



**Präsident:** Univ. Prof. Dr. Christian Brünner  
**Generalsekretär:** Peter Zöhrer  
**Adresse:** Seidengasse 28, A-1070 Wien  
**ZVR:** 429267353  
**Tel:** +43 (0)664 5238794  
**Email:** [manager@foref.info](mailto:manager@foref.info)  
**Homepage:** <http://foref.info>

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Mr Wojciech Sawicki  
Secretary General  
Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe  
Palais de l'Europe  
Avenue de l'Europe  
67075 Strasbourg

Vienna, the 7<sup>st</sup> November 2013

Dear Sir,

I would like to draw your attention to the following facts, regarding a report under preparation in the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, "The Protection of Minors Against Sectarian Influence", and his rapporteur Mr Rudy Salles. It appears to me that these facts are serious enough to bring to your attention and that of the members of the Committee.

The code of conduct for rapporteurs of the Parliamentary Assembly (resolution 1799), rules that rapporteurs should respect (1.1) a principle of neutrality, impartiality and objectivity, including in particular:

*1.1.1. undertaking not to have any economic, commercial, financial or other interests, on a professional, personal or family level, connected with the subject of the report, and obligation to declare any relevant interests;*

*1.1.2. undertaking not to seek or accept instructions from any government or governmental or non-governmental organisation, or pressure group or individual;*

*1.1.3. undertaking not to accept any reward, honorary distinction, decoration, favour, substantial gift or remuneration from a government or governmental or non-governmental organisation, a pressure group or an individual in connection with activities carried out in the exercise of their duties;*

*1.1.4. undertaking to refrain from any act which may cast doubt on their neutrality;*

The following information indicates that Mr. Rudy Salles has breached articles 1.1.1, 1.1.2 and 1.1.4 in the course of his duties as rapporteur for the report on "protection of minors against sectarian influence". It shows that he has not only been strongly influenced by both a government department and NGOs anti-pathetic towards religions (and in particular minority religions) but

that he has himself been a long-term supporter of such a position. This political and personal interest he did not declare, as he should have, according to the established code of a rapporteur.

Mr Salles was appointed as rapporteur to draft a report on “*protection of minors against sectarian influence*” on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2011.

This issue has been strongly lobbied for by French “anti-cult” groups for many years. It is also a position that has been strongly criticized internationally by both governments and human rights organisations. Mr. Salles is a long-time associate of Mr. Georges Fenech, member of the French National Assembly and former head of the Miviludes<sup>1</sup>, a French government agency in charge of fighting against what they term “sects”. When his appointment to the position of rapporteur occurred, Mr. Salles made a joint statement with Mr. Fenech in a French newspaper (Nice Matin, November 22, 2011), announcing the appointment and claiming that the purpose of that nomination was to create a European observatory on “sects”, a sort of European Miviludes.

In the article Mr. Salles and Mr. Fenech made it very clear that they considered the nomination was the result of a joint action between Miviludes and Rudy Salles to export the French government model to European level via the PACE.

Here are some excerpts of their statements as reported in the newspaper:

Mr. Salles: *“This nomination is a first victory. We will not work as in the French parliament, where the engagement is very strong and reports regarding “sects” are voted unanimously. There, for the Council of Europe, it is a question of degree of appreciation of sects in the various countries. Some of them assimilate sects as religions. So our work will be more difficult, but to register this topic at the Council of Europe is already a lot, and the fact the rapporteur is French is a good thing, also because the French National Assembly, after several commissions since 1995, is at the forefront of this issue.”*

Mr. Fenech: *“I expect a lot from the report that Rudy Salles will produce in one or two years. With that, we have re-launched a European process which had disappeared for 10 years.”* He also stated in the article that one of the purposes of the report would be: *“the creation of a European Observatory on sects”*.

This shows that right from the beginning, Mr. Salles was in agreement with and was following a political and social agenda worked out in cooperation with the French Miviludes. It also shows that the result of the report was already predetermined by the rapporteur before any actual information collection and observation was done.

In his book “Apocalypse imminente”, published in September 2012, Mr. Fenech, President of the Miviludes at that time, wrote: *“At first I went to the European Fundamental Rights Agency based in Vienna (Austria) to suggest at least, a European programme of studies on cults and minors, in order to not upset anyone. The welcome was polite, but no action has ever followed my initiative. Undoubtedly, the eternal strife within the Member States on the definition of “sect” was an insurmountable obstacle. So I had to change my tactics and act directly to the Council of Europe, the antechamber of the European Parliament (sic), in the very heart of Strasbourg institutions. To this end, I invited to Paris the president of the Legal Affairs and Human Rights Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Mr Pourgourides, a Cypriot who promised to engage firmly in that direction. He kept his promise by getting a draft resolution voted upon, whose report was entrusted to a French parliamentarian, Rudy Salles, a pioneer of the anti-cult fight in France. During my meeting with him in Nice, I had no trouble in convincing him to work on this as an emergency.”*

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<sup>1</sup> Inter-Ministerial Mission of Vigilance and Fight Against Sectarian Deviances

The above clearly shows violations of articles 1.1.1, 1.1.2 and 1.1.4 of the rules, as Mr. Salles clearly had prior interests on a professional and personal level as well as accepting instructions from and/or working in collusion with the President of the Miviludes.

This was later confirmed by Herve Machi, Secretary General of the Miviludes, when he was interviewed by a French Senate Enquiry Commission on “health and sectarian movements”. In this hearing (<http://videos.senat.fr/video/videos/2012/video14790.html>, 78<sup>th</sup> minute), Mr. Machi talked of “European harmonization”: *“we are trying to instigate such harmonization. We started to do it, not via the issue of “health”, but via the issue of “minors”, by instigating a resolution of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe which has been adopted ... It is a French Member of Parliament, Mr Rudy Salles, who is working on the question of the influence of sectarian movements with minors, in order to bring about the creation of a European observatory on sectarian deviances and minors. For us, it was a way to interest our European partners in the issue by reaching them via this common denominator, that of protection of minors. Maybe it will be the beginning of a “ball of wool” which will lead our partners to interest themselves with sectarian deviances, also in the field of health.”*

This clearly demonstrates that Miviludes used Mr Salles as a Trojan horse, following Miviludes’ plan to get the Council of Europe to adopt French policy on religious minorities. According to Mr. Machi, it was the Miviludes that “instigated” the resolution of Mr. Pourgourides, and the actions of Mr Salles are clearly viewed as those of the French Miviludes.

That Miviludes was behind this initiative is also confirmed in the Miviludes’ Newsletter of January 2011<sup>2</sup>, written before the resolution on “the protection of minors against sectarian influence” was adopted, where it is written:

*“In the frame of the promotion of a European programme on sectarian deviances and minors, Mr Georges Fenech met in December with Mr Jean-Claude Mignon, President of the French Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, as well as Mr Christos Pourgourides, President of the Committee of Legal Affairs and Human Rights of the Council of Europe. These interviews were very fruitful should lead to new initiatives”.*

In fact, this is not a new plan for Miviludes. Mr. Fenech, at a symposium organized in Lyon (France) the 26 November 2009<sup>3</sup>, stated: *“There is still one goal not yet reached to which I attach great importance, it is the implementation of a European programme on sectarian deviances which could be located in the Fundamental Rights Agency based in Vienna, which Miviludes has met in July 2009.”*

Prior to that, Miviludes had already spoken about their plan to create a European “observatory on sects”, by using the topics of “sects and minors” in order to get agreement from other countries to follow the Miviludes plan. In 2008, at a FECRIS (European “anti-sect” umbrella association, which in should be noted, receives the majority of its funds from the French government) conference at Pisa, Italy, Catherine Katz, at the time Secretary General of Miviludes, explained<sup>4</sup>: *“For many years, the MILS (ancestor of the Miviludes), then the MIVILUDES really wanted to show other European States in particular, that they were not, what the cultic movements and their friends affirmed, attacking freedom of conscience and beliefs.” (...)* *“Now, it is useful to explain France’s position, it is also good to inform about the position of FECRIS, it is positive to communicate on the legitimacy of our actions, but can we go further? Can one imagine a common model in Europe and a minimum point of convergence? I*

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.derives-sectes.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/publications/francais/lettre\\_bimestrielle\\_numero9\\_janv2011.pdf](http://www.derives-sectes.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/publications/francais/lettre_bimestrielle_numero9_janv2011.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Minutes of the symposium, Page 16. [http://www.derives-sectes.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/publications/francais/actes\\_colloque\\_lyon\\_novembre2009.pdf](http://www.derives-sectes.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/publications/francais/actes_colloque_lyon_novembre2009.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.google.fr/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CDMQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fgriess.st1.at%2FFECRIS\\_Acts\\_of\\_Pisa\\_12.04.08.doc&ei=bataUuszOCO000AXcsYCgCg&usq=AFQjCNG2V\\_Tl788jhAaHB6q4nRnroT-Rxg&sig2=TBdKDzVe8gtlWEXsjBgzRQ&bvm=bv.53899372.d.d2k](https://www.google.fr/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CDMQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fgriess.st1.at%2FFECRIS_Acts_of_Pisa_12.04.08.doc&ei=bataUuszOCO000AXcsYCgCg&usq=AFQjCNG2V_Tl788jhAaHB6q4nRnroT-Rxg&sig2=TBdKDzVe8gtlWEXsjBgzRQ&bvm=bv.53899372.d.d2k)

*tend to think that this could be realised only through technical actions and aspects, like problems of minors for example. Once again I am personally attached to the protection of the weakest and the protection of minors is a subject common to all and which could be a point of entrance. Which country can accept that its minors be crushed, destroyed, violated, misused? Another possible entrance point is health. An evaluation of deviating methods, be they cultic or not, can make it possible to find common ground. Why not a European observatory in the field of sectarian aberrations?"*

Mr Rudy Salles, described by former President of Miviludes Mr. Fenech as "*a pioneer of the anti-cult fight in France*", is anything but the neutral or impartial rapporteur needed for conducting such a report in the PACE – if indeed this has any place at all considering its origins. On the 22nd June 2000, before the French National Assembly, Mr. Salles went as far as stating: "*Unfortunately, there cannot be a 'big night' of sects that would allow us to settle this once and for all*". In France, the expression "big night" (grand soir), is a revolutionary expression alluding to the overthrow of a government, usually by the use of force and violence. In the sentence quoted above, Mr. Salles expressed his regret that he could not get rid of "sects" overnight.

I am providing this information to you, showing clearly that Mr. Rudy Salles is neither neutral, nor impartial and has significantly breached the rules 1.1.1, 1.1.2 and 1.1.4 of the code of conduct for rapporteurs of the Parliamentary Assembly.

According to Article 3 of the Code, the penalty for breaching the rules, "should a rapporteur fail to honour one or more undertakings", can be the withdrawal of his or her mandate.

I respectfully ask you to review this information and conduct an impartial investigation into this matter in order to consider withdrawing Mr. Rudy Salles' mandate on this topic.

Kind regards,



Peter Zoehrer  
FOREF Europe

Copy:

- Mr Christopher Chope, Chairman of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights
- Mr Jean-Claude Mignon, President of the PACE
- Mr Rudy Salles, Rapporteur
- Members of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights

Attachments:

- Pages 234 and 235 of the book "Apocalypse, Menace Imminente" by Georges Fenech
- Nice Matin article November 22, 2011