

QCGN approves new Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages

For Immediate Release

Ottawa, March 28, 2013 – The Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN) is pleased with the Government of Canada's renewed commitment to support the vitality of Quebec's English-speaking minority community through the Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages 2013-2018 that was officially launched Thursday morning in Ottawa.

"Canada's two official languages and two minority language communities are integral parts of this country's history and identity," said QCGN President Dan Lamoureux. "The investments announced today will certainly contribute to strengthening linguistic duality and the vitality of Canada's official language minority communities -- that is English-speaking Quebecers and our Francophone counterparts in the rest of Canada."

The QCGN, as well as many of our members and stakeholders, were fully engaged in the consultation process on the Roadmap and are pleased to see that many of our concerns and priorities have been addressed, said Lamoureux.

"We agree that the three pillars set out in the Roadmap – education, immigration and communities – are major mainstays that lead to strong, vital communities that allow them not only to survive, but to thrive," said Lamoureux.

However, it would seem that Quebec's English speaking community was once again left out under immigration programs, said QCGN Director General Sylvia Martin-Laforge, pointing out that the government's Roadmap states that "attracting immigrants and integrating them into minority communities is a key factor to maintaining community vitality".

"While this raises delicate jurisdictional issues in Quebec, the federal government has not been creative enough to find a solution for our English-speaking minority communities to ensure demographic stability," said Martin-Laforge, recalling this significant gap for our community was raised in recent reports from both the Senate and House of Commons Standing Committees on Official Languages. Martin-Laforge said the QCGN remains hopeful that the federal government and Citizenship and Immigration can find innovative ways to ensure renewal in our communities through other programs.

Despite that major disappointment, QCGN was pleased with renewed and new programs in the areas of Education and Community Support.

“Educating our children in the language of Quebec’s majority is the most important factor in ensuring our youth can find jobs and remain in Quebec,” said President Dan Lamoureux, noting the Roadmap was also applauded by QCGN members, including Youth Employment Services (YES).

“While the details of support remain to be seen, we are confident the government will provide us with the support we need to ensure English-speaking Quebecers and others whose first official language is not French to find meaningful careers, start successful businesses, and support themselves through their artistic endeavours,” commented YES president John Ayles.

Other members approved new Roadmap initiatives including the Community Cultural Action Fund, which will allow artists and performers to reach out to the English-speaking minority throughout the province and, most especially, to the majority language community in Quebec; a Literacy and Essential Skills Initiative that will help adults gain essential skills needed to gain and maintain employment; as well as the Social Partnership Initiative which encourages communities to find new revenue sources to develop community based activities that address social and economic issues that affect them.

The Quebec Community Groups Network (www.qcgn.ca) is a not-for-profit organization bringing together 41 English-language community organizations across Quebec. Its mission is to identify, explore and address strategic issues affecting the development and vitality of English-speaking Quebec and to encourage dialogue and collaboration among its member organizations, individuals, community groups, institutions and leaders.

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