

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**English-speaking Quebec plays vital role in boosting French, Language Commissioner says**

**MONTREAL, WEDNESDAY, OCT. 9** – The Quebec Community Groups Network welcomes the latest (and last) [report on the status of Canada’s official-minority-language communities](#) from Commissioner of Official Languages Raymond Th  berge, as his term draws to a close in 2025.

“This report underlines repeatedly what we and other English-speaking community groups have been saying for years: we are not the enemy of the French language in Quebec, despite the picture often painted by the CAQ government and certain elements of Francophone media,” QCGN President Eva Ludvig said.

“In fact, as the Commissioner’s report emphasizes, the 1.25-million-member English-speaking community of Quebec and our institutions, including universities and CEGEPs, are part of the solution.

“As M. Th  berge said in his report, ‘Quebec’s English-speaking communities have a long tradition of promoting federal and individual bilingualism among Canada’s English-speaking majority, as well as defending the rights of French-speaking minorities outside Quebec. It is in everyone’s interest to ensure that the rights of English-speaking Quebecers are protected and respected, and that Quebec’s English-speaking minority is recognized as a provincial community whose commitment to bilingualism continues to be a key factor in the success of this political community we call Canada.’ ”

At the same time, Ludvig noted, Commissioner Th  berge recognized the threats and pressures the English-speaking community of Quebec has been under in recent years.

“As he so astutely noted, ‘One of the main challenges facing the English-speaking minority in Quebec is the perception that it does not recognize the value of French as the province’s common language. This persistent perception is nevertheless a myth whose exposure would benefit everyone.’

“We couldn’t agree more,” Ludvig said, noting that this most recent report echoes themes Th  berge articulated in a report earlier this year about how the English-speaking community of Quebec can play a more important role in helping promote and protect the French language.

Ludvig also noted the way the report zeroes in on what it calls “the education continuum” as an area worthy of special attention in ensuring official-minority-language communities remain vital.

“We also agree with the Commissioner that minority-language education is fundamental to the development of our official-language-minority community and that our schools are the most important institution for our communities’ survival,” Ludvig said. “And we are reassured to note that the report expresses some direct concerns about recent Quebec government policies in post-secondary education (higher tuition at English-speaking institutions for students from elsewhere in Canada; stiffer requirements for university undergraduates to master an intermediate level of French prior to graduation) that have been shown to cause harm to Concordia, Bishop’s and McGill.

“When M. Théberge says these institutions can play a leading role in efforts to protect and promote the French language, he’s right,” Ludvig said, welcoming Théberge’s commitment to delve deeper into the effects of the controversial policies.

Whether it was in calling for more and faster funding for official minority-language organizations, urging more support for French-language scholarly research, and higher targets for francophone immigration to Canada (especially outside Quebec), or in declaring forthrightly that ‘providing health care to all Canadians in the official language of their choice is a matter of basic safety and respect, and all governments should be striving to do just that,’ Ludvig said she was encouraged by the breadth and depth of Théberge’s understanding of the issues confronting official-language-minority communities in Canada, both French and English.

She said she hopes both federal and provincial government leaders and opposition politicians will pay close attention.

The Quebec Community Groups Network ([www.qcgn.ca](http://www.qcgn.ca)) is a not-for-profit organization bringing together English-language community organizations and individuals 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.

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