

For immediate release

English-speaking Quebec Must Have a Stronger Voice in Conversation About Official Languages

Montreal – December 15, 2016 – The Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN) is generally pleased with the House Standing Committee on Official Languages’ report [Toward a New Action Plan for Official Languages and Building Momentum for Immigration in Francophone Minority Communities](#) however it is concerned that our community was somewhat sidelined by the study and one of its major recommendations.

“We are particularly pleased to see the Committee’s recommendations related to transparency, accountability, and involvement of official language minority communities in the Government of Canada’s official languages’ strategy,” said QCGN President James Shea. “The federal government must partner with linguistic minority communities in a real way. After all, this strategy is for the support of community vitality, and must therefore be developed and implemented by the community sector providing direct services to individuals. We want a seat at the table.”

“The QCGN understands that the key to supporting official language minority communities is ensuring a good relationship between the federal and provincial governments, however we are concerned that the committee opens an escape hatch for federal institutions by stating that they cannot do as much to help our communities in areas that require intergovernmental cooperation because of the need to “respect Quebec’s prerogatives”,” said Shea, noting the committee did not make a statement singling out other provinces for kid glove treatment.

“While QCGN was pleased to see our community’s concerns reflected in the report and its recommendations, it is unfortunate that only three of the 20 community witnesses invited to participate in this study represented Canada’s English linguistic minority community – that is English-speaking Quebec,” added QCGN Director General Sylvia Martin-Laforge. “We are disappointed the Committee did not hear from our community’s health and literacy sectors and the voice of vulnerable populations like youth, seniors, and communities that reflect our wide diversity.”

“We know that current committee members are trying to provide our community with an equal voice, but it is clear that we need a strong voice from English-speaking Quebec on this Committee,”

she added, recalling that the QCGN is advocating to make sure an English-speaking MP from Quebec is recruited.

The Quebec Community Groups Network is a not-for-profit organization bringing together 51 English-language community organizations across Quebec. A centre of evidence-based expertise and collective action, QCGN identifies, explores and addresses strategic issues affecting the development and vitality of the English-speaking community of Quebec. It also encourages dialogue and collaboration among its member organizations, individuals, community groups, institutions and leaders.

For further information:

Rita Legault, Director of Communications and Public Relations | rita.legault@qcgnc.ca

Telephone: 514-868-9044, ext. 223 | Mobile: 514-912-6555