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# Network News

The news that matters to English-speaking Quebecers



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### Yes, it's that word again

From QCGN President Eva Ludvig



The C-word has been popping up with increasing frequency lately, and I'm not talking about illness. It's a word that drifts in and out of Canadian political discourse from time to time, frequently accompanied by eye rolls, shudders and big sighs. I'm talking, of course, about the word Constitution.

Both the [Quebec Liberal Party](#) and now the [CAQ government](#) are promoting the idea that Quebec should have its own constitution, within the context of the Canadian Constitution. We wouldn't be the first province to have one (British Columbia has had a Constitution Act since 1996, subservient to the Canadian Constitution).

I raise this, not to get into the respective merits, or otherwise, of the different proposals, other than to note that they are quite different, as might be expected, but to remind us all that these issues, with which the country has grappled for decades, have not gone away. Indeed, the continued strength in opinion polls shown by the Parti Québécois (aggregator QC125 estimates the CAQ would only capture seven seats were an election held today) is one of the main drivers behind the resurgence of interest in matters constitutional.

As several national commentators have noted in recent weeks, the likelihood of turbulence in national unity files is growing; one worrying element is the degree to which many in the rest of Canada are unlikely to be sympathetic to fresh constitutional demands from Quebec – a prospect that could play into the hand of those eager for another referendum on sovereignty. Yes, perish the thought.

Quebecers have never voted in favour of sovereignty and present indications are that they aren't about to start. And most Canadians, Quebecers included, feel that all governments have far more pressing priorities right now (can you say Trump's

tariff threat?) than diving down another constitutional rabbit hole. Still, this is a file to which we in the QCGN must pay close attention - and will over the coming months.

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## QCGN stands up for the CBC

Both Director-General **Sylvia Martin-Laforge** and I had the opportunity to meet with Canadian parliamentarians on a couple of recent occasions to address the importance of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation to our English-speaking community in Quebec, particularly in the regions.

We visited the Senate Committee on Transport and Communications on November 27, and Sylvia met with the House of Commons committee on Heritage this past Monday, December 2.



"Rather than erode the CBC, we should be taking decisive action to strengthen its role as a public broadcaster," I told the Senators present. "This includes refocusing the CBC to ensure it is allocating resources to serve minority communities effectively; prioritizing local and regional content to ensure it is producing and amplifying stories that reflect the diversity of English-speaking Quebec; fostering collaboration to build stronger partnerships between the CBC and various organizations within the English-speaking community."



As Sylvia told MPs, we have need of a national broadcaster broadcasting in both official languages in Quebec, especially in rural and remote areas of the province. She spoke of the symbiotic relationship between the national broadcaster and Quebec's community-newspaper sector, as they are the ones who unearth the stories that matter to English-speaking communities within Quebec and rely on CBC to tell those stories to a national audience.

The CBC, a national institution if there ever was one, is under considerable threat in ways its Radio-Canada counterpart in French is not. We are not unmindful of the risks this presents to our community and will be paying close attention to this file as well.

## Special meeting of members

Reminder: On December 11, from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., we will hold a special meeting where three items will be on the agenda for approval. We must have a quorum at this meeting and so we are asking that you add it to your calendar today. Please use [this registration form](#) to confirm your presence.

For all our Association members, please remember that the delegate form must also be completed to attend. You can find both a [.PDF](#) version and a [Microsoft Word](#) version of the form here. Due to these unforeseen circumstances, and in order to accommodate as many members as possible, the due date for the return of the delegate form has been extended. Please submit this form as soon as possible.

The zoom link for the event will be sent just prior to the meeting. We want to thank you for your continued support and for your participation in this democratic process.

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## 'Tis the season!

Allow me to take a moment to extend a warm invitation to our annual holiday open house and breakfast next Tuesday, Dec. 10. Today (Dec. 5) is the deadline to RSVP, so we hope you'll join us as we celebrate our members' community achievements. It's also a wonderful opportunity to connect with those you might not get to see throughout the busy year and perhaps a chance to meet new people. Please [click here](#) now to confirm your attendance!



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## Meeting movers and shakers

Sylvia and I enjoyed a cordial conversation late last week with newly reappointed Minister of Official Languages, **Ginette Petitpas Taylor**.



The federal government has yet to name a Commissioner of Official Languages, and we were glad Minister Petitpas Taylor listened to our expectation that the government will follow tradition and appoint an English-speaking from Quebec as the next Commissioner. While the Minister was not yet fully briefed on many of the files in her new portfolio, she was attentive and receptive as Sylvia and I communicated the need to protect the federal government's ability to fund the vitality of the English-speaking community directly, by ensuring resources are transferred with guidelines for transparency and accountability, and that she hold dear the rights of young English-speaking Quebecers, indeed all Quebecers, as she negotiates with the government of Quebec on the use of French in in federally regulated workplaces.



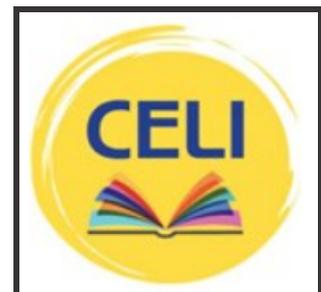
Last month, Sylvia and I were also pleased to welcome Parti Québécois MNA **Pascal Paradis**, who has proved to be a congenial point of contact with the PQ. At our second cordial meeting, M. Paradis displayed again an openness to working together, despite our ideological divergences, stressing that he continues to support within his caucus the concerns of the English-speaking community. The open dialogue lasted an hour, ending with a commitment to repeat the exercise more often and an eagerness to continue the conversation.

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## Community Empowerment Literacy Initiative Community Grants

I'm delighted to tell you to that a whopping 30 organizations applied for funding for Community Empowerment Literacy Grants. These have now gone to a third-party group which will score the applications. We hope to funding recipients soon.

I'd like to add my thanks to each of you who took the time to participate.



## Progress on Part VII

The QCGN's collaboration with the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat and the Official Languages Branch of the Canadian Heritage to ensure our community's priorities are reflected in regulations related to Part VII of the Official Languages Act continued this week with a Town Hall event on Thursday, December 5.

This followed a pre-consultation session held last April, where key stakeholders provided valuable insights on how to better include organizations in future consultations and emphasized the need for linguistic clauses in intergovernmental agreements. These insights were considered by the federal government, further supported by a unanimous resolution passed at our AGM in June 2024, which endorsed common principles to inform the regulations.

We were pleased to see these principles reflected in Thursday's presentation.

The Town Hall included member organizations of the QCGN, including the **Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network, Heritage Lower Saint Lawrence, Seniors Action Quebec, the Historical Linguistic Society of Laurentians, Coasters Association, English Parents' Committee Association, the Black Community Resource Centre, the Regional Association of West Quebecers, the English-speaking Catholic Council, Community Health and Social Services Network, the Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation, Youth for Youth, Quebec English Schoolboards Association, the Provincial Employment Roundtable, the English Language Arts Network**, and various other stakeholders.

As we've reported, Part VII is of paramount importance because it outlines the obligations of many federal institutions to enhance the vitality of Official Language Minority Communities (OLMCs), and shapes the delivery of services and funding for community organizations. Once adopted, the new regulations will establish guidelines by which government departments and institutions will advance the objectives of this legislative mandate.

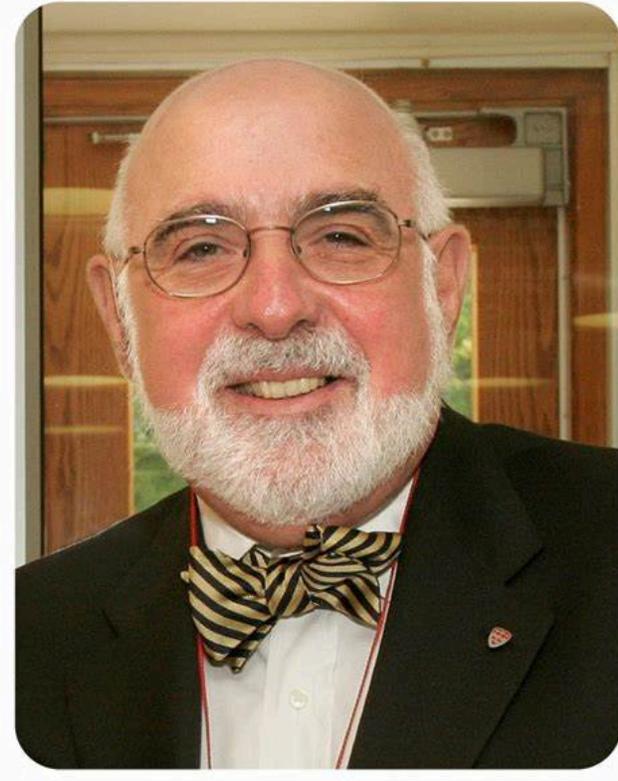
We expect the draft regulations to be tabled in the House of Commons early in the new year, after which the public will have an opportunity to comment following their publication in the Canada Gazette. We will closely follow this process, and, in our capacity as the Government of Canada's interlocutor with Quebec's English-speaking community, we will continue to mobilize our community to participate fully in the discussion to ensure our unique perspectives are fully accounted for.

*Davide Ventrone, Program and Policy Analyst*

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## Loss of a Pioneer in his field

We learned of the passing of **Dr. Abe Fuks** on December 2, and were saddened by the loss of such a tremendous person in our community. I had the honour of being with him on a panel on Bill 15 at Dawson College and had a long chat prior to the presentation. Dr. Fuks was a kind, warm human being, in addition to his scientific accomplishments. Among the many heartfelt tributes, his obituary reads in part: "In addition to his academic and professional achievements, Dr. Fuks was deeply engaged in numerous philanthropic and community projects."



"Dr. Fuks was widely recognized for his contributions. He was a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, a member of the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences, and an Officer of the Order of Canada. His legacy as a clinician, researcher, educator, and community leader leaves an enduring impact on the field of medicine and the lives of countless individuals who benefited from his knowledge, mentorship, and compassion."

Our Director-General, **Sylvia Martin-Laforge**, added that she found Dr. Fuks to be a dear man with great knowledge, skills and yet a most humble person. He will be dearly missed.

*Thank you for reading our regular newsletter. For up-to-date news about the Quebec Community Groups Network you can visit our website at [www.qcgn.ca](http://www.qcgn.ca) or follow us on Facebook, Twitter and/or Instagram.*



## Quebec Community Groups Network

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