinating the identification and judicial treatment of sectarian aberrations at regional level within each office of the attorney general. This recommendation also reflects the conclusions of the report of 12 December 2006 by the parliamentary investigatory commission on sectarian movements and the consequences of their practices on the physical and mental health of minors, which highlighted that the existing judicial and administrative provisions required completion to ensure the full protection of minors which are victims of sectarian organisations. The appointment of priority contacts within specialised courts and vigilance teams within the Interregional divisions of the Division of legal protection for minors represents a long-awaited actual improvement to the provisions protecting children and preventing delinquency. This appointment is planned for before end-2008* ¹³.

11 - Question n° 33134 by Éric Ciotti, deputy for Alpes-Maritimes (Official Journal of 21 October 2008, pg. 8957).

12 - Answer published in the Official Journal of 23 December 2008, pg. 11181.

13 - Decision of 10 February 2009 (Official Journal of 5 March 2009).

- B – Minors in danger: legal proceedings launched by grandparents

Question ¹⁴: Bérengère Poletti drew the attention of the Keeper of the Seals, Minister of Justice, to report no 3507 submitted to the government on behalf of the Investigatory commission relating to the influence of sectarian movements and the consequences of their practices on the physical and mental health of minors. This report proposes that the grandparents of a child should be authorised to directly refer a matter to a children's judge when the health, safety or morality of this child are endangered. In fact, in this case, article 375 of the civil code enables the parents, the guardian, the minor or the attorney general to refer a matter to the juvenile court judge in view of educational provisions for the good of the child. If grandparents deem that their grandchildren are in danger due to the education given to their grandchildren, they may contact the State prosecutor who may refer to the juvenile court judge. However, generally speaking, sectarian aberrations concerning minors must be rapidly counteracted. It would therefore appear necessary to modify the above article, to encourage action by grandparents, if they are concerned by the living conditions of their grandchildren. She also likes to know both the position of the government regarding this proposal and how soon it will be implemented.

Answer ¹⁵: *This question brings the attention of the Keeper of the Seals, Minister of Justice, to the situation of minors in danger due to sectarian aberrations and on the possibility to allow their grandparents to contact the juvenile court judge directly if the health, safety or morality of a child are in danger. This recommendation, presented in the form of an amendment to law no 2007-293 of 5 March 2007 reforming the protection of childhood, was the subject of a negative opinion by the government, who deemed that grandparents already disposed of significant means of recourse. In fact, if the sect membership of the parents leads to a rupture with the grandparents, the latter may contact the family court judge to claim their rights to a personal relation with the child pursuant to article 371-4 of the civil code, which provides that: "The child is entitled to maintain personal relations with older relatives." This provision has also been reinforced by this law, which gained a sub-paragraph 2 indicating that "only the interests of the child can prevent the exercise of this right". In addition, the list of individuals authorised to contact the juvenile court judge directly, as defined in article 375 of the civil code, corresponds to the list of individuals liable to be involved in the educational assistance provisions. These provisions relate to the modus operandi for parental authority and are primarily intended to apply to individuals holding parental authority: parents, guardians; or individuals directly concerned by this modus operandi; the minor, the person or service responsible for the minor. All of these parties may therefore contact the judge directly. All other individuals must report the situation to the State prosecutor, enabling the latter to fully play the assigned role and filter and direct the proceedings based on the information provided.*

14 - Question n° 3406 by Bérengère Poletti, deputy for Ardennes (Official Journal of 14 August 2007, pg. 5232).

15 - Answer published in the Official Journal of 17 June 2008, pg. 5221.

In fact, with regard minors living in sectarian organisations, the State prosecutor may opt to order a criminal investigation as a priority, in addition to referring the matter to the juvenile court judge, and, in extremely urgent cases, remove a minor from their natural environment to ensure their immediate physical and mental safety. In addition, the State prosecutor may decide that the situation reported does not require judicial involvement for the protection of the child, and is an administrative situation. In this case, the services of the Departmental council may be notified. The direct referral to the juvenile court judge by grandparents, even for minors potentially suffering sectarian aberrations, would not therefore appear to be the only possible solution. In addition, article 375 of the civil code also provides that the juvenile court judge may, on an exceptional basis, be directly and automatically contacted. This provision may apply if the grandparents inform the juvenile court judge that their grandchildren are facing imminent and severe danger directly. The most recent report of the Interministerial mission of vigilance and combat against sectarian aberrations reiterates the key points of these provisions, which currently appear to satisfy the concerns indicated by the MP in an appropriate manner.

- C – Health

- Assessment of psychotherapies

Question ¹⁶: Bérengère Poletti drew the attention of the Minister of Health, Youth and Sport to report no 3507 submitted to the government on behalf of the Investigatory commission relating to the influence of sectarian movements and the consequences of their practices on the physical and mental health of minors. This report proposes the definition of good practices for psychotherapists in the field of public health. In fact, the commission considers that the qualification "psychotherapist" should imply the acceptance of a code of good practices, which would enable the enforcement of a code of ethics for psychotherapy. These rules should mainly insist on the consideration of the primary interests of the child. This recommendation should be implemented in the context of an organisation of psychotherapy within a professional board, similar to the professional boards of some paramedical professions. Disciplinary bodies would ensure compliance with the code of good practices and therapeutic techniques could be assessed. She also likes to know both the position of the government regarding these proposals and how soon they will be implemented.

¹⁶ - Question n° 3413 by Bérengère Poletti, deputy for Ardennes (Official Journal of 14 August 2007, pg. 5266).

Answer ¹⁷: *The Government is concerned by the quality of the care received in the context of psychotherapy. The assessment of psychotherapies is indeed a complex problem. Over and beyond the benefits of psychotherapies, the definition of good practices requires preparatory work in view of determining the most appropriate assessment methods. In this context, the Supreme health authority (HAS) has accepted to summarise existing methods for the assessment of psychotherapies, based on publications, with particular focus on methods looking at practices. In addition, a clinical research network, based on practices, was co-financed in 2008 by INSERM and the Ministry of Health, in view of assessing practices in psychotherapy and networking professionals to improve these practices. While awaiting the completion of these works and in view of the need to provide information for users on the level of training of professionals wishing to use the title of psychotherapist now, the draft enforcement decree for article 52 of the law of 9 August 2004 relative to Public health policy and aiming to regulate the use of this title, was transmitted to the State council recently. In this context, the proposal of report n° 3507 on behalf of the investigatory commission on the influence of sectarian movements and the consequences of their practices on the physical and mental health of minors, aiming to ensure that those receiving the qualification psychotherapist accept to apply a code of good practices, would be difficult to apply at this stage.*

- Regulations for psychotherapists

Question ¹⁸: Bérengère Poletti drew the attention of the Minister of Health, Youth and Sport to report no 3507 submitted to the government on behalf of the Investigatory commission relating to the influence of sectarian movements and the consequences of their practices on the physical and mental health of minors. This report proposes the definition of conditions for use of the qualification psychotherapist in the field of public health. The investigatory commission considers the provisions in the draft decree on the use of the qualification psychotherapist inadequate. The commission considers that doctors in medicine, psychologists and psychoanalysts must hold theoretical and practical training in clinical psychopathology, in accordance with the provisions of article 52 of law n° 2004-806 of 9 August 2004 on public health policies. The MP would also like to know both the position of the government regarding this proposal and how soon it will be implemented.

Answer ¹⁹: *Article 52 of the law of 9 August 2004, relating to public health policies, aims to offer to professionals, who account for the majority of inquirers, as well as the public, information on the quality and the level of training of professionals using the title "psychotherapist". The idea is not to create a new profession, or to regulate training and practices in psychotherapy, but to specify the conditions in which this title may be used. The new version of this draft enforcement decree for article 52 provides the necessary guarantees to ensure quality care for vulnerable patients or those with a mental pathology.*

17 - Answer published in the Official Journal of 4 November 2008, pg. 9582.

18 - Question n° 3414 by Bérengère Poletti, deputy for Ardennes (Official Journal of 14 August 2007, pg. 5267).

19 - Answer published in the Official Journal of 4 November 2008, pg. 9583.

All professionals wishing to use the title psychotherapist, whether entitled to be on the departmental register or otherwise, must satisfy the minimum theoretical training requirement in clinical psychopathology of 400 hours and hold at least five months of practical training in the same field. The principle of partial or total exemptions to this training requirement for doctors, psychologists and psychoanalysts registered on a professional directory is also provided for to integrate the knowledge and skills acquired by these professionals. In addition, the reinforcement of the content of training specifications and the definition of the list of approved training courses for the title of psychotherapist in the form of a joint order by Ministers of Health and Higher education will guarantee the quality of the training received. These different elements were discussed with the different partners, and a draft enforcement order is currently being prepared on this basis 20.

- D – Movement: Tradition, Family, Property (TFP)

Question 21: Thierry Mariani reminded the Minister of the Interior, Overseas and Territorial authorities of the association Tradition, Family, Property. This duly declared association has its head office at 12 avenue de Lowendal, 75007 Paris. This association was indeed listed as a sect by the parliamentary investigatory commission in 1995. He wished to know if, thirteen years later, this association is still considered as a sect.

Answer 22: *State services have never published a list of sectarian organisations. The only inventory performed so far is that of the national census, during the Parliamentary investigatory commission on “Sects in France” in 1995, which enabled the creation of a list of 172 organisations; this list had no legal ramifications. In accordance with its concept of secularism, as defined by article 10 of the Declaration of Human Rights and Citizens of 1789, the French Republic does not let itself be drawn into the population’s choice of religion, but it must ensure both the protection of freedom of conscience and that of law and order, and notably protect people against sectarian aberrations. Equal opportunity requirements make the fight against these aberrations delicate for public authorities. More generally speaking, on 25 February 2008, the Minister of the Interior, Overseas and Territorial authorities addressed a circular to prefects, reiterating that information collected in the monitoring of movements whose actions may be prosecuted, must be compared by the services on the working group dedicated to sectarian aberrations within the Departmental councils for the prevention of delinquency, assistance for victims, the combat against drugs, the combat against sectarian aberrations and domestic violence, in a similar manner to regional task forces.*

20 - Decree pending publication.

21 - Question n° 24712 by Thierry Mariani, deputy for Vaucluse (Official Journal of 10 June 2008, pg. 4832).

22 - Answer published in the Official Journal of 10 February 2009, pg. 1363.

Action carried out in the departments in east France in close collaboration with State prosecutors. To date, the members of the association Tradition, Family, Property have not been prosecuted for their acts, and their behaviour cannot be qualified as sectarian aberrations involving criminal offenses. ²³

23 - According to the information held by Miviludes, the association TFP and its director were prosecuted by the criminal court of Nanterre, which dismissed the case on 5 February 2009. This decision will be made final on 5 April 2009, unless the attorney general appeals; secondly, a case against the same parties is currently in process with the District court of Paris. In addition, on 25 August 1982, in a case between the association "Assistance Jeunesse" and the owner of the school "l'école Saint Benoît", the District court of Châteauroux rendered a judgement on fairly explicit grounds relating to the sectarian aberrations performed by this association, a direct branch of TFP.

Addresses and useful links

The sites indicated below allow access to a great number of documents containing useful information. Miviludes indicates that it is not liable for the content of these sites ¹.

- Union nationale des associations pour la défense de la famille et de l'individu victime des sectes (UNADFI - National union of associations for the defence of the family and sect victims)
<http://www.unadfi.com>
- Centre de documentation, d'éducation et d'action contre les manipulations mentales (CCMM - Centre for documentation, education and action against mental manipulation)
www.ccmm.asso.fr

Other useful addresses

- L'Association des faux souvenirs induits (AFSI - Association of induced false memories)
Maison des associations, 13e arrondissement, 11 rue Caillaux, 75013 PARIS
- Association vie religieuse et familles (Association for religion and families)
www.avref.asso.fr
- Counsel for the defence of minors
<http://www.defenseurdesenfants.fr>
- The European Federation of Centres of Research and Information on Sectarianism
<http://www.fecris.org>
- Groupe d'étude des mouvements de pensée pour la prévention de l'individu (GEMPPPI - Study group for conviction movements for the protection of individuals)
<http://www.ifrance.com/sectes-info-gemppi/>
- L'Institut National d'Aide aux Victimes Et de Médiation (INAVEM - National Institute providing Assistance for Victims and Mediation services)
<http://www.inavem.org>
- Psychothérapie vigilance (Psychotherapy and vigilance)
<http://PsyVig.com>
- www.prevensectes.com
- www.zelohim.org
- www.prevensectes.com/therapies.htm
- www.antisectes.net

¹ - This list is not exhaustive.

