

PRESS RELEASE

Protection of scientific spokespersons: Citizen4Science expects concrete responses from Olivier Véran and Frédérique Vidal to stop the harassment and asks that results of Aix-Marseille University investigation on Covid-19 work by IHU Marseille-part 2020 be disclosed

On May 5, in a press release published as soon as a complaint was filed against Dr Elisabeth BIK by IHU Marseille (Institut hospitalo-universitaire Marseille, IHUM), and also quoting Prof. Karine LACOMBE, who has been under constant harassment and threats for the past 15 months and who is also being sued, we urged Assistance Publique des Hôpitaux de Marseille (APHM), the National Order of Physicians (Dr. Patrick Bouet) and concerned authorities to intervene urgently in order to stop the harassment of scientific spokespersons and their supports.

We also asked journalists to look into this matter to raise awareness.

This release was opened to the public for signature on May 10.

We would like to thank:

- several thousand citizens, scientists, scholarly societies, science promotion groups and journalists who signed it;
- the national, international and scientific press that responded to our call to cover this case in their columns;
- Mr. Senator Bernard Jomier who, on June 10, brought Citizen4Science's demands to the attention of the government by means of a Written Question published in the Official Journal, addressed to Mr. Olivier Véran and transmitted to the Ministry of Research and Higher Education.

<https://www.senat.fr/questions/base/2021/qSEQ210623282.html>

We regretted on May 5 "more and more room for bad science as well as for truncated and grossly manipulated interpretation data and attacks from IHUM [which] seem to increase in proportion to their loss of credibility in the scientific world."

We were therefore concerned when, on June 15, the University of Aix-Marseille revealed that IHUM is under investigation pertaining to scientific integrity linked to their work on Covid-19 and in particular hydroxychloroquine in this indication. One part of the investigation concerning 2020 activity was announced to be completed and 2021 part underway. We were concerned to learn that this investigation was sponsored by the IHUM itself, a fact that the Institute itself and supporters are promoting on social networks as if it were a guarantee of integrity.

Therefore, we ask the University of Aix-Marseille to:

- to make public the names of the organizations/experts in charge of this investigation announced as being independent public as a matter of urgency
- to make the conclusions and report of the 2020 investigation available to the public as soon as possible.

We are now obliged to wait for the response of the supervisory authorities by August 10, which is the deadline for answering the written question submitted by Mr. Jomier, while the promotion of bad science and the harassment of the scientific spokespersons is currently continuing at a steady pace.

On June 21st, IHUM has officially reiterated its grievances against Dr. Elisabeth BIK and has announced the filing of a new complaint, this time against Dr. Leonid SCHNEIDER, a German counterpart of Dr. Elisabeth BIK.

IHUM's weekly YouTube videos systematically attack several of the harassed, and now also include newspapers that shed light on the case. This fuels smear campaigns on social networks.

In this context, it seems crucial to us to show Mr. VÉRAN (French Minister of Health) and Ms. VIDAL (French Minister of Research and Higher Education) that many of us have our eyes riveted on their upcoming response.

This is why invite all people of goodwill to give more weight to the petition brought to the Senate so that the government notices a mobilization of the public opinion to maximize the chances of obtaining a satisfactory response with concrete and fast actions.

Citizens, scientists and scholarly societies and other organizations promoting science, journalists, news organizations, other collectives and societies, regardless of sector, can sign the petition here: <https://www.change.org/stopharcelementparolescientifique> (french/english versions available)

When people are harassed for speaking out about science and defending science integrity, it is science itself that is being silenced.

By mobilizing, we fight against obscurantism and we are all concerned, well beyond the scientific community.

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More information on Citizen4Science (n#RNA W751258960) on the association website : <http://www.citizen4science.org>

Twitter : @Citizen4Sci #Citizen4Science

Facebook page : <https://www.facebook.com/Citizen4Science-112042660698911>

Facebook group : <https://www.facebook.com/groups/354060265679040>

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