* ***Is independence in the field of health an utopian concept***

*It is an ideal more than “utopia”.*

*What does independence mean ?*

*This means above all the refusal of dependencies that may interfere with the mission of health (see charter Formindep). This task is professional, ethical.*

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*Therefore it is impossible to be totally independent and one must choose one’s dependences, in function of the risk benefit balance in order to be able to realise a health mission.*

*To choose one’s dependences one has to identify them, learn to recognise them, be they personal and psychological (ego, career, personal motivations, etc), environmental, political, philosophical or religious, and finally (and especially because they are the ones of which the risk benefit balance is the best known) industrial and commercial.*

*These dependences are intricate and interact with each other, this complicates the situation. The commercial dependences can rely on the ego to increase their influence, etc...*

*It is therefore an ideal, an objective to achieve, knowing with humility that it will not be achieved totally, but can be well reached to a certain extent.*

What counts here is the distance covered and not the place where we are. Now there shouldn’t be too many obstacles appearing on this road. Otherwise, we stumble too often, and those who wish to continue moving, may become tired and give op, and stop progressing or even reverse. The reduction of obstacles on the path to independencenis the responsibility of the authorities, the society. It is a democratic fight.

However, we have seen how the authorities may not reduce the obstacles, but contribute to creating them, for instance the “Sunshine Act” in France.

* ***2 From your personal experience and role, have you noticed in the last 10 years an evolution in the behaviours in relation to this concept ?***

*There has been a conscience awareness of the disastrous role played by these dependences in the health area and the necessity to fight them, but it should be noted that, in parallel, the pressure of those who seek to create or maintain dependences is ever increasing.*

*In 2004 France, few health professionals knew what a conflict of interest meant and its role in medical decisions.Actually this concept is better known (alas , partly because of dramatic accidents such as the “Mediator” scandal) but it is still badly understood, ignored and also now manipulated or perverted to minimise its importance and continue to cause harm.*

* ***3- What do you think of organising such a day on medical independance ?***

*We identify trees from their fruits.*

*For this particular day, the tree is promising, well grown, watered, the soil is well turned, well kept, thanks to the force of the gardeners- organisers.*

*The roots are deep, thanks to the people who have been engaged in this battle, some for over many years. All is done so that the harvest is promising, so that it can produce more than many seminars, where we met, talked, but with no much result at the end.*

*But none can predict the results. We can at this stage confirm that the job has been done, and thank all the ones who have done it.*

*Philippe Foucras, 29 octobre 2012*