



## INTERNATIONAL CARTOONING CENTER – SAINT JUST LE MARTEL – France

Press Statement du 10 janvier 2021.

The management of the Center is stunned by the notification of French President Emmanuel Macron to refuse the implantation of the European Cartooning House in Limousin area. Paris localisation was preferred was preferred, even though the infrastructure already exists in Limousin, and had many advantages, of security, experience, and recognized legitimacy.

It is a feeling of contempt and injustice that prevails here at the Caricature Center among all the volunteers. Seeing over 40 years of investing in the defense of Freedom of Expression through the cartoonish swept away by political choice without any justification leaves you speechless.

This choice goes against all the announcements, all the considerable assets, know-how, memory, commitment of the population of Saint Just Le Martel and local elected representatives of Limousin, to defend what already existed since 1982.

It is also a slap in the face to the 250 cartoonists who every year are travelling in september to Saint Just Le Martel for the International Festival, and who were mobilized in their large majority in favor of this place of meeting and celebration of Freedom of Expression.

The management of the Center dispute this decision because it fundamentally contravenes the interests of this project, in particular through a decentralization supposedly promised in the general policy speech of the Prime Minister.

We contest this project, because it goes against the flow of cultural opening up, even though Saint-Just Le Martel is easily and quickly accessible being at 1 hour from Paris by plane, or 3 hours by train or road.

We contest this project, because it discredits and denies all the experience of organizing exhibitions, and the very strong link that binds the community of designers to the International Center of Saint Just Le Martel, with more than 2,500 partners through the five continents.

Finally, we dispute it, because it goes against all the previous investments, made jointly, by European funds, the state, the Region, the Department, the Municipality in 2011. All had testified to the recognition and legitimacy of this place to make it the sanctuary of the defense of Freedom of Expression through satirical drawing.