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▲ Lvl. 2

No state
reply yet

Belgium

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Multiple Complaints Filed Against Investigative Journalists David Leloup and Tom Cochez

SOURCE OF THREAT ▶ Non-state

CATEGORY  ▶ Harassment and intimidation of journalists

NO STATE REPLY YET

PARTNER: EFJ/IFJ

Several complaints have been filed against Belgian investigative journalists David Leloup and Tom Cochez by companies or individuals belonging to the political and financial community of the city of Liège. Following the publication of a series of articles between April 2017 and December 2018, in the weekly "Le Vif-L'Express", regarding a corruption case involving Socialist MP Alain Mathot and the Nethys company's business, led by Stéphane Moreau, former socialist mayor of the city of Ans, David Leloup has been the target of five complaints and two threats of complaints, within little less than a year, between 5 January and 28 December 2018. The journalist must answer criminal charges following a complaint filed by the Semeb company. Four complaints were also filed with the Journalistic Ethics Board (CDJ) by Alain Mathot and by the Nethys SA and Ogeo Fund companies. Brussels businessman Dominique Janne and Ogeo Fund threatened the journalist with two additional judicial complaints.

The journalist Tom Cochez is also targeted by two ethical complaints and faces two threats of judicial complaint, including one targeting the Flemish online investigative media Apache, which collaborates with Le Vif-L'Express on the above-mentioned investigation cases. The Belgian Association of Professional Journalists (AJP) is worried about this multiplication of complaints targeting those journalists. The AJP provided David Leloup with a lawyer, in order to respond to the judicial harassment he is obviously subjected to.

UPDATES

12 Aug 2019: On 16 May 2019, news about a Thailand villa which MP Alain Mathot allegedly bought with a €475,000 loan led the Public Prosecutor's Office at Liege to open a preliminary investigation on possible money laundering, and to order a home search.

➔ **Article from La Libre (in French): Alain Mathot éclaboussé par le Land Invest Gate**

13 May 2019: On 11 April 2019, the President of the Liege Court of First Instance decided to postpone the Ogeo Fund trial, given it was not on the court's role. The Liège pension fund Ogeo Fund sues Thierry Fiorilli, editor in chief of Le Vif/L'Express and journalists David Leloup and Tom Cochez for €500,000 in damages.

➔ **Article from RTBF.be (in French): "Nous préparons de nouvelles révélations", déclare David Leloup au sujet d'Ogeo Fund**

11 Mar 2019: On 8 March 2019, the Belgian association for the support of journalists and whistleblowers Xpress revealed that Nethys' and Stéphane Moreau's lawyer served a formal notice to the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ) to remove all references to its clients in the alert published on the Council of Europe Platform to strengthen the protection of journalism and the safety of journalists. The EFJ did not answer the demand.

➔ **Report by Xpress : "Nethys a tenté de censurer la Fédération européenne des journalistes (8 mars 2019)"**

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION



➔ **Decision of the Belgian Journalistic Ethics Board ((CDJ) considering the complaint filed by MP Alain Mathot unfounded**