

Press Release from the Associations and Representatives of Home Education (IEF- Instruction En Famille, private schools 'hors contract' - not operating under a contract with the state and defenders of freedom).

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Following the presidential announcement to make schooling (rather than education) compulsory for all children from the ages of 3 to 16 years, a meeting to present the bill to strengthen the values of the Republic (initially a bill on "separatism ") was organised by the Ministry of National Education on Tuesday the 10th of November 2020. The meeting was led by Richard Senghor, special advisor to Jean-Michel Blanquer, with the participation of the DGESCO, the DAJ and the DAF.

The bill anticipates a ban on home education (IEF - Instruction en Famille) in France except in the case of "the impossibility of the child to attend school due to their situation or that of their family". It also gives the administration, without the guarantee offered by the intervention of a judge, the sole power to decide on the closure of private schools (hors contract - not operating under a contract with the state).

Civil organisations and representatives expressed their deep determination and declared their absolute opposition to the provisions presented.

The purpose of this bill is illegible; it results in a **disturbing violation of educational freedom**, which is clearly a constitutional issue.

The government has been unable to provide statistics or evidence of a link (other than anecdotal) between the phenomenon of radicalisation and the existence of the regulated and supervised practice of home education. They could only refer to forthcoming figures (!) from a future impact study for the bill. They were unable to explain how a home education (IEF - Instruction en Famille) ban might address the existence of clandestine forms of "education" beyond state control.

Is the state only using the legal means already at its disposal to dismantle schools which put children or the community in danger? How will this law increase the effectiveness of the state in this area? No answer to these common sense questions was provided.

Other than founding an independent school (not operating under a contract with the state), it will no longer be possible to educate in any direction other than that of National Education Department. The government thus deprives parents of the fundamental freedom to choose the type of education for their children: this authoritarian drift is contrary to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (art. 26-3) and the Constitution of our country, as the ministry indicated that it would do nothing to fa-

cilitate the creation of new free schools or the extension of private schools under defined contracts.

This introductory bill also constitutes a breach of equality: not all families have the financial means to enroll their child(ren) in private schools 'hors contract' (not operating under a contract with the state) which would better correspond to their educational orientation; not all families benefit from equal geographic access to schools. In the interests of their child(ren), all French people must have access to the option to home educate, even occasionally as in case of: school bullying, racketeering, school phobia ... The choice of home education is certainly not a form of avoidance or refusal of the Republic and its institutions. To assimilate families practicing home education legally into "enemies of the Republic or public order" constitutes an unacceptable slanderous attack.

Associations and representatives of home educators and non-contract schools will fight against this anti-freedom project, with the help of parliamentarians who are adherents of freedom of education, personal freedom and fundamental freedoms which are also attacked in this bill. They ask the Council of State and the Constitutional Council to recall with all required solemnity, the constitutional nature of the freedom to choose the type of education to be given to one's children and to take action against the manifestly disproportionate nature of the infringements made on this freedom by the project of law.

They invite the policy making parliamentarians to vote against this bill, which is a disgrace to the French Republic.

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