

# International Ban Asbestos Secretariat

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*Campaigning for a global asbestos ban and justice for all asbestos victims!*



April 11, 2014

Yale University

**Attn:** Kimberly M. Goff-Crews, Secretary

P.O. Box 208230

New Haven, CT, U.S.A., 06520-8230

Re: Yale's Award to Stephan Schmidheiny

Dear Secretary Goff-Crews:

I am the Coordinator of the International Ban Asbestos Secretariat (IBAS) located in the United Kingdom. As noted on our website ([www.ibasecretariat.org](http://www.ibasecretariat.org)), IBAS was established in 2000 and provides a forum for the exchange of information between groups and individuals working to achieve a global asbestos ban and to alleviate the damage caused by the widespread use of asbestos. We have co-sponsored and supported national and international conferences to further these aims and to counter the asbestos industry's decades-long control of the information stream and to provide a platform for victims to speak out against the injustices they have suffered.

IBAS has been monitoring the ongoing tragedy and legal proceedings in and around Casale Monferrato, Italy and we have linked to media stories on our website. In 2012, we published the only English-language book about the ongoing Eternit asbestos scandal: *Eternit & The Great Asbestos Trial* which spotlighted the role of the Schmidheiny family in the global asbestos epidemic. [<http://ibasecretariat.org/eternit-great-asbestos-trial-toc.htm>] This book has been translated into Portuguese, Japanese and Thai.

We join in the Italian asbestos victims' plea to have Yale University review and revoke Stephan Schmidheiny's honorary doctorate. The Yale Administration may not be aware of this, but Yale's involvement in this story is spreading in the international media, with stories already appearing in the U.K.'s *Daily Mail*, in Brazil's *El Pais*, in several regional and national publications in Italy (*La Stampa* and *Il Monferrato*, among others), and, of course, in the United States. The story spread rapidly after it was picked up by the Associated Press news wire.

The Yale Administration needs to know that its award to Stephan Schmidheiny has honored a man that is a convicted criminal in Italy, who was found guilty of the deaths of thousands of Italian citizens and of creating an environmental disaster. Yale needs to know that Stephan Schmidheiny himself continued to operate asbestos facilities in Brazil, Lebanon, and South Africa (during Apartheid) throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Many of these business units were merely sold to new owners rather than closed down. No remediation of any Eternit Company site has been attempted by Schmidheiny, Eternit, or Schmidheiny's Avina Foundation. Yale also needs to know that criminal proceedings had already commenced in Italy (including Casale Monferrato specifically) in the 1980s and early 1990s, all in the years

leading up to Yale's award in 1996. We cannot believe that these historical facts were known to Yale in 1996 and, if they were, that Yale would have honored Schmidheiny if this information was available.

Far too often, we have seen the individuals responsible for the worldwide asbestos catastrophe evade justice. Yale should not allow itself to be used by Stephan Schmidheiny to whitewash his past or to popularize a revisionist history of his time leading a multinational asbestos giant. On a personal level, and on behalf of IBAS, we urge you to take immediate steps to rescind the award bestowed upon Mr. Schmidheiny, a man who has benefited from the financial operations of an international conglomerate which has injured thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of innocent human beings the world over. I, and asbestos victims around the world, eagerly await Yale's reply.

Sincerely,

Laurie Kazan-Allen (Mrs.)  
Coordinator: International Ban Asbestos Secretariat

Copies to: Peter Salovey, President of Yale University  
Attorney Christopher Meisenkothen, New Haven, CT (AFeVA)