

2017 Pre-budget Submission

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Fédération culturelle canadienne-française

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FCCF | 2017 Pre-budget submission
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Preamble

The Fédération culturelle canadienne-française (FCCF) is a national organization devoted to promoting the artistic and cultural expression of Francophone and Acadian communities in Canada. For 39 years, the FCCF has assembled the opinions and voices of provincial and territorial organizations from St. John's, Newfoundland, to Vancouver, and from Windsor to Yellowknife dedicated to cultural development. It also brings together representatives of national theatre, publishing, song/music, media arts and visual arts groups, a group of performing arts presentation networks, and a network of French-language community radio stations.

In recent years, different studies and supporting statistics have shown that the arts and culture sector, and artists and cultural workers, are important economic engines and social assets. In addition to the benefits derived from the arts and cultural works from an aesthetic and visual perspective, its understanding of its environment and as an expression of identity, the sector constitutes one of the fundamental pillars for the sustainable development of francophone and Acadian communities. In March 2016, the last federal budget recognized this fact by not considering this sector as an expense, but rather as an investment that creates jobs, improves quality of life and strengthens intercultural and intergenerational ties while sustaining our common Canadian identity.

Today, the government must ensure that this recognition is retained by having it become an integral part of the policies and the legislative framework for our Canadian system so that Canadians have access to a range of artistic works and cultural experiences that reflect, reinvent and shape Canada's current cultural identity and cultural diversity.

We would like to thank the Government of Canada for its concrete and clear commitment made in the last budget. In presenting this submission, we encourage the government to strengthen this commitment by making permanent investments in the sector and revitalizing the francophone minority environment by implementing concrete measures for Canada's arts and culture sector and cultural industries.

Summary of the submission

The FCCF would like to make five recommendations concerning Budget 2017, which affects the three priorities of Canada's arts and culture sector and cultural industries:

Focus 1 | Protect our cultural heritage

Focus 2 | Promote recruiting, maintaining and stabilizing human resources in the arts and culture sector

Focus 3 | Support cultural and community infrastructures

The following recommendations were identified on the basis of the priorities stated by the sector that represents almost 3,125 artists and 150 artistic and cultural development organizations working in more than 250 francophone and Acadian communities across Canada.

Martin Thériège, President of the FCCF, would like to appear on behalf of the FCCF at the pre-budget consultations that will be held in fall 2016 in order to present these recommendations.

Focus 1 | Protect our cultural heritage

R1 The FCCF recommends that the Government of Canada include the arts and culture sector in government policies by permanently funding the programming and operations of artistic and cultural organizations and networks of Canada's francophone communities, and indexing the funding to the cost of living.

Organizations dedicated to the arts and culture in Canada's francophone communities have worked extremely hard and the results are encouraging despite the issues specific to our sector in francophone and Acadian communities. Thanks to these organizations, the creativity of our artists continues to flourish and is manifested in the dynamic cultural and artistic life of our communities. Some well-known regional cultural and artistic events take place time and again and let artists express themselves and thus conquer new audiences.

Although the new government recognized the sector in its first budget, the programs accessed by our artistic and cultural communities in a minority setting have not been bolstered. Given the demographics of Canada's francophones, the associated organizations are clearly at a disadvantage when compared to their counterparts of the majority in terms of covering their operating costs.

It should be noted that this is particularly important for the media and communications. Whereas community newspapers and radio stations of the majority can survive on advertising revenues, these organizations in Canada's francophone communities suffer from chronic lack of core funding.

Focus 2 | Promote recruiting, maintaining and stabilizing human resources in the arts and culture sector

To question 1 | What federal measures would help **Canadians** generally – and such specific groups as the unemployed, Indigenous peoples, those with a disability and seniors – maximize, in the manner of their choosing, their contributions to the country's economic growth?

R2 The FCCF wants the government to include an investment in linguistic duality in provincial and territorial agreements on education by providing payments to the provincial/territorial governments to promote greater integration of arts and culture in French-language education.

In view of the fact that French-language schools in a minority context are different from other schools because of their twofold mission, namely, the educational success of the students and the development of their francophone identity, an arts education can help them acquire the tools and means to express this culture. In order to develop their cultural identity, young people must have opportunities to discover and understand all elements of what is unique to their culture.

Although there are mechanisms to support education in a minority setting through federal-provincial-territorial education agreements (pertaining to education in the minority language and second language education) that recognize the specific and additional needs and challenges of the francophone and Acadian communities, the funding provided does not recognize the substantial contribution of the arts and culture to education.

Contact with artists from their area plays an important role in the development of youth's identity in Canada's francophone communities, and this contact must be supported by mechanisms for co-operation that promote a positive integration of the arts and culture in the educational setting.

To question 2 | What federal actions would help **Canada's businesses** – in all regions and sectors – meet their expansion, innovation and prosperity goals, and thereby contribute to Canada's economic growth?

R3 The FCCF wants the federal government to maximize the means of increasing the human resources and professional training and development opportunities available in Canada and abroad for SMEs, cultural and artistic entrepreneurs, and artists, by setting aside 3.5% of the Canada Arts Training Fund budget to support projects originating in francophone communities in Canada.

The government has indicated what it intends to do to modernize cultural policies and we are pleased to see that these initiatives are in keeping with the sector's priorities. However, even though statistics clearly show that the arts, culture and cultural industries sector is an integral part of Canada's creative economy and its global economic performance, the reality is that the needs of artists and cultural workers for professional training and development are growing, especially among French-speaking Canadians.

According to one study, *A Current Look at the Situation of Artists in the Canadian Francophonie*, 3,125 francophone artists in Canada declared income from their artistic profession compared to 119,045 Canadian artists. Their average income was approximately \$25,000 while that of the Canadian labour force was about \$37,000.

This situation gives rise to sizeable challenges with respect to the recruitment, retention and development of human capital and validation of this career choice. In order to reach their full potential with respect to creating, disseminating and developing their art, artists must have access to funding and the people working in the arts and culture must master certain basic skills and be able to continue improving and renewing themselves throughout their professional career.

Focus 3 | Support cultural and community infrastructures

To question 3 | What federal measures would ensure that **urban, rural and remote communities throughout Canada** enable residents to make their desired contribution to the country's economic growth and businesses to expand, prosper and serve domestic and international customers in order to contribute to economic growth?

R4 The FCCF is asking the federal government to extend the financial commitment to the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund beyond 2017.

By visiting professional venues we discover places that accommodate francophones in their community other than the traditional places such as schools. The francophone and Acadian communities must be able to use their language where they want to within their local community. The Francophone and Acadian communities need spaces that truly meet the needs of the local community.

One-time funding from year to year weakens the cultural infrastructures that house artistic productions, welcome and retain the public and, in so doing, strengthen a collective identity forged by the common

experience of art. Funds must be allocated for renovation, expansion and improvement projects for community and cultural infrastructures, and for maintaining them.

R5 The FCCF recommends that the federal government ensure that the new program to expand and improve broadband service ensures fairness for rural and remote French-speaking communities in Canada.

As is the case for any other industry, our cultural industry's access to markets depends on various factors including strategies to develop audiences and improve physical and financial infrastructures and the measures and means to stimulate competitiveness. In a constantly changing world where technological and digital advances greatly influence the distribution and production of cultural products and, in some cases, reshape traditional approaches to artistic expression, we can only conclude that the parameters for our booming sector must be reinforced.

The economic performance of the arts and culture sector is one of the main reasons behind the need to allocate adequate resources for the sustainable development of artists' ability to create and innovate.

Conclusion

The FCCF has said many times that "the benefits of government investment in Canada's francophone culture and arts are numerous and unequivocal." Due to the needs imposed by the environment as well as the very nature of the creative and innovative industry that we work in, considering the above recommendations will strengthen the role of a sector that is constantly evolving as the socio-economic engine of development of francophone and Acadian communities, and also as one of the ambassadors of French-Canadian culture beyond our borders.

The many benefits derived from supporting the arts and culture ensure that there are vital opportunities to build and affirm the identity of 2.6 million francophones who wish to live out their linguistic and cultural identity.

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