

## **CBC/Radio-Canada's Language Obligations: Communities Want to See Themselves and Be Heard Coast to Coast!**

**Ottawa – (April 8, 2014)** – According to testimony heard over the past two years, CBC/Radio-Canada needs to take urgent action so that it does not hinder the development of official-language minority communities. Any cuts to service could have a negative long-term impact on their vitality and survival. If there was one point on which all of these communities could agree, it was their desire to see, hear and read about themselves on the national network. The Corporation must therefore demonstrate that it takes the communities' needs into account in its decision-making process, its consultation and reporting mechanisms, and its programming.

Entitled *CBC/Radio-Canada's Language Obligations: Communities Want to See Themselves and Be Heard Coast to Coast*, the Senate committee's report looks at the role of the public broadcaster and its respect for its language obligations, an issue that the committee has touched on several times in previous studies. It first addressed the issue in a 2005 study on francophone and Acadian communities in Nova Scotia. The committee addressed the subject again in its 2009 report on francophone arts and culture. The issue also came up during the committee's visit to anglophone communities in Quebec, which led to a report being tabled in the Senate in 2011. This is the first time, however, that the committee has taken an in-depth look at the key role this federal institution plays in the advancement of Canada's linguistic duality and the development of official-language minority communities.

"It is recognized that CBC/Radio-Canada plays an important role in the development and vitality of francophone communities," said the Honourable Claudette Tardif, Chair of the committee. "However, the committee recommends that CBC/Radio-Canada take concrete and positive measures to enable all francophones across Canada to see, hear and read about themselves in French."

"The Corporation's strategies must focus on young people, and various steps can be taken to attract and hold their interest," added the committee's Deputy Chair, the Honourable Andrée Champagne, P.C. "The message that stands out is that the public broadcaster needs to embody linguistic duality, offer local programming that reflects who young people are, and be aware of what they need and expect. The Corporation needs to consult them right away."

During its study, the committee met with more than 40 witnesses (represented by 74 stakeholders) at public hearings in Ottawa. Testimony was heard over approximately two years, during which time other studies were also conducted and Parliament was prorogued. The committee attempted to obtain as complete a picture as possible of the situation in all regions of the country. Provincial and territorial stakeholders delivered testimony that was at times poignant and at times hopeful.

The Senate committee hopes that the recommendations in its report will be taken into consideration.

To read the committee's report and recommendations or to learn more about the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages, please visit its website at <http://senate-senat.ca/ollo-e.asp>

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