

CONFERENCE ON 25 YEARS OF THE *FRENCH
LANGUAGE SERVICES ACT:*
SUMMARY OF PANEL DISCUSSIONS



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**Message from the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services
and Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs**

The Office of Francophone Affairs is proud to support the Conference on 25 years of the *French Language Services Act* (FLSA) and I extend a warm welcome to all participants.

The FLSA, unanimously adopted by the Legislative Assembly on November 18, 1986, is the culmination of many years of efforts on the part of the Franco-Ontarian community.

This framework law – reinforced throughout the years – has not only enabled a substantial and tangible improvement in terms of French services offered by the Government of Ontario's ministries and agencies, but also contributed to the blossoming of the Francophone community.

This conference is going to be an opportunity to celebrate the progress made to date and to explore different avenues for the future so that Ontario's Francophones continue to actively participate in the province's development.

I wish you all a wonderful conference!

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "M Meilleur".

The Honorable Madeleine Meilleur



CONFERENCE ON 25 YEARS OF THE *FRENCH LANGUAGE SERVICES ACT*

As one of the world's largest bilingual universities and the university with the largest number of Francophone students in Canada outside Quebec, we are pleased to be hosting this symposium marking a landmark piece of legislation. We offer a warm welcome to all participants.

The *French Language Services Act* recognized a fundamental reality of our province: the French language has deep roots here. It provided long overdue support for a community that had fought for decades for its language and culture, and in a broader sense, to be recognized as full partners in our great Canadian endeavour.

Since its founding in 1848, the University of Ottawa has had a special mission to serve the Franco-Ontarian community, enabling Franco-Ontarians to take their rightful place in all fields of activity. We are proud to say that our destiny and that of Ontario's Francophones are forever joined.

Enjoy the conference,

Mr. Allan Rock
Rector | University of Ottawa

Dear guests,

I would like to sincerely thank you for accepting our invitation to the Conference on 25 years of the *French Language Services Act*. Over the next two days, you will have the opportunity to both listen to and participate in essential discussions about the past and future of Ontario's Francophone communities.

While French speakers have been living in Ontario for more than 400 years — ever since the arrival of Étienne Brûlé in Huronia —, the legislation guaranteeing French-language services in our province is still quite young. In fact, within the context of a lifetime, 25 years is the age of a young adult for whom the hope of a promising future lies ahead.

This is the image that I would like to propose as a starting point for our discussions. After all, the *Act* is a tool that looks towards the future. But at the same time, we shouldn't ignore the road already travelled because to know where we're going, we need to understand where our journey began.

Can we improve the situation for French-speaking citizens even further? Who will be that Francophone citizen 25 years from now? Does the *Act* simply serve French-speaking citizens, their community, or both? How can we make this law even more relevant for the next 25 years?

These are just some of the questions that you will be asked to answer and, as usual, we will be listening carefully. We look forward to hearing your voices and listening to your points of view.

I wish you all a wonderful conference!

Mr. François Boileau
French Language Services Commissioner

Dear participants, partners and distinguished guests,

The Association des juristes d'expression française de l'Ontario (AJEFO) welcomes you to this conference marking the *French Language Services Act's* 25th anniversary.

This fundamental statute, which ensures the preservation of French language in our province, supports AJEFO's access to justice in French mandate.

AJEFO has been working for over 30 years in order to ensure that Ontarians can access every level of our justice system in French. To achieve its goals, AJEFO works on the political, communal and educational fronts whether to support bilingualism on the bench or to teach teens and adults about justice sector career options.

AJEFO is proud to have partnered with others in order to offer you this conference which not only celebrates the act's anniversary but also provides a look to the future and to what needs to be done to make Ontario a true model for French language minority regions.

I wish you all a good conference !

Mrs. Danielle Manton
Executive Director | AJEFO

As president and CEO of GroupeMédia TFO, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the Conference on the 25 years of the *French Language Services Act*. This anniversary offers a rewarding opportunity to exchange and participate in forums that not only celebrate the achievements but also trace new a course for the future of this Law.

The *French Language Services Act* plays an essential role in the public institutions serving the Francophone communities of Ontario. It is thanks to this Act that today Francophone and Francophile citizens can benefit from a wide range of services offered in French. The celebration of the 25th anniversary of this Act represents an important milestone in the affirmation of our rights and should be a source of pride for all of us. I wish you all a pleasant and fruitful conference!

Mr. Glenn O'Farrell
President and CEO | GroupeMédia TFO

A CONFERENCE CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF THE *FRENCH LANGUAGE SERVICES* *ACT (FLSA)*

November 17th and 18th, 2011
The Desmarais Building, University of Ottawa

Thursday, November 17th

12:00 p.m. Registration

1:00 p.m. Welcome Message

- Sébastien Grammond – Dean, Civil Law Section, University of Ottawa
- Bruce Feldthusen – Dean, Common Law Section, University of Ottawa

1:10 p.m. Opening Speech

- Graham Fraser – Commissioner of Official Languages

1:30 p.m. **PANEL 1 - 25 Points Concerning the *FLSA* and the Office of the French Language Services Commissioner (OFLSC)**

Sponsored by the Office of the French Language Services Commissioner

Moderator:

- Pascale Giguère – Senior Counsel and Manager, Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages

Panelists:

- Daniel Bourgeois – Executive Director, Beaubassin Research Institute: 5 positive outcomes of the *FLSA*
- Mark Power – Law Professor, University of Ottawa and associate at Heenan Blaikie: 5 areas of improvement for the *FLSA*
- Danielle Manton – Executive Director, AJEFO (Association of French Speaking Jurists of Ontario): 5 achievements of the OFLSC
- Linda Cardinal – Chairholder, Francophonie & Public Policy, University of Ottawa: 5 challenges or areas of improvement for the OFLSC
- Jocelyne Samson – Manager of Investigations, Executive Policy Advisor, Office of the French Language Services Commissioner: 5 attitudes to cultivate about the OFLSC

Summary:

The first panel session will provide an assessment of the *French Language Services Act*, while analyzing its *raison d'être*, its strengths and weaknesses, as well as areas in need of improvement. It will also provide an opportunity to focus on the role played, and the challenges faced, by the Office of the French Language Services Commissioner.

2:30 p.m. Refreshment Break - Kiosks

Sponsored by Timothy's

3:00 p.m. PANEL 2 - 25 Reasons to Request French Language Services

Sponsored by the Office of Francophone affairs

Moderator:

- **Linda Lauzon** – Management Consultant

Panelists:

- **Oliva Roy** – President, *Fédération des aînés et des retraités francophones de l'Ontario* (FAFO): 5 points on senior citizens
- **Ghislaine Sirois** – Executive Director, *Action ontarienne contre la violence faite aux femmes* (AOcVF): 5 points on women
- **Amélie Hien** – Professor/Researcher, Laurentian University: 5 points on immigrants and newcomers
- **Albert Nolette** – President, the *Regroupement étudiant de common law en français*, University of Ottawa: 5 points on youth
- **Denis Vaillancourt** – President, the *Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario* (AFO): 5 points on Francophone community organizations

Summary:

Why is requesting services in French still relevant today? Why and how should the Ontario government offer these services? In what way can community organizations, youth, seniors or Francophone immigrants support this process? All of these questions will be discussed during this panel session.

4:00 p.m. Reading from Speeches delivered at the Legislative Assembly in 1986

Moderator:

- **François Larocque** – Vice-Dean, Common Law Section, University of Ottawa

Presenters:

- **Bernard Grandmaître** - Former Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs of Ontario
- **Bob Rae** - Former Member of Provincial Parliament, Legislative Assembly of Ontario
- **Gilles Morin** – Former Member of Provincial Parliament, Legislative Assembly of Ontario
- **Ronald Caza** - Partner, Heenan Blaikie
- **Étienne Saint-Aubin** – Executive Director, Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Legal Clinic
- **Joseph Morin** – Student, University of Ottawa
- **Marie-Michèle Pellerin-Auprix** – Student, University of Ottawa

5:30 p.m. RECEPTION , The National Arts Centre

Sponsored by the Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens (AEFO)

7:00 p.m. BANQUET, The National Arts Centre

Cultural entertainment sponsored by the Montfort Hospital

Wine sponsored by Heenan Blaikie

- **Stéphane Paquette** – Master of Ceremonies

Friday, November 18th

9:00 a.m. PANEL 3 - 25 Reasons to Love the New Francophonie in Ontario

Sponsored by the Health Cluster of the Government of Ontario

Moderator:

- **François-Olivier Dorais** – Coordinator for the Secretariat, *États généraux de la francophonie d'Ottawa*

Panelists:

- **Christine Dallaire** – Associate Professor, University of Ottawa: 5 points on youth and diversity
- **Cheik Tall** – Communications and Leadership Consultant: 5 points on the integration of immigrants
- **Diane Gérin-Lajoie** – Professor, University of Toronto: 5 points on bilingual identity
- **Max Cooke** – Vice-President, French for the Future, board member, Canadian Parents for French (CPF) Ontario: 5 points on Francophiles
- **Joël Beddows** – Associate Professor and Chair, Department of Theatre, University of Ottawa: 5 points on cultural wealth

Summary :

French-speaking Ontario is undergoing a radical transformation: an increasingly fragmented identity, families that are becoming continually more exogamous and ever-greater diversity among immigrants. This panel session will provide you with an overview of the reasons to love the new face of Ontario's Francophonie, which seeks to be inclusive and pluralistic.

10:00 a.m. Refreshment Break – Kiosks

Sponsored by Timothy's

10:30 a.m. PANEL 4 - 25 Reasons to Request Designation

Sponsored by GroupMédia TFO

Moderator:

- **Linda Godin** – Journalist and Reporter, TFO

Panelists:

- **Jacinthe Desaulniers** – Director, French Language Health Services Network of Eastern Ontario: 5 points on the health sector
- **Denis Hubert-Dutrisac** – President, Collège Boréal: 5 points on post-secondary education
- **Raymond Lemay** – Executive Director, VALORIS for Children and Adults of Prescott-Russell: 5 points on the child and youth sector
- **Jeannine Proulx** – Former Executive Director, *Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario* (ACFO) Mille-Îles: 5 points on regional designation
- **Paul Genest** – Deputy Minister, Office of Francophone Affairs of Ontario: 5 points on the OFA's role in designations

Summary:

The French Language Services Act divides Ontario into 25 regions with 200 designated organizations. This panel session will feature presentations by representatives of designated institutions operating in various sectors. The role of the Office of Francophone Affairs in determining geographic and institutional designations will also be discussed.

11:45 a.m. Lunch Break

Sponsored by NAV Canada

1:00 p.m. PANEL 5 - 25 Steps for the future

Sponsored by the Education and Community Services Cluster of the Government of Ontario

Moderator:

- **François Larocque** – Vice-Dean, Common Law Section, University of Ottawa

Panelists:

- **Ronald Caza** – Partner, Heenan Blaikie: 5 points on French language services in Ontario's municipalities
- **Ibrahima Diallo** – Professor, University of Saint-Boniface: 5 points on the Canadian and Manitoban Francophonie: multilingual, mobile, integrated and diverse
- **Michel Giroux** – Director, Department of Law and Justice, Laurentian University: 5 points on a Franco-Ontarian University
- **Anne Gilbert** – Director, Centre for Research on French Canadian Culture, University of Ottawa: 5 benefits of Francophone communities in Ontario
- **Pierre Foucher** – Professor, University of Ottawa: 5 points on Ontario's national influence – a pan-Canadian linguistics debate

Summary:

This panel session will serve as an opportunity to envisage the future by asking a number of questions, including: What will the face of the Francophonie look like in 25 years? How do the contributions of Francophones enrich the province? And why is the *FLSA* an important aspect of Canada's very foundation? In what way will the future of French-language agencies and institutions help build vitality in the community?

2:30 p.m. Closing Remarks

- **François Boileau** – 25 words by the French Language Services Commissioner

INTRODUCTION

The Conference on 25 Years of the *French Language Services Act* was held in the University of Ottawa's Desmarais Building on November 17 and 18, 2011, a quarter century to the day after the *Act* was passed. The theme of the conference was *Our Rights, Our Actions, Our Future*. This event was the result of a joint effort between the Faculty of Law of the University of Ottawa, the Office of the French Language Services Commissioner, the Association of French Speaking Jurists of Ontario (AJEFO) and Groupe Média TFO, with the support of the Office of Francophone Affairs.

Organized around five panels, the conference produced debates on ideas and gave rise to discussions that were sometimes heated but always constructive. Intended for the general public as well as for researchers and jurists, the conference was a resounding success, bringing together nearly 200 representatives from a range of backgrounds and sectors of activity in Ontario's French-speaking community to discuss language rights. The panel discussions are summarized below. Some of the summaries contain links to the panelists' presentations. However, the Office of the French Language Services Commissioner is not responsible for Web content placed in "external links" in some of the summaries, and these presentations may therefore be available only in the language of the website in question.

WELCOME MESSAGE

Bruce Felthusen, Dean, Faculty of Law, Common Law Section
Sébastien Grammond, Dean, Faculty of Law, Civil Law Section

In declaring the conference open, besides the usual acknowledgements the two deans quickly went straight to the heart of the matter, emphasizing that all decision-making authorities of both sections of the Faculty of Law had unanimously asked that the Faculty be officially designated under the *French Language Services Act*! Both deans said the main unanswered questions involve the impact this designation would have on programs and services and reminded the audience that the University has had a Regulation on Bilingualism ever since 1974.

OPENING SPEECH

Graham Fraser, Commissioner of Official Languages of Canada

The Commissioner of Official Languages of Canada, Graham Fraser, delivered the opening address, declaring at the start that this conference would celebrate not only the 25th anniversary of the *French Language Services Act (FLSA)*, but also the relentless work of Franco-Ontarians. He reminded the audience that before 1971, French Language was primarily a private language, not a public language. He also said that over the years, people seem to have forgotten all the Francophones and their supporters who played such an important role in Canadian unity. He referred to the "Bonne Entente" of 1916, a significant group that sought to reconcile the growing rift between Ontario and Quebec. In the same vein, there was the Unity League of Ontario, whose goal was the repeal of the notorious *Regulation 17* that prohibited the teaching of French in Ontario schools.

As the Commissioner of Official Languages sees it, there aren't any 'good old days': relations between the two official language communities have always been difficult in Ottawa. It was not until the *Victoria Charter* in 1971 that significant progress was made in the debate on the language question. He recalled that at that time, the Government of Ontario was prepared to accept the status of a bilingual province. He added that the collapse of the Victoria Accord and the events that followed – Bill 22, Bill 101 and the 1980 sovereignty referendum in Quebec, then the constitutional negotiations of 1981 – led Ontario to take a different approach from the one that seemed to be taking shape in 1971. The *French Language Services Act*, he reminded the audience, was enacted on the eve of the adoption of the Meech Lake Accord.

Mr. Fraser went on to list some of the successes of the Franco-Ontarian community that have marked the 25-year existence of the *French Language Services Act*, and to recall the role of some of the community's institutions, such as TFO, La Cité Collégiale, and Montfort Hospital. The Commissioner spoke of the importance of the legal protection the *FLSA* provides to the institutions that are designated agencies under the Act.

Mr. Fraser concluded by encouraging students to pursue their studies in French and said it was important for the University of Ottawa to be designated as an institution subject to the *French Language Services Act*.

PANEL 1 - 25 points concerning the *French Language Services Act* and the Office of the French Language Services Commissioner (FLSC)

The first panel assessed the *French Language Services Act*, analyzing its *raison d'être*, strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. The discussion was also an opportunity to consider the role and challenges of the Office of the French Language Services Commissioner.

- **Daniel Bourgeois**, Executive Director of the Beaubassin Institute, listed Five Positive Outcomes of the *French Language Services Act*: symbolic recognition of the Ontario government bilingualism; the entrenchment of the territorial approach in legislation for the first time; the exclusion of municipal services and the reactions that ensued. He also underscored the fact that the *FLSA* includes a positive and proactive preamble that recognizes the historic and honourable role the French language has played in Ontario. For the fifth positive outcome, he pointed to the amendment of the *FLSA* in 2007 to create the language ombudsman role. Finally, he challenged the audience to imagine bilingualism in Canada without the *FLSA* in Ontario. The territorial approach resulting from the Laurendeau-Dunton Commission was adapted by Ontario Premier Bill Davis and later taken up not only in the *FLSA*, but also in other similar laws elsewhere in the country.
- The theme discussed by **Mark Power**, Assistant Professor of Law at the University of Ottawa and a lawyer with Heenan Blaikie, was Five Areas of Improvement for the *FLSA*. Mr. Power wished to deconstruct certain myths, particularly with regard to the designation of agencies. In his opinion, there is a need to clarify which government agencies, and which institutions of the Legislature, are subject to the *FLSA*. He also advocated drawing on federal legislation to improve the *FLSA* by granting the Commissioner the right to take court action through the addition of the equivalent of Section VII of the *Official Languages Act*. He called for the *FLSA* to be reviewed on a regular basis every ten years, as provided in New Brunswick's *Official Languages Act*. The last improvement he proposed was to enshrine the *FLSA* in the Constitution, a process that would require a simple majority in the House of Commons if the Government of Ontario asked for a bill to be put forward on this matter, as provided in subsection 52(2)(b) of the *Constitution Act*, 1982.
- The Executive Director of the Association of French Speaking Jurists of Ontario (AJEFO), **Danielle Manton**, spoke about Five Accomplishments of the Office of the French Language Services Commissioner. The first success she underlined was having built a credible institution, known and respected by the government and the public, in just four years. It was in response to the Commissioner's very first recommendation that the Government of Ontario adopted the new Inclusive Definition of Francophone, a first in Canada. She said the new regulation on services provided by third parties on behalf of government ministries and agencies and the new directive for communications in French by the Ontario Government further reinforced language rights in Ontario. Finally, Ms. Manton called attention to the creation of the Bench and Bar Committee on French Language Services, to improve services in French in the field of justice.
- What would be Five Challenges or Areas of Improvement for the Office of the French Language Services Commissioner? That was the question addressed by **Linda Cardinal**, Professor at the School of Political Studies and chairholder of the University of Ottawa's Chaire de recherche sur la francophonie et les politiques publiques.

Prof. Cardinal suggested that the Commissioner conduct a study to document the reasons why the *French Language Services Act* should be enshrined in the Canadian Constitution. To complement the legal and political dimension of this institution, the researcher would like to see the Commissioner report to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. Her third challenge for the Commissioner was to study the issue of Francophone representation in Ontario's political, institutional and administrative life and to identify possible solutions. Another point raised was the adoption of a mechanism for differentiated Francophone analysis to see that the government's obligation to provide services in French was accompanied by a proactive offer and the tools needed for effective and efficient service provision. The presentation concluded with the idea that any transfer of French-language services to third parties should be done within an approach by and for Francophones.

- The Manager of Investigations/Executive Policy Advisor in the Office of the French Language Services Commissioner, **Jocelyne Samson** suggested Five Attitudes to Cultivate in Relation to the Office of the French Language Services Commissioner (OFLSC). The first of these is to take ownership of the OFLSC by using its services and by making it known as an institution that protects the rights of minorities in the face of majority power. The second attitude to develop, says Ms Samson, is to perceive the OFLSC as a language ombudsman that makes government accountable to citizens and helps improve the efficiency of public administration and access to quality services. In exercising its functions, the Office of the Commissioner acts as a mediator. It remains impartial and at arm's length and sees complaints as a quality control mechanism that creates opportunities to make improvements. Perceiving the OFLSC as a driver of, and a partner in, community development are the other attitudes that Ms. Samson would like to see citizens develop. Indeed, being Francophones in a minority situation requires constant efforts of affirmation. However, with the help of citizens and community groups, the OFLSC identifies the systemic problems that must be corrected and contributes to enlarging the space occupied by Francophones.

PANEL 2 - 25 Reasons to Request French-Language Services

Why is requesting services in French still relevant today? Why and how should the Ontario government provide these services? In what way can community organizations and Francophone youth, seniors or immigrants support this process? All these questions were discussed during this panel session.

- **Oliva Roy**, President of the *Fédération des aînés et des retraités francophones de l'Ontario* (FAFO), dealt with Five Points on Senior Citizens. According to Mr. Roy, what is important to seniors is being able to pass on to future generations the tools they need to ensure the survival of the French language and Francophone communities. To do this, they must ensure that their language rights are respected. In addition, seniors need access to medical services and long-term care in French so they can grow old in their own language, feeling that their language and identity are respected. Another point was the importance of access to justice in French and being able to defend their interests using their own language. Mr. Roy added that the French-language media are an important tool because they reflect the society they serve. The concept of community vitality concluded this presentation: the idea of living in French in order to ensure the survival of Francophone communities for future generations.
- Why is it so important for a woman who is a victim of violence to be able to receive services in French? This question was asked by **Ghislaine Sirois**, Executive Director of *Action ontarienne contre la violence faite aux femmes* (AOcVF) to introduce her topic, Five Points on Women. She began by explaining that it is easier for a woman in a vulnerable situation to find the right words in her own language. It is important to find the words to begin healing, in some of the same words heard when the violence was being experienced. Ms. Sirois continued her talk by underlining the high risks that can arise from misunderstandings between the patient or client and a health care or other worker, for example in terms of questions asked or instructions given. Her third point was that a French-speaking woman has the right to receive the same information as an English speaker, including legal information, in critical situations. Moreover, a woman who is a victim of violence must be involved and feel that she is being heard when receiving specialized services. She must feel that she is an active participant in the decisions which, obviously, are all about her. In this regard, an active offer of services is of the utmost importance. Ms. Sirois concluded her presentation by saying that obtaining services in French enables a woman who is a victim of violence to regain the power she has lost.

- **Amélie Hien**, a Research Professor at Laurentian University, took a targeted approach to the question of Health Care for Francophone Immigrants and Newcomers. For them, asking for services in French is a way to counteract the frustrations and humiliations caused by a lack of fluency in English. It also prevents misdiagnosis or errors that could be fatal when immigrants try with difficulty to speak English. In expressing themselves in French, Francophone immigrants are given the opportunity to better understand their treatment plan and to make informed decisions, knowing what medical treatment is being given and why. Being able to speak French in these situations enables them to push back against assimilation and encourages Francophones to keep their language and contribute to the vitality and development of the community. In health, services in French are not a language issue, but truly a care issue. Finally, Ms. Hien concluded by reiterating that it is important to promote the *FLSA* to immigrants and to encourage them to request services in French.
- In his presentation of Five Points on Youth, the President of the *Regroupement étudiant de common law en français* at the University of Ottawa, **Albert Nolette**, asked: What do we mean when we say “youth”? Are we referring to young adults, young parents, young children, young professionals? For Mr. Nolette, young Francophones should first of all have access to programs of equal quality to those offered in English, in order to keep students in their schools and their communities. To do this, young people should have a role in managing educational programs. Thirdly, he stressed the importance of having post-secondary programs and services available in French to educate future generations in their language. A fourth point: ensuring service delivery in French for youth entering the labour market. Young people must feel sufficiently comfortable requesting services in French to develop a sense of commitment to the community and of ownership of their Francophone identity. For his fifth and final point, Mr. Nolette suggested demonstrating to students that the French language is useful and that it is valued in the labour market, as a way of contributing to developing their identities as Francophones.
- The challenge of presenting Five Points on Francophone Community Organizations was given to **Denis Vaillancourt**, President of the *Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario* (AFO). Mr. Vaillancourt said the community must be mobilized and its values reaffirmed, in order to ensure that the language and culture will be passed on to future generations through day-to-day living. Francophones should be able to live and work entirely in French in all areas of activity. This means expanding the space for Francophone life in all regions of Ontario. His third point was for organizations to promote the visibility of French and the regard shown for its use across Ontario to ensure respect for language rights – respect that would ensure the availability of services in French. Mr. Vaillancourt believes that Francophone organizations not only contribute to the development of Ontario's Francophone community, but also to the society as a whole. The last point on which he focused was the ability of the Franco-Ontarian community to act and develop in all areas while developing the “Francophone reflex”.

PANEL 3 - 25 Reasons to Love the New Francophonie in Ontario

Francophone Ontario is undergoing a radical transformation: an increasingly fragmented identity, families becoming more and more blended with marriages outside the community, and immigrants with ever more diverse origins. This panel session provided an overview of the reasons to love the new face of Ontario's Francophonie, which seeks to be inclusive and pluralistic.

- **Christine Dallaire**, Associate Professor at the University of Ottawa, highlighted Five points on Youth and Diversity. Reporting on a research study she conducted among young Francophones – with the caveat that her study involved young people actively involved in their community – Prof. Dallaire emphasized that these young people have a feeling of inclusion which fits in well with their linguistic and cultural diversity. For them, being Francophone remains a focal point that brings them together and gives them a feeling of being integrated regardless of their ethnic origins, place of birth or mother tongue. Moreover, she noted that Francophone cultural production and consumption are among the values they identify with. As well, the youth are proud of their language and culture, even though many of them were not born in Canada. Being Franco-Ontarian is not dependent on Franco-Ontarian ancestry. They have no hesitation in identifying themselves as Francophones and demanding services in French. These young people

do not feel a connection to their identity when they listen to music in English, for example, but the connection is there when the music they are listening to is in French. Lastly, Prof. Dallaire said these young people are engaged with the Francophonie because they have a sense of belonging and a connection to it. They are youth who have chosen to be Francophone and who have confidence in the possibilities the future holds. One important thing to keep in mind, which she brought up in response to a question from the audience, is that in activities involving Francophones and Francophiles, a nucleus of 70-75% Francophones is essential for the event or project to be a success, in French.

- Communications and Media Consultant **Cheick Tall** presented *Five Points on the Integration of Immigrants*. Mr. Tall shared his personal experience of integration and talked about the reality of newcomers' arrival in Francophone communities today. He added that we need to "take the guilt out" of the process of welcoming immigrants and refugees. He also suggested working with those who choose to integrate in French, because they are the ones who can influence others by leveraging the common denominator of language. Furthermore, he stressed that first-generation immigrants are torn between the will to preserve their own heritage and the desire to propel their children toward success. That first generation sometimes has the feeling of betraying their native culture which can only be Francophone. But Mr. Tall also spoke of the importance of addressing the recurrent problem of employability and the recognition of degrees and professional training. According to him, a new immigrant will integrate first into the language group that gives him or her a first job, because there can be no integration without employment.
- **Diane Gérin-Lajoie**, a Full Professor at the University of Toronto, delivered her *Five Points on Bilingual Identity*. This is a subject that worries some people. Ontario's Francophone population is becoming very diverse, with rural-to-urban migration, more and more families of mixed backgrounds, and Francophone immigration. The result is the emergence of a fragmented, patchy identity. The concept of identity is a social construct that involves belonging to a group, which is a shifting phenomenon and a positioning that depends on social practices. As well, Prof. Gérin-Lajoie stressed that a bilingual identity is not defined only by the ability to speak French and English, but more by the blending of two cultures, which may conflict with one another at certain points. It is a new form of identity. She also emphasized the importance of everyone's contribution to this social phenomenon, because this diversity brings added value. Finally, it is important to support the development of a sense of belonging for people involved in this new dynamic that is an entirely appropriate part of the new Francophonie in Ontario. In response to a question from the audience, she said that for young people French is often the language of work, i.e. schoolwork. English may then be seen as the language of recreation and entertainment. We need to find ways to make French a language that youth will also see as enjoyable and entertaining!
- The topic addressed by **Max Cooke**, Vice President of French for the Future and a member of the board of Canadian Parents for French, was *Five Points on Francophiles*. He addressed the question of the place of Francophiles in Ontario's Francophonie. Characterizing Francophiles as the best allies Francophones have, and using the slogan "Yours to Discover", Mr. Cooke invited the community to appreciate linguistic duality and to promote French to Anglophones. He called on Franco-Ontarians to step outside of their traditional comfort zones. Moreover, he assured the audience, not only will students in immersion programs choose to communicate in French, but this fosters a better understanding of the realities of Francophones and Francophiles. For example, Francophiles need to be made aware of the phenomenon of assimilation and the challenges associated with providing services in French. Similarly, Francophones do not know the immense challenges that face Francophiles trying to maintain immersion schools in the face of constant threats, and to maintain access for children with learning difficulties. There should be more exchanges between immersion schools and French schools. Students need practical experiences of living in French, and, he added, so do their parents! Such experiences give young people motivation and a better understanding of why they are learning French.
- **Joël Beddows**, Chair of the Department of Theatre at the University of Ottawa, broached the topic of cultural enrichment by describing the results of the *French Language Services Act* for culture and the arts in Francophone Ontario. He noted the expanding presence and awareness of Francophone performers and artists in Ontario thanks to the creation of the artists' network, which has enabled Franco-Ontarian artists to become better-known across the province and beyond. He emphasized the important relationship between culture and technology such as radio,

film and television in Ontario. Moreover, he stressed that many productions that have received effective promotion have enabled Francophone artists to pursue careers in Ontario, creating a star system that helps keep them in the province. To conclude his presentation, Prof. Beddows emphasized the significant development of the professionalization of the arts in the province. During the audience question period, he said the young need role models. A child needs to see his or her parents reading a novel in French, going to the theatre, and in short, living their lives in French as well.

PANEL 4 - 25 Reasons to Request Designation under the *French Language Services Act*

Ontario has 25 regions designated for bilingual services under the *French Language Services Act* and more than 200 designated agencies. This panel session heard from representatives of designated agencies in various sectors. The role of the Office of Francophone Affairs in determining geographical and institutional designations was also discussed.

- **Paul Genest**, Deputy Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs, gave his points on *the role of the Office of Francophone Affairs* in designations. He explained the steps in the designation process and the eligibility conditions to be met by candidate organizations. The designation of an agency is synonymous with its commitment and the formal recognition of its ability to provide services in French. As for the designation of a geographical area, this serves to ensure an active offering of services in French by government departments and agencies. Today, 85% of Francophones in Ontario live in the 25 designated areas and more than 200 agencies are designated under the *French Language Services Act*.
- The Executive Director of the French Language Health Services Network of Eastern Ontario, **Jacinthe Desaulniers**, discussed *reasons to improve designations in the health care field*. Stating that “when you’re sick, you’re sick in French,” she stressed that the designation remains the most important lever to ensure care of patients in their own language. In addition, Ms. Desaulniers alluded to a number of challenges stemming from the current designation process and raised the need to make improvements. She lamented the inconsistencies in interpreting the criteria from one ministry to another as well as the lack of mechanisms for monitoring, accountability and ongoing evaluation. Ms. Desaulniers suggested that a comprehensive exercise be undertaken to review the designation process. Finally, she said the time is now ripe to bring together the different players, including the new French-language health services planning entities, to consider what changes are needed to move the designation process forward – changes that would help Franco-Ontarians to have better health experiences in French.
- Collège Boréal is the only postsecondary educational institution designated under the *FLSA*. With this in mind, the school’s President, **Denis Hubert-Dutrisac**, offered *Five Reasons for Designation* in the education sector. He said the first reason is political, based on the symbolic importance of the designation, defining Collège Boréal as an institutional leader in the Francophone community. The second reason put forward was the legal, socio-political and public recognition the designation confers. Mr. Hubert-Dutrisac spoke of the heightened reputation of his institution as an advantage resulting from the designation. Another benefit of designation is that it can be used as a financial lever. The final reason given for designation of postsecondary institutions was the fact that it provides legal and political protection under the aegis of the *French Language Services Act*. Mr. Hubert-Dutrisac proposed several points to ponder, including establishing a provincial fund for legal action.
- **Raymond Lemay**, Executive Director at VALORIS for Children and Adults of Prescott-Russell, spoke on five reasons for designation in the child and youth sector. Like the previous panelist, Mr. Lemay underscored the symbolic and political value of designation. He also said designation was not an end in itself, but a means to obtain an active offering of services in French on the ground and to meet the specific needs of many families in his region. We must also take advantage of strength in numbers, as designated agencies grow larger and gain strength if they organize themselves into coalitions. Mr. Lemay stressed the importance of the quality of the services provided, beyond simply being available. He cited the example of the Positive Parenting Program (triple P). This program, based on evidence

that is becoming more and more widely known, helps parents to create a harmonious family environment and teach their children the skills they need to live in society, and also helps prevent behavioural problems. Like most evidence-based approaches, the program is only available in English, but the community is exerting pressure to have it made available in French as well. Finally, according to Mr. Lemay, we must not be lured into thinking that services in French will not require new investments, because in the social sector there is still much to be done.

- The former Executive Director of the *Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario (ACFO)*, **Mille-Îles, Jeannine Proulx**, spoke on Five Points on Regional Designation. Ms. Proulx was a major contributor to the efforts that led to the city of Kingston's becoming a designated area in 2009, the 25th designated area under the *FLSA*. Ms. Proulx's first point was that designation brings Francophones out of their isolation and guarantees that they will have services available in French without having to count on the goodwill of an individual to provide them. Designation provides equitable access, at all times, to the same government services as the majority. As the speaker sees it, the *FLSA* designation recognizes the existence of a critical mass of Francophones in the region and demonstrates the dynamism of a community seeking to preserve its language and culture. She concluded by saying designation gives the community a new lease on life and this has an impact on individuals who had stopped believing in the Francophonie – individuals who today feel a calling as they affirm their identity and seek to live their daily lives in French.

PANEL 5 - 25 Steps for the Future

This panel session propelled participants into the future by asking a number of questions, including: What will the face of the Francophonie look like in 25 years? How do the contributions of Francophones enrich the province? Why is the *FLSA* important to Canada's very foundations? In what way will the future of French-language agencies and institutions contribute to the community's vitality?

- Lawyer **Ronald Caza** expressed his views on Five Points on French Language Services in Ontario's Municipalities. He pointed out that municipalities are the level of government that is nearest to citizens and that Ontario municipalities are created by virtue of a provincial law. Mr. Caza recommended that municipalities adopt by-laws providing for bilingual services. He added that while things are going well today, there is no knowing what the future may have in store. According to Mr. Caza, passing a by-law for French services would send a message that it is worth making an effort and fighting. His second recommendation: raise municipal employees' awareness of the realities of Francophones; they must be able to recognize and reject frivolous complaints from certain Anglophones or other language groups. Moreover, municipalities should pass by-laws in both languages to send a positive message to the Francophones in the city. He also stressed the importance of signage, which gives an important signal to the Francophone population that their language is valued. Finally, municipalities, which are essential institutions in their communities, should work together to protect Francophone communities. He said the resulting effervescence would push citizens to appreciate French and understand its importance and relevance. This in turn would, for example, motivate parents to register their children for French-language schools.
- **Ibrahima Diallo**, a Full Professor at *Université de Saint-Boniface*, delivered a presentation on the Francophonie in Canada and Manitoba: multilingual, mobile, integrated and diverse. He said there are certain similarities between the Francophones of Manitoba and Ontario even though they face different realities. Manitoba has a policy on French-language services, rather than a law as in Ontario. To increase social cohesion, he stressed the importance of addressing native-born Manitoba Francophones in couples, whether or not both partners were in that group. He spoke of the idea of sharing challenges and recognizing the contributions of immigrants to facilitate their integration. As for Francophiles, he thinks partnerships must be established with them, because they are natural allies. In concluding, he spoke about the case of unilingual Anglophone citizens who need to be made aware of the realities and challenges Francophones face.

- **Dr. Michel Giroux**, Director of the Department of Law and Justice at Laurentian University, chose Five Points in Favour of Creating a Franco-Ontarian University. The objective of his presentation was to provoke reflection. Franco-Ontarians form the largest Francophone minority in Canada, but there is no Franco-Ontarian university. According to Dr. Giroux, they need to follow their counterparts in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Manitoba who already have a French-language university. The second reason he put forward was to complete French education in Ontario after primary, secondary and college institutions. The university constitutes a political institution that, in the hands of Franco-Ontarians, will be able to foster the development of the community. A French-language university would allow for complete management of university education. He added that without these Franco-Ontarian institutions going all the way up to university, we cannot maintain the community's linguistic and cultural identity. Finally, Mr. Giroux considers this project feasible, given the number of students. He recognizes that Franco-Ontarians have achieved great things, but says they could do better within a Franco-Ontarian university.
- The Director of the *Centre de recherche en civilisation canadienne-française* at the University of Ottawa, **Anne Gilbert**, presented Five Strategies for Consolidating Francophone Territory in Ontario. Ms. Gilbert emphasized the importance of creating Francophone places and institutions to use French-language services. Her second strategy was to build Francophone neighbourhoods by implementing, among other things, a Francophone land-use planning policy. Prof. Gilbert also called for the community to create a landscape to reflect its culture and the status of the languages on the ground. She added that preserving and showcasing heritage are synonymous with culture and identity. Finally, she suggested rethinking the city, which is a space where power is exercised in the municipal government.
- **Pierre Foucher**, a Full Professor at the University of Ottawa, considered Five Points on Ontario's National Influence: A Pan-Canadian Language Debate. In 1986, the *FLSA* was passed against a national backdrop of debate over the place of Francophones in the country. A few months before, Quebec had set out six conditions for re-entering the constitutional fold, including a strengthening of language rights in the Constitution itself. The question of language rights was front and centre. Twenty-five years later, the *FLSA* has not had the hoped-for national impact, according to Prof. Foucher, and in view of this he has formulated five wishes for the next 25 years. First, he wants the contribution and the role of the *FLSA* in the development and thriving of Ontario's Francophone community to be made known and recognized in all Francophone Canada, including Quebec. Secondly, he wants Francophones across Canada to know and appreciate the *FLSA*'s contribution to developing other legal instruments in favour of Francophone minorities in Canada, including the Acadians. He also expressed the wish for language rights to be recognized in every province and territory and for Francophones' rights to be considered as natural rather than a nuisance. Last on Prof. Foucher's wish list were for the *FLSA* to enable the diversity of Francophone Ontario to lead French-speaking Canada in a new direction, and for the Act's principles to be made part of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

CLOSING REMARKS

François Boileau, French Language Services Commissioner

Ontario's French Language Services Commissioner, François Boileau, delivered the conference's closing remarks. Mr. Boileau saluted the courage and determination of the Honourable Bernard Grandmaitre, who worked tirelessly for the passage of Bill 8, which was unanimously adopted by the Legislative Assembly on November 18, 1986. He reminded the audience of the crucial role the *FLSA* played in saving the Montfort Hospital, itself a designated agency under the Act. Indeed, the quasi-constitutional status of the *FLSA* protected the Francophone community's gains by preventing the dismantling of the province's only Francophone hospital. Mr. Boileau also went back to the importance of ensuring the delivery of programs and services adapted to Francophones' needs, whether directly by the government or by third parties. In another vein, alluding to this period of restructuring of public services, the Commissioner reiterated his desire to see Francophones become more involved and engaged in government reforms, by suggesting innovative and pragmatic methods and means of developing them. Finally, Mr. Boileau expressed optimism for the future of the community, rich as it is in its diversity and its cultures, at the same time acknowledging that there are still challenges to be overcome.

**Sincere thanks to the Organising Committee of the Conference
Celebrating 25 Years of the *FLSA*!**

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**Heartfelt thanks to the Programming Committee of the
Conference Celebrating 25 Years of the *FLSA*!**

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Many thanks to the Conference recorders!

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