



VoxPublic

2019 ACTIVITY REPORT



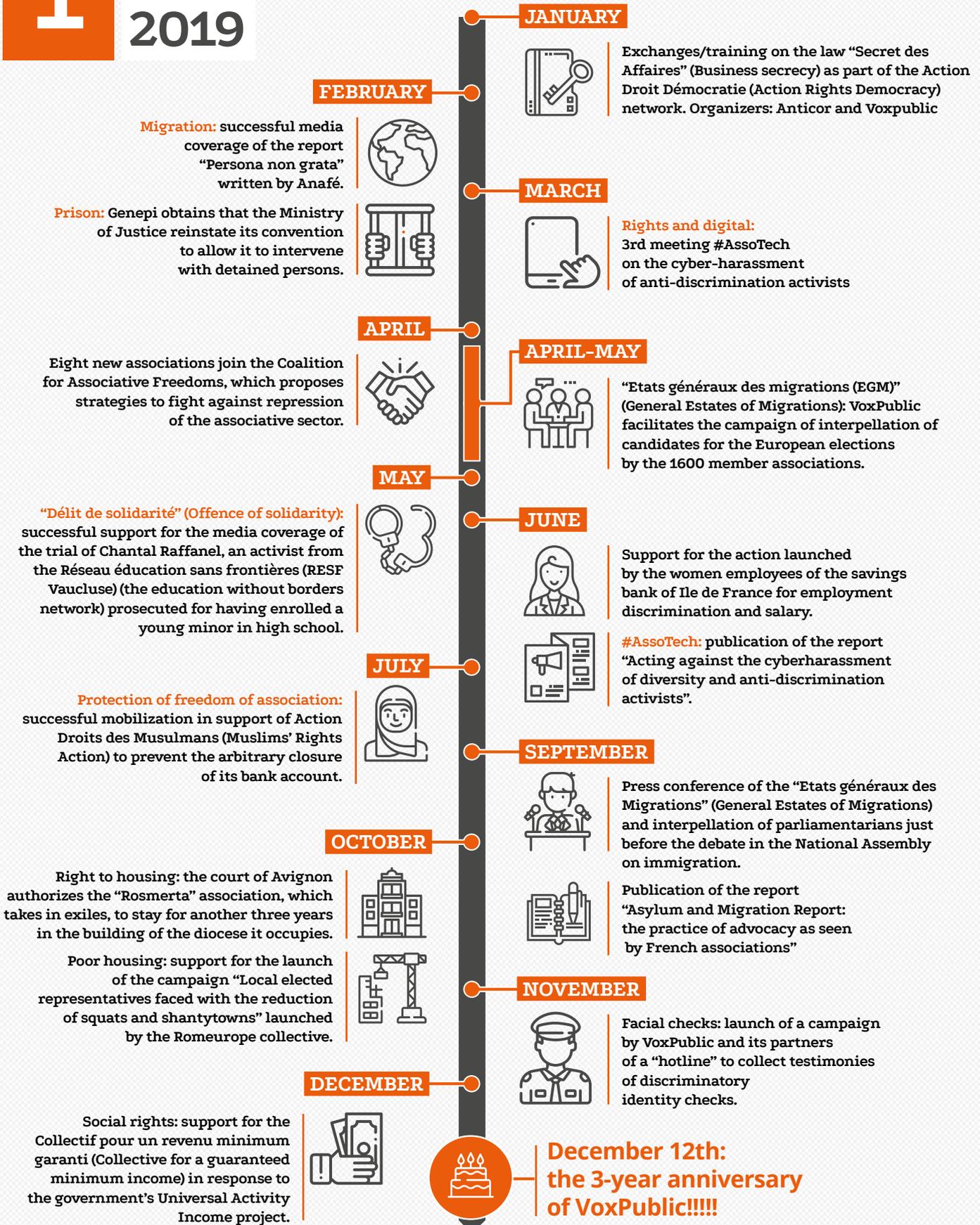
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Cover photo : Melany Rochester / Unsplash - Copyright Mathieu PRAT : Ibrahim, in the center of the picture with his two companions at the Accommodation Center opened in Bayonne, France - January 2019. Icons and infographics: G.S. with Freepik & Flaticon.

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Highlights 2019



2 ÉDITORIAL

Discriminatory identity checks, citizens prosecuted for their solidarity with migrants, an association defending the rights of Muslims threatened with the closure of its bank account, salaried women victims of discrimination in a major bank, itinerant citizens targeted by new, very repressive legislative provisions, the rights of exiled people denied... The list of discriminations and social injustices on which VoxPublic was asked to help associations make their voices heard was unfortunately still long in 2019.

After three years of existence, VoxPublic has become a sought-after partner for many civil society actors. Associations and citizens' collectives, who appreciate our ability to support them in their fight against discrimination and for social justice by transmitting indispensable know-how. In these difficult struggles, victories are rare and are always won thanks to the pugnacity of those first concerned! This activity report highlights the successes to which VoxPublic is proud to have contributed alongside its partners.

2019, as 2020, are election years marked by European and municipal elections, two key dates to raise awareness among future elected officials and ask them to take a stand on major social and democratic issues. In this perspective, VoxPublic supported the advocacy work of the "Etats généraux des Migrations" (General Estates of Migrations) to influence current migration policy, as well as a campaign launched by the 46 member associations of the Romeurope collective to end slums.

The past year was also marked by the enlargement of the "Coalition pour les Libertés Associatives" / "L.A coalition" (Coalition for Associative Freedoms) led by VoxPublic. It now brings together 16 associations, including some of our partners, which have been affected by attacks and political-administrative pressure aiming at destabilizing them. For VoxPublic, the defense of citizen and associative action, particularly when it questions and criticizes public authorities, is essential to the proper functioning of democracy.

To ensure that these actions have the desired impact, VoxPublic has enriched its online resource centre, which is open to all, with methodological tools such as the "*Guide to Fighting Cyberharassment of People Engaged in the Fight against Discrimination*" and the guide "*Advocacy migrations*". Regular updates have also been made, in particular of our famous directories, which are freely accessible and so useful for contacting parliamentarians, members of ministerial cabinets or journalists.

In 2020, France entered an electoral sequence that will end in 2022 with the presidential and legislative elections. In a context of economic and social destabilization, linked to the Covid-19 pandemic, this is a high-risk period for our country living under a "state of health emergency" and the putting on hold of counter-powers. The vitality of the civil society and its solidarity initiatives as close as possible to the ground will remain essential so that the most fragile and the most deprived, hit by the inequalities - so visible during the pandemic - can live with dignity.

VoxPublic will be there to support socially disadvantaged people, foreigners, Roma, itinerant citizens, Muslims and other stigmatized minorities so that they are no longer scapegoats and are fully integrated into our society. In this crucial period, VoxPublic will stand alongside all those who will defend social justice and tackle the root causes of discrimination in order to rebuild a more egalitarian world.

Jean-Baptiste Paulhet and Léa Gauthier, co-presidents of VoxPublic

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Advocacy support

3-1 Focus on the theme of freedom association

The issue of the threats to freedom of association was at the heart of our activity in 2019. Since its creation, VoxPublic has supported dozens of partner associations, many of which have suffered attacks - financial, reputational, judicial and police ones - from political or administrative authorities.

The year 2019 began with the victory of the Genepi association, which had been sanctioned by the prison administration (end of grant and agreement) because its word was considered too critical. Under pressure, the Minister of Justice dismissed her administration.

During the summer, Action Droits des Musulmans (Muslims' Rights Action) saw its BNP account closed without justification, but certainly at the request of an administration (Interior or Finance). After a pro-court injunction against the bank, and the mobilization of human rights organizations, the account was put back into service.



IN 2019 VOXPUBLIC SUPPORTED 6 PARTNERS IN LEGAL ACTIONS

OFFENCE OF SOLIDARITY:

Trial of the "7 de Briançon" supported by the association Tous Migrants (All Migrants)

SOLIDARITY ACCOMMODATION:

Victory against the expulsion procedure of the Rosmerta association in Avignon

CRIME OF SOLIDARITY:

Trial and appeal of Chantal Raffanel, volunteer RESF Avignon.

ATTACKS AGAINST THE FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION:

summary proceedings initiated by the association Action Droits des Musulmans (Muslims' Rights Action) after the closure of its bank account without motivation.

EQUALITY BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN AT WORK:

announcement of a forthcoming group action against the savings bank of Ile de France.

THE 3 BIGGEST SUCCESSES OF 2019



The Genepi signed a new agreement with the Ministry of Justice after the latter had indicated its willingness to put a definitive end to it.

Action Droits des Musulmans (Muslims' Rights Action) has regained its right to use its bank account.

Rosmerta has been given three years to evacuate the currently occupied premises.

Despite these victories, VoxPublic remains concerned by this climate hostile to associations fighting for the respect of rights. This is why, since the beginning of 2019, we have been leading the “Coalition pour les libertés associatives” / “L.A. Coalition” (Coalition for Associative Freedoms), which brings together 16 associations whose aim is to denounce these attacks, protect the democratic space the civil society needs to act in France and promote associative freedoms. This Coalition, supported by a group of European foundations (Network of European Foundations), is

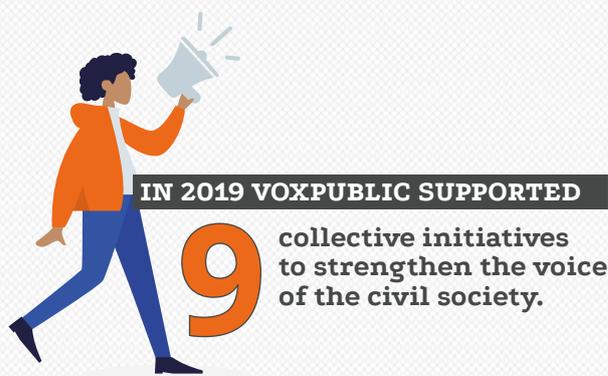
based on the work of the Observatoire des Libertés associatives (Observatory of Associative Freedoms), a partner project in which VoxPublic participates. During the year, L.A. Coalition prepared a series of actions for 2020: creation of a tool to challenge candidates for the 2020 municipal elections, distribution of videos showing examples of repression, recommendations for political decision-makers, a practical guide to better resist and respond.

In the same spirit, VoxPublic co-animates a network called Action Droit Démocratie (Action, Rights, Democracy), which brings together lawyers from associations, academics, lawyers and magistrates who work together to strengthen the capacity of associations to take legal action.



3-2 Key witnesses and debate

At two events, VoxPublic invited “key witnesses” to speak about threats to the associations’ ability to act. In January, lawyer Jérôme Karsenti and Elise van Beneden, secretary general of the Anticor association, presented the risks of the law on “secret des affaires” (business secrecy), which restricts the right to information of the media, associations and whistleblowers. In October, Ms. Vanessa Codaccioni, university professor and author of the book “Repressions”, spoke at the Agora de VoxPublic for an exchange with our members on the forms of repression that civil society has historically faced in France and strategies to counter them.



Thank you to the members and participants of: Réseau anti-terrorisme, droits et libertés (p.x), Réseau action droit et démocratie (p.x), AssoTech (p.x), la Coalition pour les libertés associatives (L.A Coalition p.x), les Etats Généraux des Migrations, le Collectif pour un revenu minimum garanti, mobilisation contre les contrôles au faciès, les réseaux euro-péens European democracy network et Right2Protest.

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Pooling of experience and sharing of resources

4-1 The meeting #AssoTech against cyberharassment



Speaking out on social networks to demand respect for one's rights is a high-risk activity for victims of discrimination. A tweet or Facebook post posted by an activist committed to fighting homophobia, racism, discrimination on the basis of religion, and violence against women can be considered a smear campaign and/or personal attacks against the author. This cyber-harassment is carried out by organized groups with xenophobic, sexist, racist and/or LGBT-phobic ideas. These attacks are psychologically very difficult to bear, many activists give up expressing themselves on the internet to avoid them.

It is in this context that VoxPublic and several anti-discrimination associations have organized a day for people and associations directly concerned to discuss how to "counter" cyber-harassment campaigns. This day led to the practical guide *"Acting against cyber-harassment for diversity and anti-discrimination activists"*, available since June 2019 on our resource centre and widely distributed. Ways to fight these cyber-harassment campaigns will be illustrated in 2020 by videos and educational tools for the self-defense of activists of diversity and website. These tools are necessary to ensure that the fight against discrimination does not end in lynching on the internet.

4-2 The meeting Advocacy-Migrations



Following the co-training meetings on parliamentary advocacy and the use of digital tools, VoxPublic organized a day of exchanges between some twenty associations involved in advocacy operations for the rights of migrants. The aim? To list the effective - and also the less effective - methods of questioning political decision-makers on the rights of migrants, and to make this sharing of experiences available to as many associations and citizen groups as possible.

Several VoxPublic partners actively participated in this day: Tous Migrants (Briançon), Désinfox Migrations, Rosmerta (Avignon), Anafé, Utopia 56, Local Assemblies of the Etats Généraux des Migrations (Aisne, Hérault), Paris d'Exil, alongside MSF-France, CCFD-Terre solidaire, Emmaüs France and Emmaüs International, Jesuit Refugee Service, the Committee for Refugee Relief and the Auberge des Migrants (Calais).

The result is a beautiful handbook entitled *"Migrations and Asylum, the practice of advocacy as seen by French associations"* (40 pages, available in VoxPublic's online resource centre), which has been widely acclaimed in association networks and downloaded hundreds of times since its publication in November 2019



THE DIRECTORIES, ARE THE CONTACTS OF:



577 MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY



348 SENATORS AND THEIR ASSOCIATES



291 MEMBERS OF MINISTERIAL CABINETS



147 NATIONAL AND LOCAL MEDIA



707 JOURNALIST



319 CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

2020 Outlook

→ **Defending fundamental freedoms in times of crisis, the lessons of the Covid-19 pandemic.**

The health, social, economic and political crisis linked to the Covid-19 pandemic poses considerable challenges to our society and, more broadly, to all countries. It requires the creation of networks of associations, unions and legal professionals (lawyers, magistrates, academics) to facilitate the sharing of information, promote strategic thinking and coordinated responses to defend fundamental freedoms in the face of the temptation of authoritarianism, which is particularly strong in times of crisis.

VoxPublic has offered to coordinate the State of Health Emergency Monitoring Network, created on the 25th of March 2020, in the same spirit as our commitment to the Anti-Terrorism, Rights and Freedoms Network, which since 2017 has enabled many civil society actors to cooperate in order to influence public debate. VoxPublic will constantly adapt its action to this exceptional context.

→ **Promoting free digital tools and at the service of civic causes**

Finally, over the next three years, notably through the continuation of its #AssoTech program, VoxPublic intends to orient the collectives and small/medium organizations that we support towards the use of free software and tools capable of strengthening their internal organization and their ability to better protect their communication. It is also an essential issue to make their actions visible and influential.

→ **Promoting freedom of association alongside our partners**

Another point of attention for the future, the support we have been able to give to Genepi or Action Droits des Musulmans (Muslims' Rights Action), targets of attacks, has allowed important victories against administrative arbitrariness and strengthened our internal capacities to advise these actors under pressure. This is an evolution that we wish to deepen by proposing guides of good practices as well as training workshops to defend and promote associative liberties. This will also be done through the animation and strengthening of the "L.A. Coalition for Associative Freedoms" alongside all partners willing to make strong recommendations on the subject to strengthen our democracy.

→ **Facilitating the use of the "weapon of law" and legal disputes**

VoxPublic also believes, like its partners in the legal network "Action Droit Démocratie" (Action Rights Democracy), that it is necessary to use the weapon of law, particularly that of strategic litigation. Civil society actors are increasingly adopting offensive legal strategies to make rights and freedoms effective and advancing. VoxPublic will support them in this strategy.

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