

## ***Community, Commitment, Cooperation*** ***Moving Forward Together***

**For Immediate Release**

### **QCGN supports Commissioner's call to reinforce Part VII of Official Languages Act**

**Montreal, October 18, 2011** - The Quebec Community Groups Network supports a call from the Commissioner of Official Languages Graham Fraser for the Government of Canada to comply with Part VII of the Official Languages Act to support the development of Official Language Minority Communities and to foster the full recognition and use of English and French in Canadian society.

In his 2010-2011 Annual Report released earlier today, Commissioner Fraser urges the Government to "send a clear signal to let Canadians know that full recognition of English and French in Canadian society is still an essential value" and to work to ensure that Federal stakeholders develop a "Part VII reflex".

In 2005, Parliament amended the Official Languages Act to require that all federal institutions to take positive measures to meet the objectives set out in Part VII. But the obligations are not well understood and, consequently, many federal departments and agencies are not complying with the legislation.

"We fully support Commissioner Fraser and his recommendations that the Government strengthen Canadian Heritage's role and enhance Treasury Board's responsibilities in applying Part VII of the Act," said QCGN Interim President Noel Burke, noting the Government must also ensure that all federal institutions define and take positive measures to ensure the vitality of Quebec's English-speaking minority and French-language communities outside Quebec.

Echoing comments made by the Senate Committee on Official Languages last spring, Burke said positive measures must be decided after consulting official language minority communities to ensure their policies and programs take into account the specific needs and priorities of those communities. "That is the only way that positive measures will have a long-lasting impact on our communities," said Burke.

But the community also has a role in ensuring the government lives up to its obligations, commented Noel Burke. “We are helping them help us,” he said, explaining that the QCGN has undertaken a community priority setting process that aims to inform government stakeholders about the overarching needs and priorities of English-speaking Quebec.

Burke said the QCGN also agrees with the suggestion that senior management of federal institution be more accountable for the ways in which their organization implement Part VII and that they report their results to the Canadian public.

“It has been almost six years since these important amendments to the Official Languages Act and we have not seen much change in our communities,” said Burke. “It is time for the Government to truly stand behind its commitment to promote and enhance the vitality of our communities.”

The Quebec Community Groups Network ([www.qcgn.ca](http://www.qcgn.ca)) is a not-for-profit organization bringing together 38 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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