



NEWS

THE FRENCH LANGUAGE SERVICES COMMISSIONER RECOMMENDS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A STANDING COMMITTEE ON FRENCH-LANGUAGE SERVICES

TORONTO, July 10, 2014 – French Language Services Commissioner François Boileau recommends that the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly appoint a standing committee on French-language services to deal with issues related to the welfare and full development of Ontario's Francophone community. This is the first recommendation in the Commissioner's annual report for 2013-2014, which was submitted today to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, the Honourable Dave Levac.

If in January 2014, the Commissioner's Office has left the government and is now an integral part of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as an independent body, the Commissioner noticed that he does not have an real interlocutor within Parliament to act on the recommendations in his reports.

"I want to enter into a dialogue with my 107 new bosses, i.e. Members of the Provincial Parliament, but I noticed that there was nowhere in Parliament to obtain a reaction to the recommendations and statements made in such reports. It is therefore desirable for MPPs to have a real forum where they can examine questions and issues related to the implementation of the *French Language Services Act*," said Commissioner Boileau.

"As an officer of the Legislative Assembly, I am certainly independent of the government, but I am completely accountable to MPPs, and I have to be able to hold discussions with them."

In another recommendation, the Commissioner asks the government to open a dialogue with the public concerning the actions it has undertaken to implement the *French Language Services Act*, by submitting a detailed, engaged and relevant annual report on the affairs of the Office of Francophone Affairs. Government transparency in this regard is critical, particularly in this era of more direct dialogue with citizens.

In addition to reviewing the priority concerns of the Commissioner's Office, the Commissioner's seventh annual report recommends that

- the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration establish a group of experts on Francophone immigration during the 2014-2015 fiscal year to develop a plan for achieving the 5% target; and
- the Attorney General establish a pilot project to improve access to justice in French based on the recommendations and intentions of the report *Access to Justice in French*.

QUICK FACTS

- The position of French Language Services Commissioner was created in September 2007 following an amendment to the *French Language Services Act*.
- The French Language Services Commissioner became the ninth officer of the Legislature on January 1, 2014, following the unanimous adoption of Bill 106.
- Under section 11(3) of the *French Language Services Act*, the Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs is required to produce and submit to the Lieutenant Governor in Council a report on the affairs of the Office of Francophone Affairs at the end of each fiscal year.
- In 2012, the Ontario government announced the development of a francophone immigration strategy with a target of 5%.
- The French Language Services Bench and Bar Advisory Committee published a report entitled *Access to Justice in French*, which contains 17 important recommendations specifically identifying the measures that the government must take to ensure that Francophones enjoy genuine, effective access to justice in French in Ontario.

The Office of the French Language Services Commissioner reports directly to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. Its principal mandate is to ensure compliance with the French Language Services Act in the delivery of government services.

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