

Resolution of the Colloquium “Freedom of conscience, Freedom for Science” Lille, 16th-17th May 2014

The participants of the colloquium “Freedom of conscience, freedom for science” at the Université de Lille 1 in Villeneuve d'Ascq, on the 16th and 17th of May 2014, observe that scientific research is confronted with difficulties linked to resistance from traditional religious obscurantisms and from new obscurantisms characterized by relativism encouraged by ideological stances or dogmatic decisions concerning the subjects of research. This situation leads, in the most negative cases, to the violent destruction of scientific experiments, the decline of progress in knowledge, and the blocking of some research projects.

The participants reaffirm: scientific research is founded on doubt and cannot flourish under pressure from those who, whether scientists or not, have the pretention of possessing the truth. Freedom of research must be preserved or gained in Europe.

They also wish to underline that scientific tutelage by governments and supra-national authorities, far from protecting researchers from the pressures of economic and financial lobbies, increase the incentives to submission.

Public health decisions and ethical debates on the applications of technology, on social advances or new social demands, must adhere to humanist principles, that is to say, kept separate from religious or other lobbies. These decisions would however be reduced to nil if access to care failed to be assured as a result of the destruction of social security systems.

Furthermore, noticing that the stakes of the scientific research are very often disguised by the media and not well understood by the wider public, the colloquium participants insist on the crucial importance of science education and the promotion of a real scientific culture.

The participants endorse the declaration adopted in Barcelona in 2011, which still remains current, and have decided to publish it again in the proceedings of this colloquium.

This colloquium occurred under the initiative of the Fédération Nationale de la Libre Pensée (FNLP-France), the Fédération des Amis de la Morale Laïque (FAML – Belgium), the European Humanist Federation (EHF) and the International Association of Free Thought (IAFT).

With the cooperation of the Université de Lille 1, the Conseil général du Nord, Radio Campus Lille, the Fédération du Nord de la Libre Pensée, the Union Rationaliste, Entraide et Solidarité des Libres Penseurs de France, the Université Libre de Bruxelles, the Université de Mons, Associació de Bioètica i Dret de la Universitat de Barcelona, the town of Villeneuve d'Ascq and the Région Nord Pas-de-Calais.

Mailing: michel.godicheau@fnlp.fr or scharles@ulb.ac.be