

Annex to the Declaration of support: Extract from CICNS proposal

Project for an independent Observatory of spiritual minorities in France

The CICNS has worked for seven years to demonstrate the value of an independent observatory, in response to the "fight against sectarian abuse" considered inadequate by many witnesses of our society. The question of so-called "sects" in France is locked-up by intellectual orthodoxy and misinformation. There is no legal evidence as to the alleged *social evil* that spiritual minorities¹ would constitute, all called "cults" by confusion and no serious investigation has been initiated.

Such an Observatory is consistent with the June 1999 Recommendation of the Council of Europe, urging member countries to establish or support, if necessary, national or regional centers of information on groups of a religious, esoteric or spiritual character, which would be independent of the State.

Mission of the Observatory

- Be a balanced advisory body, consisting of sociologists, anthropologists, lawyers, psychologists and social workers, experts in consciousness, of spiritual minority representatives, and of associations, this pluralism being based on the acceptance of dialogue as a basis for progress and a return to the spirit of secularism;
- Provide advice and recommendations to improve legislation, to preserve civil liberties in light of the diversity of spiritual and therapeutic approaches for the 21st century while preserving public order;
- Initiate a process of knowledge of spiritual minorities, which would thus emerge from the shadows, providing the State and judges access to consensual information from experts, thus preventing them from making use of skills too isolated and biased in their opinions or anticult associations too oriented in their positions;
- Answer questions from civil society and demystify the new spiritual and therapeutic approaches;
- Mediate in conflicts between followers and movements before any legal action;
- Establish a charter respectful of the diversity of beliefs to which all spiritual minority should subscribe;
- To report annually on its activities to the Government and the general public.

This document is a summary of a more comprehensive 10 pages proposal available on www.cicns.net/Observatory/Observatoire_independant_minorites_spirituelles_presentation.htm.

It is a draft presented in order to generate debate on the creation of an independent Observatory of spiritual minorities in France. It does not attempt to override the protocol of establishing missions by government and the CICNS is willing to withdraw from the process, as should the anti-cult organizations, once the Observatory is created and gives signs of vitality.

¹ The expression "spiritual minorities" includes today all groups with a spiritual, educational or therapeutic orientation, who want to honestly answer the key questions faced by mankind in order to improve individual lives and societies.