

Channeling Quebec's True

ENERGY

THEMATIC DOCUMENT

31st Members' Convention
of Quebec Liberal Party



IV

A WORLD
FOR QUEBECERS

1- A Quebec open to the world

Since the QLP came to power, Quebec has been more open to the world. It has explored new markets and made its presence felt at many major international forums. The QLP government has sought to push back the frontiers of Quebec and open new vistas where Quebec talent can shine. The QLP government created a new environment of workforce mobility with France that opened doors for Quebec's qualified workers, who now have access to a market of over 60 million people, and that allows Quebec to attract qualified workers in fields where we have a shortage here, whether current or expected.

Quebec has taken the lead in the continuous improvement of the Canadian social and economic union, thanks to the creation of the Council of the Federation. It is a QLP government who made sure that the asymmetric principle would find a practical application in a historical agreement on healthcare. It is also a QLP government that was successful in obtaining a seat at UNESCO for Quebec, and made it so that Canada truly became an interior market to which any Quebec worker can have access, from sea to sea.

Being open to the world obviously starts at home. As the history of Quebec has shown us eloquently, liberal governments act as magnets for people living outside our borders: the province receives more immigrants and can generally boast a brighter interprovincial net migration rate. The last few years have also seen a certain added benefit to this liberal advantage: Quebecers have regained their confidence as never before, and the fertility rate has started increasing again, a phenomenon the people of Quebec had long ceased to hope for.

This confidence in what Quebec is today, but also in everything it has the capacity of becoming, is exactly what motivates the QLP and orients each of its actions.

This confidence that Quebecers have what it takes to be among the best in the world is what nourishes our desire to compete on every market. We certainly have all the talent needed to play — and win — at the globalisation game.

1.1 A Quebec leading in Canada

Having Quebec progress within the Canadian federalism, all the while actively participating in the building of a stronger Canada, more respectful of provincial jurisdictions and Quebec's identity, such is our vision.

Since 2003, relations between Quebec and the rest of Canada are much better than they were under preceding governments of the Parti Québécois.

Most Quebecers are strongly attached to Canada. All the while having indisputable pride for Quebec, its accomplishments and promise; they consider Canada their country, as they rightly should. For them, home is Canada. They also believe that actively participating in the evolution of Canada is in their best interest.

Our strong preference is for a Quebec acting as leader within Canada, a province aiming to contribute even more to the future of this country. Making good use of its leadership role and making sure it benefits all its citizens. In other words, Quebec must express this leadership as it gives a positive impulse to the evolution of Canadian federalism, an evolution following a path towards greater respect for Quebec's superior interests.

The QLP's position is clear and coherent and has remained the same for a number of years: to continually promote and defend the interests of Quebec as a full-fledged member of the Canadian confederation. On that level, our record is exceptional.

Indeed, it is under a QLP government that a historical agreement on health care was signed in 2003 and formally recognized a principle dear to Quebecers: asymmetrical federalism. Also thanks of the QLP, Quebec now plays a formal role within UNESCO (a permanent representative of Quebec, within the Canadian mission, with a specific right to speak), progress was made redressing fiscal imbalance and the House of Commons recognized that Quebec's people form a nation.

It is also at our initiative that the Council of the Federation was created and the Canadian domestic market reinforced, among other things, with the signature of agreements on workforce mobility with Ontario, New-Brunswick and the other federal partners. All this and the return of Quebec within the Canadian Francophonie, as well as the efforts and initiatives made by the Quebec Government to convince Canada to take part in talks leading to a global economic and commercial agreement with the European Union.

The QLP is unquestionably a federalist party, in the real sense of the word. However, this position does not mean that we must accept all decisions made by the Government of Canada without debate. On the contrary, we must remain critical and vigilant, and continue to vigorously oppose federal interference or attempts to interfere in areas of Quebec jurisdictions.

Some of these interferences are the result of the so-called federal spending authority. This power must be framed by a rigorous set of guidelines, even eliminated, as much for existing programs as for new initiatives.

This is why we propose that a QLP government ...

PROPOSITION 59

Continue to lobby in favour of the abolition or, if not, for the limitation of the federal spending power with full compensation in areas of provincial jurisdiction, and that, in compliance with, if need be, the asymmetry principle;

The reform of the Canadian Senate constitutes another problematic issue for Quebec. In fact, the manifest intention of the federal government to unilaterally modify the nomination process and mandates of senators is not acceptable. The Senate, we should never forget, is at the very basis of the original federalist compromise. The Canadian Senate is also essentially a federal-provincial entity more than strictly a federal one. The spirit of federalism teaches us that this institution was part of a historical compromise and is by nature a federal-provincial entity, in its most essential characteristics. Thus, it should only be modified with the consent of the different partners of the federation.

This is why we propose that a QLP government ...

PROPOSITION 60

Vigorously oppose any attempt from the government and Parliament of Canada to modify any one of the essential characteristics of the Senate without the consent of the federal partners, and that, in accordance with the amending procedure laid out in the Constitution Act, 1982;

Noteworthy is the fact that the Senate was initially suppose to act as Chamber for the provinces and regions, a role it has really never played since all senators are named exclusively by Ottawa. To this day, Canada remains one of the rare federations in the world where provinces have no formal role to play in its central institutions and almost no say in important national decision-making. It is high time this be corrected.

This is why we propose that a QLP government ...

PROPOSITION 61

Promote the transformation — through current constitutional amendment mechanisms — of the Canadian Senate into a true House of the Provinces, that is, into an entity where each province would be directly represented by delegates and where its voice could be heard, on the basis of its needs, priorities, positions and own objectives;

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The influence of Quebec in the House of Commons is likely to decrease in the next few years as the result of a diminution of the Quebec's population compared to that of Canada as a whole. Already, the Canadian government has submitted a Bill in the federal Parliament, Bill C-12, which unfortunately confirms this trend. The Government of Quebec must lead the charge with all its energy in anticipation of maintaining the current relative weight of Quebec within the House of Commons. This position is even more justifiable for the fact that Quebec is the only province with a francophone majority in Canada and that reducing its influence within a central institution can only result in diminishing the place French holds in Canada.

This is why we propose that a QLP government ...

PROPOSITION 62

Take all means necessary for the relative weight of Quebec within the Canadian House of Commons to be maintained;

We have mentioned the Council of the Federation. This provincial-territorial body was created in December of 2003 and its origin can be traced to the report of the QLP's Special Committee on the political and constitutional future of Quebec society presided by Mr. Benoit Pelletier at the time. This report, titled *An Action Plan: Affirmation, Autonomy and Leadership*, was unanimously adopted in October 2001 by QLP members.

When first established, the objective of the Council of the Federation was to reinforce dialogue and encourage consensus between the provinces and territories, on the one hand, and provide them opportunity to not only make more vigorous representations, but also present a unified position vis-à-vis Ottawa on certain issues. The Council of the Federation has played its role well until now and proven its worth on many issues, including those on health care, fiscal imbalance and the strengthening of the Canadian Economic Union. However, it would be appropriate that its Secretariat be reinforced, which in its initial form was expected to be highly effective and relatively autonomous. This would not be possible without the consent of all provinces and territories. It would also be fitting that the Council fully assume all duties listed in its current mandate. Among these responsibilities are analysis of any action or measure from the federal government having a significant impact on the provinces and territories (including a project to review federal bills and legislation), as well as the elaboration of a shared vision on how intergovernmental relations that respect the fundamental values and principles of federalism should be conducted.

The federal spirit, the QLP believes, implies that different federalist partners work in concert to improve those public policies they are responsible for. In the areas of education and health care, namely, organisations such as the Canadian Institute for Health Information and the Canadian Council of Ministers of Education have played a helpful role in terms of disseminating best practices and evaluating new initiatives. Yet, one area where few innovations and best practices are identified and disseminated is Family Policy. Quebec is a recognised pioneer on the matter across Canada, and our expertise could certainly benefit other provinces. Other provinces could also inspire Quebec on issues regarding family policy.

In fact, the promotion and dissemination of best practices and the transfer of knowledge is a worthy objective, regardless of the jurisdiction in question and not only on health care, education or family services. We believe the Council of the Federation can, and must, play a key role in this issue, especially when best practices or transfer of knowledge regarding public policies adopted by the provinces on their exclusive area of jurisdiction are concerned. When it comes to jurisdiction provinces share with the federal government, then it is desirable that the promotion and diffusion of best practises and the transfer of knowledge be done in the context of federal-provincial collaboration. But even then, the Council of the Federation could play a determinant role in defending the points of view of the provinces and territories with the Canadian government.

It would even be desirable if, at an international level, the provinces, territories and the federal government each played a role in the promotion of Canada's best practices – from the respective exercise of their constitutional jurisdiction to the implementation of their public policies.

This is why we propose that a QLP government ...

PROPOSITION 63

Continue the development of the Council of the Federation, and:

- 63.1 Convince its partners in the Council of the Federation to proceed with a reorganisation and substantial strengthening of its Secretariat and to actively ensure that it fully assumes all the duties and functions prescribed in its current mandate;***
 - 63.2 Invite its partners in the Council of the Federation to create a Council of Family Ministers of Canada, which would be a permanent study and analysis body dedicated to disseminating knowledge, information and best practices regarding family policies;***
 - 63.3 Work in concert with our partners of the Council of the Federation to increase its role in terms of promotion and dissemination of the best practices and transfer of knowledge regarding provincial public polices, and ensure that the Council even assumes this role of promotion towards the federal government, and that, on behalf of the provinces and territories;***
 - 63.4 Convince our partners of the Council of the Federation to offer their collaboration to Ottawa so that, together, they can promote the best Canadian practices on an international level, which would allow foreign governments to learn from Canada and share with our federal and provincial governments on the full range of these issues;***
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Since the early 60's, the liberal governments of Jean Lesage, Robert Bourassa, Daniel Johnson and Jean Charest have all given a great deal of importance to the role Quebec plays on the international scene. The Canadian Constitution does not address aspects regarding international relations, if only in one now obsolete clause — section 132 of the Constitution Act, 1867. Without resolving the question of who between the federal government and the provinces has the authority to conclude international treaties (unless they both do?), the law clearly establishes that provinces have the responsibility of implementing such treaties when their constitutional jurisdiction are involved. It would be important for the provinces to actively participate, along with the Canadian government, in the negotiations of these treaties which, in the end, the provinces

will have to implement, whether in all or in part. Presently, this is not really what takes place. In fact, the participation of provinces to the negotiation of treaties remains a random occurrence, which is regrettable.

This is why we propose that a QLP government ...

PROPOSITION 64

Convince our partners, federal and provincial, of the importance of the provinces actively and formally taking part, along with the government of Canada, in international treaties negotiations whenever a treaty or parts of a treaty concerns an area of provincial jurisdiction;

Still, with regard to international relations, in May of 2006 the federal government followed-up on the appeal from the Quebec government to allow the Quebec nation to speak of its own voice at UNESCO, an international forum where questions that touch on Quebec's distinct nature and jurisdictions of the National Assembly are debated. Since its signature, the Canada-Quebec Agreement on UNESCO has eloquently demonstrated that being part of Canada does not prevent Quebec from independently building ties with other nations around the world. We believe that the experience of UNESCO opens the door to a winning formula that should be applied to other international forums, including two in particular: the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Organization of American States (OAS).

The ILO is an institution of the United Nations specializing issues surrounding work conditions and the protection of workers. Born of the Treaty of Versailles, it is made up of governments, employers and employees from over 180 States. A more active presence of the Quebec government within the ILO would provide an opportunity to emphasize documented differences that exist between Quebec and its Canadian partners in terms of labour law.

With respect to the OAS, its goal is to defend democracy and Human Rights, increase territory security and reinforce exchanges between all countries of the Americas. With its four official languages (English, Spanish, Portuguese and French), it reflects the diversity of people and cultures from all over the continent. Of course, the organisation counts among its members very many francophone and francophile nations and discusses many hemispheric issues which have a considerable impact on areas of jurisdictions exclusive to Quebec.

This is why we propose that a QLP government ...

PROPOSITION 65

Seek to negotiate with the federal authorities an arrangement inspired by the 2006 Agreement on UNESCO, by which Quebec could increase its presence, even speak on its own behalf, in the greatest possible number of international forums, in particular at the International Labour Organization and the Organization of American States;

Canada is, as we all know, a constitutional monarchy. Her Majesty the Queen is represented in each province by the Lieutenant-Governor. Many Quebecers wish for this function to be abolished. This can however only be done in accordance to a procedure of constitutional amendment that is quite challenging: unanimity.

We suggest that, at the very least, a dialogue be initiated in Quebec on different ways to modernise the institution of the Lieutenant-Governor, to adapt it to the contemporary context. This discussion could debate a certain number of modalities surrounding the nomination of the Lieutenant-Governor, without prejudice to constitutional laws currently in effect.

This is why we propose that a QLP government ...

PROPOSITION 66

Look closely at different ways to modernise the function of Lieutenant-Governor of Quebec such as, for example, the elements surrounding the conditions and procedures around his or her appointment;

According to the Canadian Constitution, the administration, organisation and delivery of health services are under the jurisdiction of the provinces. The federal government is only supposed to intervene in matters related to marine hospitals and the event of quarantine, or regarding certain groups under its jurisdiction, such as war veterans, stationed service members, Aboriginals and prisoners in federal prisons. Since the federal government finances certain provincial health services, it attempts to influence provincial policies on the matter. And so, provinces must, while assuming the management of health services and administer their own health care insurance plans, respect the conditions provided in the Canada Health Act, namely the universality, comprehensiveness, accessibility, transferability and public management of health care. The provinces have nonetheless the obligation to provide any information requested by the Canadian Government and mention federal contributions in all public documents or health care services advertisements. Financial sanctions are provided for in case of regulatory infractions, including the reduction of federal transfers or even a downright withholding of federal contributions.

Health services represent the most important item of expenditure for the Quebec government and a provincial area of jurisdiction of undeniable importance. Yet, the interpretation of Canadian laws impacts greatly on how provinces can assume their own jurisdiction. A proper application of the federal conviviality principle, as defined in the 2001 report titled An Action Plan: Affirmation, Autonomy and Leadership, would normally mean that the Canadian government must collaborate with provinces on matters regarding the interpretation and implementation of this federal law.

C'est pourquoi nous proposons à un gouvernement issu du PLQ...

PROPOSITION 67

Ensure that the Canadian provinces can actively take part in the interpretation and implementation of the Canada Health Act;

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For a number of years now, the QLP government has played a leadership role within the Council of the Federation in order to find sustainable solutions to fiscal imbalance. In response, the government of Canada increased healthcare transfer payments and made improvements to equalization. On the other hand, Ottawa has failed to bring transfers for post secondary education back to their levels of 1994-95, as called for by the Council of the Federation. The Canadian provinces need budgetary and economic planning stability. They need to rely on the necessary resources to meet their constitutional responsibilities without resorting to an excessive tax burden that would slow their growth.

Even if the recent world economic recession has transformed federal surpluses into deficits, it is crucial for the smooth functioning of the Canadian federation that the federal government not repeat the mistakes of the past and bring its public finances in order on the back of provinces.

This is why we propose that a QLP government ...

PROPOSITION 68

Exert leadership within the Council of the Federation so as to reach satisfactory agreement with the federal government concerning fiscal arrangements;

The application and respect of norms regulating commercial trade represents a major challenge in Quebec. If the opening of borders constitutes a remarkable opportunity for Quebec companies and ensures access to a larger range of products and services for Quebec consumers, it also brings up inequalities for a certain number of Quebec companies and different industry sectors.

For example, in the farming sector, Quebec producers were forbidden to use a large number of different pesticides, all with the aim of protecting the health of Quebec consumers. Certain foreign producers, not liable for the same norms, still used these pesticides and were able to offer their products on the Quebec market, what is more, at a lesser cost. Strawberries are the most telling example. The pork industry is another example of an industry where production is highly regulated by both the federal and provincial government — specifically with regards to the prohibition of using certain antibiotics in livestock feeding. Pork produced outside of Quebec is not submitted to the same norms and regulations than pork produced here, but it still ends up on our grocery shelves.

The lack of control regarding the compliance of imported products could obviously favour abuse and misrepresentation, and consumers would be the first ones to suffer.

This is why we propose that a QLP government ...

PROPOSITION 69

Insist that the federal government ensures the respect of the principle of reciprocity in international trade agreements, specifically with regard to environmental issues and food safety;

The election of the QLP government in 2003 has been marked by the return of Quebec within the Canadian Francophonie. Since then, initiatives made by the Quebec government in order to reinforce ties that bind Quebecers on the one hand and francophone and Acadian communities of Canada on the other have certainly multiplied. More recently, new types of projects, with essentially economic objectives, have seen the day. It is the case with the Rendez-vous Acadie-Québec, which provides an opportunity to entrepreneurs from Quebec and New-Brunswick to meet face to face and explore new paths of collaboration together. These types of initiatives should be applauded as the Canadian Francophonie constitutes a wonderful opportunity for companies and business people from Quebec interested in expanding their share of the market. We can only hope that opportunities for such encounters become popular everywhere across Canada.

Inaugurated in November 2008, the mission of the Centre de la francophonie des Amériques has been to promote and emphasize a strong and promising Francophonie for the French language in a global context of cultural diversity. The Center focuses specifically on the reinforcement and enrichment of relations between the francophones and francophiles of Quebec, Canada and the Americas³⁴. Initiated by the Quebec government, the center works tirelessly to ensure the development and flourishing of the French language, and promote rapprochement between francophones and francophiles. It supports projects that aim to promote the French language and the French factor in the Americas.

The activities of the Centre de la francophonie des Amériques are financed by the Quebec government. However, since 2010, grants awarded to the center have been substantially reduced because of budget cuts being made across the government³⁵. With the future in mind, we believe this situation should be rectified.

This is why we propose that a QLP government ...

PROPOSITION 70

Assume the responsibilities specific to Quebec with respect to the Francophonie of the New World, and:

- 70.1 Continue to strengthen the Canadian Francophonie, by developing, among other things, commercial networking events similar to the Rendez-vous Acadie-Québec model that took place between Quebec and the francophone and Acadian communities of Canada;***
 - 70.2 Increase the resources allocated to the Centre de la francophonie des Amériques, namely by appealing to other financial partners, and dedicate as a priority such additional financial resources to programs regarding youth as well as cultural, commercial and business exchange programs in order to make sure French has an even greater visibility throughout the continent;***
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34- http://www.francophoniedesameriques.com/documents/misc/Rapport_activites_2009-2010_Centre_Interactif.pdf

35- http://www.francophoniedesameriques.com/documents/misc/Rapport_activites_2009-2010_Centre_Interactif.pdf

In 2001, the report titled *An Action Plan: Affirmation, Autonomy and Leadership* was officially adopted by the QLP. This report contains a wide range of principles that, to this day, continue to guide the actions of the government in its relations with the rest of Canada as well as with the government of Canada.

If many of the recommendations contained in this report have been implemented (the Council of the Federation, asymmetry in intergovernmental agreements, leadership of Quebec within the Canadian Francophonie, increased role of Quebec in the world, partial settlement of fiscal imbalance, various initiatives regarding Aboriginals, etc.), recommendations regarding the return of Quebec into the Canadian fold and which path should be taken to achieve this remain topical.

These recommendations can be summarized as such:

- Full and complete participation of Quebec to the evolution of Canada, its openness to other provinces, joint action, balance and flexibility in federal-provincial relations, respect of the federalist spirit by all Canadian partners.
- Expansion of the Canadian Social and Economic Union, limitation of the federal spending power, participation of Quebec and the other provinces to negotiations of international treaties affecting their area of jurisdiction, better respect of provincial autonomy and priorities of provinces in their areas of jurisdiction, participation of the provinces to the nomination process of senators and Supreme Court of Canada judges.
- Recognition of the autonomy of Quebec and its identity, reinforcement of its place on the international scene, improved partnership between Ottawa and Quebec in a wide range of sectors by way of administrative agreements, among others things.
- Recognition within the Canadian Constitution of Quebec's specificity (in its national characteristics) and a right of veto in terms of constitutional modification, integration of the Canada-Quebec Agreement on Immigration and temporary admission of foreign aliens in the Constitution, reform of the Canadian Senate, the need for the principle of federal conviviality to be entrenched in the Canadian Constitution.

These recommendations, and the principle of affirmation, autonomy and leadership guiding them, continue to orient our actions and exchanges as federalists.

This is why we propose that a QLP government ...

PROPOSITION 71

Reaffirm and reconfirm the report titled *An Action Plan: Affirmation, Autonomy and Leadership* as the official position of the QLP with respect to intergovernmental relations;

On a final note, let us be reminded of the importance of Quebec's distinctiveness being affirmed and formally recognised in Canada and that its prerogatives as well as its social, economic and fiscal priorities being respected.

Quebec must remain active within Canadian federalism and continue to contribute to the growth of our great country. Quebec must also persist in working, with its federal partners, toward the strengthening of the Canadian Economic Union in the spirit of openness which characterises the QLP.

1.2 A Quebec that excels on the international scene

Active for over a century on the international scene, Quebec has every interest in reinforcing relations with its allies and forming new relationships with other partners. The Quebec government is already leading a strong, concerted and multilateral international action to increase the notoriety of Quebec, all the while fulfilling its own needs. Other actions are also deemed necessary to further develop the presence of Quebec on the international scene.

Similar to her international commercial partners, Quebec has established a public diplomacy policy aiming to promote the interests of Quebec among her international commercial partners, by speaking directly to the people of these countries instead of only to their political and diplomatic leaders. Quebec offices abroad and commercial missions organized by the province are also two key actions. Quebec would nonetheless gain to adopt an additional strategy of public diplomacy.

The citizen-ambassadors of tomorrow

Traditional diplomacy and public diplomacy, both performed by government representatives, cannot replace the impact of hundreds of thousands of tourists, students, exporters, investors and other Quebec expatriates have on our commercial partners. The strategies aiming to harness the energy of these 'citizen-ambassadors' are only embryonic at this stage and the development of an innovative, creative and audacious strategy for Quebec is needed to meet this challenge.

The two main obstacles for implementing these strategies is the identification and mobilisation of these 'citizen-ambassadors' needed to disseminate certain key messages of information from the Quebec government (i.e. Quebec being opened to foreign investors, its stable political climate regardless of the presence of an independence movement, the existence of a multitude of tourist attractions, the quality of the Quebec's education system, etc.) as widely as possible.

It is essential that the Quebec government know who its citizen living abroad are, if it wants members of the Quebec Diaspora to establish contacts with one another. No standardized and complete database on the Diaspora currently exists. Furthermore, no official structure of contact has been established to allow Quebecers living abroad to stay in contact with authorities or professionals back in Quebec. The network of Quebec delegations established abroad and the various professional associations would both constitute excellent resources for the networking efforts we need to carry out.

The best way to contact and attract these 'citizen-ambassadors' is, at first, to look at individuals and companies who receive governmental aid from Quebec to go abroad. As such, in exchange for grants awarded to students, exporting companies, athletes, artists and humanitarian co-workers, it would be fair and quite appropriate for the Government of Quebec to ask that these individuals and companies join a directory or a recruiting and networking virtual platform.

This platform would allow them to exchange on the particularities, challenges and different business opportunities inherent to their host country. It would also be used to frequently send key messages and various information the Quebec government would want to disseminate.

Quebec has every interest to organize a network of the Diaspora, but also ensure its development and growth. The knowledge of one or more foreign languages is indispensable to openness and cooperation with other countries. Within the context of commercial exchanges, multilingualism allows corporations to take full advantage of globalization.

Multilingualism still needs to be developed in Quebec. In June 2006, Quebec's ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport added English as a second language to the curriculum of elementary schools. This decision served to help students become familiar with a second language at a very young age. English is among the most spoken languages on the planet, but the learning of other foreign languages is also necessary to prepare children and students become citizens of the world. One of the best ways to learn another language remains immersion, ideally at an early age.

This is why we propose that a QLP government ...

PROPOSITION 72

Build on citizen diplomacy and:

- 72.1 Establish the province's own communication policy towards Quebec citizens living abroad with the objective of passing on different basic information on Quebec and its international policy positions;***
 - 72.2 Develop a directory of Québec citizens living abroad likely to share their expertise and business contacts with Quebec;***
 - 72.3 Create a virtual platform of exchange to allow Quebec executives and professionals working abroad to contact each other and exchange, as well as for the Quebec Government to send key messages it might want to share with them;***
 - 72.4 Develop inter-language exchange partnerships between Quebec schools and colleges and foreign institutions;***
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Many organisations, public as well as private, actively participate in the promotion of Quebec on the international scene by showcasing its strengths and assets in different ways. This is the case of Quebec's ministère des Relations internationales (MRI), which focuses on Quebec's commercial policy. Information on the website of the MRI is available in three languages: French, English and Spanish. Many government agencies and municipalities are also active in this matter.

The participation of numerous organisations in the promotion of Quebec represents a considerable asset to increasing its notoriety on an international level. Nevertheless, the information shared is often selective as it depends on the objectives of each organisation.

This is why we propose that a QLP government ...

PROPOSITION 73

Develop a multilingual central governmental portal showcasing the different assets of Quebec in order to attract more investments and skilled labour;

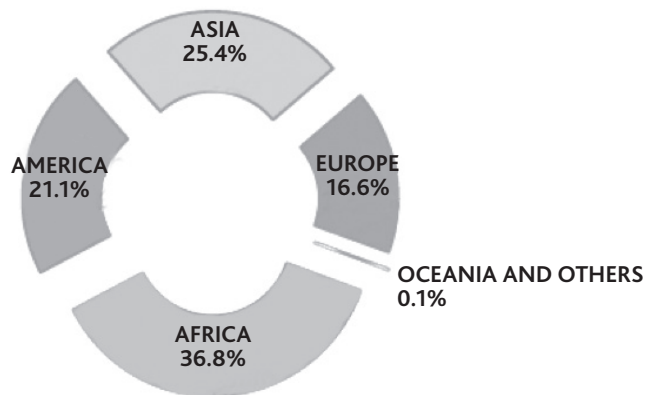
Multiply Labour Mobility Agreements

In the 70's, Quebec was considered one of the youngest societies in the Occident; it is now on the verge of becoming one of the oldest. The median age in Quebec will jump in 30 years as much as that of other nations will two or three generations. The search for a workforce with qualifications such as the ones Quebec needs will become central to sustaining Quebec's prosperity. We must therefore choose the path of opening our borders to qualified workers. Quebec has already begun implementing this strategy with the signature of a historical agreement with France on qualified workers mobility.

We must continue to open such new environments to attract the talented workers we need. The rest of Europe and Latin America represent great targets for promoting Quebec's assets to qualified workers likely to immigrate here.

European countries have professional qualifications generally similar to those of Quebec. Upon their arrivals, Europeans workers can move more easily through the process, which can sometimes be long and complex, of obtaining the recognition of their diploma, credentials and professional skills.

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Source: Statistical Report on Permanent Immigration in Quebec, 4th quarter, 2010

France and Quebec have already concluded an agreement on the mutual recognition of professional qualification. As such, the fact of agreeing with France in advance on different regulated professions will notably have a direct consequence on French immigrants, who will no longer need to worry about their diplomas having any value on Quebec soil: they will have the opportunity to practice their respective professions sooner after their arrival, and therefore be able to contribute to the growth of our economy.

The openness toward other francophone countries such as Belgium and Switzerland also deserve to be explored. Belgium has 10 788 760 citizens and 3.5 millions of those are French speaking³⁷. Switzerland, a country with four recognized languages, had 7 731 167 citizens in 2010, including almost 1.6 million (20%) of those being francophone.

Non-francophone Europe is also worthy of special attention, namely countries which, like Quebec, are interested in collaborating in the widening of the mobility zone of talented citizens. Considering the similarities between their professional system and the one in Quebec, a progression towards the full recognition of qualification and skills for these workers is also easier to achieve.

Finally, Quebec and Latin American countries also share numerous traits. They share the geographical reality of having the United States as a commercial partner. With a growth rate in the year 2008 estimated by the World Bank at 5.7%, Latin America is among the emerging markets with the best perspectives for the future. Finally, Spanish, the official language of Latin American countries, has the same language root as French, making it easier for Latin American immigrants to learn the language.

³⁷ - Source : Source : FMI - World Economic Outlook Database : Banque Mondiale

PROPOSITION 74

Invest in the international mobility of labour and:

- 74.1 Negotiate mobility agreements with other European francophone countries than France, such as Belgium and Switzerland;***
 - 74.2 Organise skilled labour prospection missions aimed at non-francophone European countries interested in widening their area of mobility, and who have professional and academic systems similar to those of Quebec;***
 - 74.3 Increase its efforts to stimulate immigration from Latin-American countries, considering their linguistic proximity with Quebec;***
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Cultural diversity: a key to the development of Quebec

“Cultural diversity is the name given to the idea that all peoples should be able to develop in an international environment conducive to the expression of different cultures and ongoing dialogue. As a principle, cultural diversity underlies a modern view of the world based on respect for plurality”³⁸.

Cultural diversity represents a major asset for a nation such as Quebec. For a company, cultural diversity can also represent a competitive edge. The diversity of a company’s human resources allows it to better meet the expectations of its clientele, but also enhance its corporate image and take advantage of a potential network of ambassadors present in different international markets.

In practice and in the pronouncements of successive liberal governments in Quebec, we can clearly identify a distinctive common thread: an imperative of mobility according to which a person (immigrant or non-immigrant) integrating a society must not see his or her destiny enclosed in the pathway (social class, profession, cultural environment or ethnic group) that opened this access in the first place – in other words, borders must be porous.

It also goes without saying that, implicitly, the practices of the QLP institute French as the common language of intercultural rapport. Contrary to certain viewpoints of the Parti Québécois however, there is no question of a formal test or time limit, even less so the idea of disenfranchising citizens of certain fundamental rights if the quality of their second language does not satisfy government inspectors. Liberals are convinced that French must be required of new immigrants, in view of her intrinsic prestige and the opportunities speaking French provides on Quebec soils. The linguistic history of the last decades has proven us right.

38- Gouvernement du Québec : <http://www.gouv.qc.ca/portail/quebec/pgs/commun/>

"With regard to Quebec, it is essential to refer to a formula that preserves the acquisition of this nation in all its richness, while widening the environment in which they can be organized or reorganized. Until proven otherwise, interculturalism announces itself as the best model to efficiently conjugate these imperatives." (G rard Bouchard, 2011)³⁹

The fact is that Quebec has developed her own model throughout the years. A model that focuses on dialogue but that also suggests the integration to a common foundation to new immigrants, to values forged throughout centuries by the majority group of the host country. We believe that this model should not however simply remain a well guarded secret of sociology experts. It must be based on certain clear and easy to understand definitions, widely shared by all members of Quebec society. A more open model that would focus on the balance of moral obligations required as much from new immigrants and fellow-countrymen who preceded him or her, but also on the host society and her institutions.

It would also be more legitimate to refer to this model, instead of to concepts foreign to our political culture, if circumstances require additional safeguards, namely when the behaviour of a small group of newcomers in Quebec contradicts the principles of equality between men and women, universal education or the neutrality of public institutions towards religious beliefs.

³⁹- Bouchard, G. (2011). Qu'est-ce que l'interculturalisme?. Revue de droit de McGill.

This is why we propose that a QLP government ...

PROPOSITION 75

Promote the benefits of cultural diversity among the Quebec population, in an intercultural perspective;

The integration of newcomers is a shared process, which is the spirit itself of interculturalism as it is practiced in Quebec. More basically, this suggests that immigrants should be interested in the gradual discovery of the cultural heritage of the host society, and that the government seeks to make it accessible in all its richness. We believe that a sure way to achieve this goal would be offering new immigrants, in the year following their permanent resident status, a cultural pass giving them access to admission tickets to shows and Quebec cultural events at a price similar to those paid for youth admission. Cultural institutions, in particular those outside of the greater Montreal region, could join the initiative in exchange to the advantages related to the promotion of the governmental program.

This is why we propose that a QLP government ...

PROPOSITION 76

Offer a 'Cultural Pass' to new immigrants to help them discover and learn more about Quebec and also visit Quebec's cultural institutions, particularly those outside of the Montreal metropolitan area.
