

**All EMF experts**

# **Bordeaux teaches female MD lesson on International Women's Day: Athens and Karolinska play the same game on men**

**By John Weigel**

There are few women on the planet equal to Dr. Annie Sasco, multiple degree-holding doctor, lecturer, humanitarian and mother.

For all her dedication, expertise and care for cancer and HIV sufferers, on International Women's Day, her offices were taken from her by the administration at the University of Bordeaux. Her offense? She participated in a conference before Canada's House of Commons Standing Committee on Health (HESA) a year ago outlining the dangers of low level electromagnetic radiation from cell phones, masts and wi-fi. Her crime was to offer words of support to those opposed to the proliferation of new technology without adequate regulations, warnings and safeguards.

Dr. Sasco's academic credentials are impeccable. Her medical degree (with honours) was followed by two masters degrees from Harvard where she also acquired a doctorate in Public Health in the field of Epidemiology. Ten years later in 1996 she received the highest university research degree in France researching the epidemiology for cancer prevention. It was precisely because of her world-wide reputation that the Next-up organization in France recommended her when Canadian conference organizers scoured the globe for experts to testify.

Next-up is based in Lyons, France. Its argument is, "Today, in the light of a scientific consensus on the biological, health or 'athermal' effects, the argument about the innocuous nature of EMF on humans must cease and what must be adopted at last are norms which conform to the requirements of a real public health policy."

The women Sasco represents around the world were absent in her defense on March 8. The only thing she said in Canada was simply to challenge doctors to adhere to the first rule of medicine. "As an MD," she said "I would remind you of what Hippocrates said: first do no harm. *Primum non nocere*: when it's not necessary to have even a cause for potential harm, why should we have it?"

The circumstances of Dr. Sasco and two colleagues moved the Alliance for Irish Radiation Protection to issue the Dublin Declaration on Microwave Radiation which states, "We assert that there are dangers attached to the use of this technology which are not being addressed. Further, we assert that researchers are being silenced while others are being funded when the outcome of their research is anticipated before the research commences."

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She is only one of three independent researchers who participated in the Canadian hearing. A fourth expert witness, Dr. Andrew Goldsworthy, is retired following harassment.

Dr. Dimitris Panagopoulos, a biophysicist at the University of Athens who has remained a post doctoral fellow in spite of numerous widely-known research papers, was relegated to an “office” the size of a toilet cubicle without a window. When he refused to use the space he was threatened with having his wages cut. When he found a position at Demokritos, the largest and most acclaimed research institute in Greece, his U of A employer refused to allow him to leave, effectively blocking both his research and his career.

Panagopoulos’ offense is to have scientifically proven DNA damage and reproductive decreases from mobile phone radiation and also to have found a mechanism by which weak electromagnetic fields can affect cells non-thermally.

After testifying before the HESA (Canadian Health Committee) last April, according to journalist Popi Soufli the previous director of Panagopoulos’ department in the University of Athens, Lukas H. Margaritis, took his office and lab. The situation did not change with the new director of the department. Meanwhile, Margaritis, though now retired and awarded the status of Professor Emeritus, has retained his office, secretary and post-graduate programs.

Soufli, a writer for website Attika Nea ([http://attikanea.blogspot.com/2011/02/blog-post\\_7717.html](http://attikanea.blogspot.com/2011/02/blog-post_7717.html)), placed responsibility for Panagopoulos’ loss of premises with Margaritis, claiming he is responsible for the installation of two sets of antennae in close proximity to the university’s biology department in 2007 and again in 2010.

In a blog written for Greece, Soufli asked, “How is it possible that the professor of Radiobiology at the University of Athens, Lukas Margaritis who has declared for years how dangerous mobile telephony base station antennae are, permitted the installation of a range of them within the university campus (photograph: <http://www.xpolis.blogspot.com/2010/08/dr.html>) in close proximity to the buildings and classrooms of the Biology Department? How, although he has spoken for years to the media about the dangers of radiation and garnering publicity for himself, not only did he not act against their installation but assured the Biology Department that these antennas are harmless? Aren’t his actions against his declarations?”

Curiously, when Panagopoulos attempted to switch research facilities to Demokritos - the National Centre for Scientific Research, the biggest and most acclaimed research center in Greece, the administration at the University of Athens refused to let him go.

According to Soufli, “Dr. Panagopoulos is a top scientist in our country, known to me as a personality. He has given many lectures informing people about the dangers from mobile phone masts and other sources of radiation. The facts about his persecution came to me from letters by some who, of course, didn’t want their names to be known. As a journalist and activist myself experienced for many years in defending people’s rights I have my ways to check the credibility of the news that comes to me.

## Scientists

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“Panagopoulos is one of the very few gifted scientists dedicated to the truth. It is sure that certain people are afraid of his findings. The news about his persecution and about the antennae installation in the university by his superiors didn't surprise me. His students adore him and say that he should be a full professor by now but obviously they have undermined his career. At the same time Panagopoulos is a very respected musician-song writer here. That makes him a unique personality. I hope they won't be able to destroy his career. If the few scientists who speak the truth are silenced, there will be no one left to defend public health,” said Soufli.

The third victim of the simultaneous symbolic “demotion” is the venerable Prof. Olle Johansson, a scientist of international renown. Johansson's first salvo against the digital industry occurred in the early 1970's when his research revealed that radiation from computer screens endangered both pregnant woman and their unborn children. The computer industry beefed up the safety standards of computer monitors but did not forget.

In a letter to Nikolaos Matsis, Greek ambassador to Canada, Daryl Vernon, conference co-ordinator, explained the circumstances of the three scientists. “Shortly after those meetings in April, three international witnesses before the HESA urging revision of microwave standards based on their scholarly work, Dr. Panagopoulos, as well as Dr. Olle Johansson of the Karolinska Institute in Sweden, and Dr. Annie Sasco of Bordeaux University in France; all three have had their offices removed from them! The fourth international witness, Dr. Andrew Goldsworthy of Imperial College London, England, could not have his office removed, being recently retired, but he has attested to having suffered similarly prior to retirement.”

Greek writer Kostas Lampos, added, “I think it is of utter importance to inform everyone about the issue since we are clearly facing a battle between freedom of speech and science (as well as the three scientists) on one side, and corporate profiting on the other.”

Margaritis has failed to respond to questions about his role in the controversy.

When Johansson, a proponent of the often ignored “Precautionary Principle” regarding the use of microwave technology, accepted the invitation to participate in the Canadian HESA hearing, his fate was sealed. He went even further to challenge Canada and the world. “It's obvious that your safety code is completely out of date and obsolete, and that goes for any form of international or national standards body throughout the world, including the American IEEE and FCC and the international ICNIRP standards and so forth,” he told the Canadians.

As an independent researcher, Johansson must pay rent to the Karolinska Institute. Different countries in Europe have different arrangements with researchers where fewer than 10 percent are not employed by government or industry. Following a large public meeting in Leixlip, Ireland two years ago he was told his premises were needed by the institute to house ferrets. He refused to move. Less than a year later he was told by his superior, Staffan Cullheim, a professor of anatomy in the Department of Neuroscience, that his premises were required for use as an imaging facility. Again, Johansson refused.

Following a prolonged meeting with administration several weeks ago, it was suggested that Johansson accept smaller offices elsewhere for reasons of “personal development”.

Under European law, universities have the legal right to control their premises which appears to be the stance being taken by the three respective educational facilities against the three professors.

Administrators at the three universities have not responded to requests for clarification of their simultaneous actions against Sasco, Panagopoulos and Johansson. Questions to Harriet Walberg-Henriksson, president of the Karolinska Institute, Manuel Tunon de Lara, Président de l'Université at Bordeaux, Prof. Theodoros Pelegrinis, the University of Athens, and Prof. Bernd Huber, chairman of the League of European Research Universities have gone unanswered.

Insight into what is happening to the three professors comes from Dr. Stan Monteith, California broadcaster and member of the Council for National Policy, an umbrella organization and networking group for social conservative activists in the United States.

On air, Dr. Monteith said: "When you speak out and tell the truth in the United States or Canada today, they're going to come after you. I have one gentleman, he's a professor up in the dental school in Toronto, whose name is Hardy Limeback, (Head of Preventive Dentistry, University of Toronto) and he's written extensively on the dangers of water fluoridation and when I asked him to come on my program, he said, 'I can't. I've been threatened and I'm not going to risk my family.' I've talked to people who've had their medical licenses lifted. Dr. Andy Wakefield (Royal Free and University College Medical School, London) lost his license because he told the truth about the danger of vaccines. Dr. Bonnie Dunbar, an internationally-known vaccinologist actually lost her - actually they threatened her - because she spoke out about the Hepatitis B vaccine.

"These people certainly don't play very fair," said Monteith.

Lending credibility to claims of harassment of scientists in Canada is the case of Dr. Asaf Durakovic, an international expert on low dose ionizing radiation effects. Speaking with Dr. Bill Deagle on radio a week after Sasco lost her office ([http://podcast.gcnlive.com/podcast/nutri\\_med/0315113.mp3](http://podcast.gcnlive.com/podcast/nutri_med/0315113.mp3)), Dr. Durakovic explained that following presentation of research at the European Association of Nuclear Medicine in Copenhagen, a letter was written claiming his results were bogus. "The revenge of Ontario is still being felt," he said. "They came to my house in the north of Toronto, Ontario. Thirteen police cruisers came with two helicopters hovering above and searching my house from the basement to the ceiling for some clandestine materials and all they found was children's toys."

Fairness was not a consideration when the administration at Victor Segalen Bordeaux II University met with Dr. Annie Sasco on her return to work after burying her mother to learn that her team of 15 researchers was being dispersed. "Now I am on my own, more or less," she said.

And alone, she has been moved from offices with a view to overlooking a car park and rubbish bins. Yet she remains loyal, "I respect deeply the university I am in. I don't want to criticize them," she said.

*John Weigel is a member of the Alliance for Irish Radiation Protection*

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