

For immediate release

Quebec's English-speaking Communities Need Support to Integrate Newcomers

Montreal – May, 7 2015 – Quebec's English-speaking minority community and Francophone minority communities outside Quebec need the support of the federal government to ensure they take full advantage of the positive impacts that immigration can have on them, said Commissioner of Official Languages, Graham Fraser, as he delivered in his 2014-2015 Annual Report released earlier today.

Fraser directly addresses the issue of the immigration of English speakers to Quebec. "This oft-neglected topic is critical for the revitalization of the province's English-speaking communities. Some communities, especially those outside urban areas, are having difficulty attracting a sufficient number of English-speaking immigrants to revitalize their institutions over the long term," he said. "To integrate successfully into Quebec society, English-speaking immigrants who choose to settle in the province's English-speaking communities need support. This invaluable assistance is provided by community organizations. They not only make English-speaking immigrants feel less isolated, but they also help them find jobs and learn French. These organizations must have sufficient resources in order to provide these services."

Indeed immigration, and migration from the rest of Canada, are the primary sources of renewal for Quebec's English-speaking community and the government of Quebec is not listening to our concerns, said QCGN President Dan Lamoureux. Earlier this year, Quebec Immigration Minister Kathleen Weil and the Committee on Citizen Relations undertook public hearings on a discussion paper entitled *Towards a New Quebec Policy on Immigration, Diversity and Inclusion*. This key policy discussion paper was utterly silent about our community and our role in integrating immigrants into Quebec.

"Our communities are integrating newcomers into Quebec society without the support and participation of the Government of Quebec," said Lamoureux. "We have repeatedly tried to involve the provincial government in these activities - especially in supporting newcomer

programs run by regional community groups. Without Quebec's support, there is very little our community can expect in the way of support from our federal partners."

"We understand that the federal government's hands are tied in Quebec due to the Canada – Quebec Accord on immigration which allows Quebec to select its own immigrants," added QCGN Director General Sylvia Martin-Laforge. Martin-Laforge said Quebec's English-speaking community had been promised research funding from Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) which, as a federal institution, has an obligation to support the vitality Quebec's English-speaking minority communities.

This is not the first time the Commissioner has brought up the immigration issue for our community, Martin-Laforge pointed out, remarking that he discussed it in his 2008-2009 report. "But there has been little to no progress since then," she said. "The QCGN and the community have invested significant time and resources to engage CIC in narrow areas like research where they can directly support our community. However, research programs specifically set up in the federal *Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages 2013-2018: Education, Immigration, Communities* to support our community have proven nearly impossible to access."

The Quebec Community Groups Network (www.qcgn.ca) is a not-for-profit organization bringing together more than 40 English-language community organizations across Quebec. As a centre of evidence-based expertise and collective action it identifies, explores and addresses strategic issues affecting the development and vitality of the English-speaking community of Quebec and encourages dialogue and collaboration among its member organizations, individuals, community groups, institutions and leaders.

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