



"A Repressed Citizenship", an inventory of the barriers against associative actions in France

Press release -

Paris, Tuesday 6 October 2020, the Observatory of Associative Freedoms publishes an unprecedented report elaborated with the support of a scientific committee, painting the picture of a "repressed citizenship" in France. This in-depth analysis is based on a hundred cases of barriers and abuse against associations and citizens' collectives. The report is the result of a collaboration between researchers and French national and local associations, working in various fields of activity (defense of rights, ecology, solidarity, culture...); they are all members of the Coalition for Associative Freedoms. Twelve recommendations to defend and reinforce democratic and associative freedoms were also addressed to a representative panel of MPs who came to the press conference.

Associations whose activities have been suspended following a subsidy cut for having contradicted an elected representative, activists prosecuted in court for solidarity actions, a neighborhood association banned from access to communal meeting spaces, political representatives stigmatizing anti-racist or Muslim associations, environmental activists targeted by road checks and repeated fines...

Here are a few examples of the hundred cases identified and analysed in the first report of the Observatory of Associative Freedoms, entitled "*Repressed citizenship: 100 cases of restricted associative freedoms, 12 recommendations to protect them*", and published on October 6th in the presence of a representative panel of MPs and journalists.

This report is the result of a close collaboration between a committee of social science researchers and associations brought together within the Coalition for Associative Freedoms, most of them had already been the subject of attacks on their ability to act according to their goal.

Freedoms of association under threat

The authors of the report point out a paradox: "while participatory democracy is now being tested at the national level (Great Debate, Citizens' Climate Convention), associations, who are essential actors of our democracy, are being marginalized or even openly attacked by the public authorities when they take critical stances or carry out collective actions for the defense of rights, aiming at challenging the authorities and enriching the public debate."

In the context of a pandemic and health crisis, the authors of the report highlight that "some of the associations that were repressed in the past, or that were repressed because they carried on with

their activities during the period of lock down, have been and are still playing a central role in mitigating the effects of the crisis on the most vulnerable groups.”

Once this assessment has been made, the Observatory's report emphasises that at the local, regional or national level, many associations participate in the public debate and enable the exercise of collective citizenship.

Reflecting on the protection that trade unions can benefit from in the exercise of their activities, the associations suggest a series of twelve measures to better protect them from abusive repression, and to recognise their role in defending rights and taking part in the public debate, in order to strengthen democratic freedoms that are now under threat.

Members of the Observatory for Associative Freedoms:

- **L'Alliance Citoyenne, Alternative pour des Projets Urbains Ici et à l'international (APPUII)**
- **Centre de Recherche et d'Information pour le Développement (CRID)**
- **Collectif des Associations Citoyennes (CAC)**
- **France Nature Environnement (FNE)**
- **Ligue des Droits de l'Homme (LDH)**
- **Le Mouvement Associatif (LMA)**
- **The national coordination Pas Sans Nous (PSN)**
- **Action Droits des Musulmans**
- **Fédération nationale des Arts de la Rue,**
- **Framasoft,**
- **La Quadrature du Net,**
- **React,**
- **Ritimo,**
- **Tous Migrants,**
- **Vent d'assos,**
- **VoxPublic**



“A Repressed Citizenship” report and the map locating the 100 cases of abuse against associations in France are available here:

<https://www.lacoalition.fr/Observatoire>