



PERT's Recommendations Included in New Report on the Economic Development of Official Language Minority Communities

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Outreach

On October 24, 2024, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages released their report on the [Economic Development of Official Language Minority Communities in Canada](#). This report has been in development since the fall of 2023, and PERT previously provided [testimony](#) and a [brief](#) as part of the consultation process. We were pleased to see the inclusion of several of our recommendations in this report.

Inclusion of two key recommendations

Employment Strategy

The inclusion of PERT's recommendation that the Government of Canada adopt an employment strategy for English-speaking Quebecers is a significant step forward in addressing the long-standing challenges English speakers encounter in accessing employment opportunities across the province.

More specifically, the recommendation emphasized that the employment strategy should:

oritize access to free and accessible French-language training programs;

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work toward forging a partnership between the participating federal institutions and Quebec's English-speaking communities

work toward improving Canada–Quebec intergovernmental and interdepartmental coordination on the employability and economic development of Quebec's English-speaking communities; and

fund research into the employability and economic development of Quebec's English-speaking communities.

Most importantly, the recommendation recognizes that this is an area of shared jurisdiction and that there is a need to coordinate with the province. We are encouraged by the potential positive impact that the implementation of this recommendation will have on the employability of Quebec's English speakers and look forward to seeing the province and federal government collaborate in this crucial area.

Improved data collection

We are also reassured by the inclusion of our recommendation regarding the improvement of the data environment for our community:

That the Government of Canada request that Statistics Canada collect language data in its monthly Labour Force Survey in order to provide socioeconomic development to stakeholders with an up-to-date picture of the national, provincial, territorial and regional employment and unemployment rates for official language minority communities.

As our brief states: “more resources must be dedicated to [...] increasing the available data on official language minority communities. Data is particularly needed for English-speaking communities outside of the Montréal region whose specific reality has been historically overlooked in economic portraits of Québec's English speakers.”

We are hopeful this new data collection will be implemented as soon as possible, and that we will be able to access more timely and regular information about our community.

Concerns

Despite the inclusion of these two recommendations, we are concerned by the presence of two problematic assertions in the report.

Definition of our community

First, the report recycles different definitions of the English-speaking community of Quebec imposed on us by those external to our community. This contravenes the clear consensus in Quebec's English-speaking community that First Official Language Spoken (FOLS) is the best statistical method available. This method of data collection not only aligns with self-identification, but also gives us the most practical information to understand needs, including access to English services and French language training resources.

It should also be noted that while other Official Linguistic Minority Communities (OLMCs) don't always indicate how they define their community, their numbers tend to be much higher than those derived through the FOLS method.