

Elections DG admits case against AQ is unfounded

Lawyers representing the Director General of Elections withdrew four charges against Alliance Quebec in Court. The charges, which the DG now says were unfounded, were based on four editions of a regular Alliance Quebec publication called "Quebec Notes" published during the 1994 provincial election campaign

. The publication, which is still issued on a regular basis, offers commentary and analysis on political and social events of interest to English-speaking Quebecers. The DG's charges alleged that four editions of Quebec Notes violated the Electoral Act, which requires that expenditures to support one political option or another must be authorized by an official agent. DG lawyers admitted in court that, after further examination, they established that the publication was an ongoing initiative of Alliance Quebec's, and was thus fully legal.

"The decision by the Director General is an important vindication," noted AQ President Michael Hamelin. "It's essential that individuals and volunteer-based organizations like ours have the right to freely offer opinions and analysis during elections and referendums."

The Director General's investigation of this matter was launched on July 5, 1996 — about a month after the Alliance publicly declared that it expected to take the DG to court to demand a full inquiry on electoral fraud during the 1995 referendum. Alliance Quebec's action is moving forward, with an expected date in Quebec Superior Court for mid-February.