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Chair

The Honourable Michael Chong

Standing Committee on Official Languages

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• (0845)

[Translation]

The Chair (Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC)): Welcome to the Standing Committee on Official Languages. Today is Thursday, December 8, 2011, and this is our 19th meeting. We are here pursuant to Standing Order 108 to study the evaluation of the roadmap, to improve programs and service delivery.

This morning, we have representatives from three groups. We have with us Mr. Arseneault and Ms. Cohen, from the Société Saint-Thomas-d'Aquin, then Ms. Doucet and Mr. Dubeau, from the Fédération culturelle canadienne-française, and Ms. Lavergne and Mr. Diallo, from the Société franco-manitobaine.

We'll begin with the presentation by the representatives of the Société Saint-Thomas-d'Aquin.

[English]

Mr. Costas Menegakis (Richmond Hill, CPC): If I may—

The Chair: Before I begin, did I hear somebody has a point of order?

Mr. Costas Menegakis: I do. I would like to move that we put aside the last 15 minutes of today for committee business, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: We are going into committee business—

Mr. Costas Menegakis: In the last 15 minutes?

The Chair: —in the last 15 minutes of today, yes.

Mr. Costas Menegakis: And I would like that to be in camera, please.

The Chair: We'll deal with that when we get to that portion of the meeting.

[Translation]

Mr. Godin, do you have a point of order?

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Yes, Mr. Chair. I was wondering why the matter of the letter that was supposed to be sent to the Yukon, to school board No. 23, if I'm not mistaken, was not on the agenda.

[English]

The Chair: No, I didn't put it on the agenda, but we could discuss it again if you so wish. I assumed we had exhausted discussion on this. If you have anything in particular that you would like to—

[Translation]

Mr. Yvon Godin: I'd still need two or three hours to discuss it.

[English]

The Chair: If you want, I can cancel the next meeting and—

[Translation]

Mr. Yvon Godin: No. It's just that I didn't see it. I think we should move forward with that.

The Chair: Yes, we will discuss Mr. Bélanger's two motions.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): That may be.

The Chair: It's on the agenda. We'll discuss Mr. Bélanger's two motions. If we have time, we'll discuss the letter. Otherwise, I'll add it to the agenda for next week's meeting.

Let's move on now to the Société Saint-Thomas-d'Aquin.

Mr. Gabriel Arseneault (President, Société Saint-Thomas-d'Aquin (Société acadienne de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard)): Mr. Chair, committee members, thank you for the invitation.

As the chair just said, with me is Aline Bouffard Cohen, the director general.

The Société Saint-Thomas-d'Aquin was created in 1919, and the organization is the official ambassador for Prince Edward Island's Acadians and francophones. Its mandate is to work on behalf of all Acadians and francophones so that they can live and grow individually and collectively in French on Prince Edward Island.

In 2010, the Island's Acadian and francophone community developed the 2011-2016 global development plan, which proposes a common vision that would be used to guide the action of community partners and governments, while making everyone's efforts cohesive.

What is interesting in the process that the community undertook in creating its global development plan is that the Société Saint-Thomas-d'Aquin also approached the provincial government to establish a joint development plan. It defines what the Acadian and francophone community and the provincial government hope to accomplish in the future and how they intend to do it. The process and the planning support are both as important as the planning document itself.

The reason we are talking to you about this process is that this collaboration is a first in Canada. We would hope that, when the federal government sets out the next roadmap, it takes into account this kind of model, where minority communities and the government work together to attain common goals. But each development plan needs support. Creating a dynamic is necessary to coordinate, create partnerships and produce results. On the Island and in all Acadian and francophone communities, we need support from Canadian Heritage to help us implement our development plans.

If this idea is used, it will be extremely important to work with the government on performance indicators and for the roadmap to strengthen the community's ability to gather results better.

A very important objective for the Island's Acadian and francophone community that stems from the roadmap is the improvement of access to services for official language minority communities.

On April 1, 2000, the Government of Prince Edward Island enacted in part the French Language Services Act. The legislation, overdue since the 1990s, marked the start of a new era in relations between the provincial government and the Acadian and francophone community. Although the act guarantees services in French, the act is being implemented little by little. For example, it sets out that government agencies offer a minimum of services in French.

Although notable progress has been made since the early 1990s, particularly with respect to services in French in certain provincial departments and bilingual road signs on the Island, there is still far to go before the French Language Services Act is fully implemented. This seems to be the case in the areas of health care and justice, among others.

Providing services in French on Prince Edward Island is an important issue, which is why it is absolutely important to continue making it a priority of the roadmap. The provincial government is facing the same challenges we are: finding a sufficient number of qualified, competent human resources in the right places, and who can provide the service in relation to the needs. Promising a service is one thing; finding the human resources to provide it is another.

The roadmap enabled us to create an important agency: the Réseau des services de santé en français de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard. It's an initiative of the Société Saint-Thomas-d'Aquin, in collaboration with the province.

As we know, access to health care services in a person's own language is a matter not only of respect, but also of health and safety. This is why we feel it is essential that Acadian and francophone users be able to benefit from services in their own language because we know very well that a population that does not have access to services in its own language will perceive itself as less healthy than the rest of the population.

People age 65 and older make up a particularly large segment of the Island's Acadian and francophone population. It is more important for seniors to be able to communicate in their own language. The lack of bilingual staff working in retirement residences, among other places, is glaring.

● (0850)

These people say they aren't as healthy as the other residents on the Island. Not having health care services in French or services in French in all areas of intervention, whether it involves a loss of independence or human services, adds considerable stress to the elderly francophone population, which just adds to the stress of becoming less independent, aging and the lack of resources.

In addition to services in French, there are a few other issues that are priorities under the roadmap that are able to rise to some of our challenges and for which support through an initiative like the roadmap is still necessary.

Among other things, the aging population, the declining birth rate and the exodus of young people are growing phenomena in the Acadian and francophone community. We have noted the results of statistical studies on the lower literacy level among francophones and the limited participation in postsecondary studies that, of course, compromises sustainable employability. Since the median age of Prince Edward Island's Acadian and francophone community is 48 years, basic renewal is a challenge, and the rapid decrease in the number of workers available on the labour market is creating a vicious circle.

To change this trend, the community has taken measures that need to be sustained. We are targeting individuals, such as newcomers and francophiles, to strengthen the Island population. The demographic challenge is an issue that is far from being resolved, which is why it's important to continue to invest in the immigration of French-speakers. However, it is important to ensure that the provinces are not all treated in the same way. It's difficult for Prince Edward Island to compete with the much larger provinces, which is why we would like strategies put in place that are specific to each province.

The school-community centres are essential in our communities to ensure that our culture and our language grow. It's through the language that a culture expresses itself best. It remains the cornerstone of each person's identity. These centres are places for French education, with high-quality programs, and places to spread our culture.

Since 2002, Prince Edward Island has increased its number of francophone school-community centres from two to six. We are very proud of the official opening of the sixth centre, which will take place tomorrow, December 9, in Rustico. We would never have been able to do it without the federal government's funding and support through the roadmap. But it's important to note that the school-community centres don't all offer education from nursery school to grade 12. It's also important to note that it's still very difficult to obtain funding for community infrastructures because the concept of a school-community centre is not recognized.

The daycare centres in each of these school-community centres are growing rapidly and do a very good job of welcoming our children all over the Island. However, the lack of trained teachers is glaring.

So far, the roadmap has enabled us to organize ourselves and, today, it is allowing us to grow. Tomorrow, it will enable us to live in French. The idea of a roadmap like the one currently in place is absolutely essential to ensure the spread of linguistic duality. We cannot say enough just how important it is that the roadmap be renewed in 2013 by the federal government.

However, it is necessary to ensure that the priorities of the provincial and federal government are established and worked on together, in connection with the priorities of the minority communities. It is also essential to ensure that a clear, specific, transparent and responsible implementation process is established.

Thank you.

• (0855)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Arsenault.

We will now hear from the representative of the Fédération culturelle canadienne-française.

Ms. Marie-Claude Doucet (President, Fédération culturelle canadienne-française): Good morning, Mr. Chair and members of the committee. Thank you for inviting the Fédération culturelle canadienne-française to speak before the Standing Committee on Official Languages as part of the midterm report on the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality 2008-2013.

I would first like to give you an introduction to our organization. The Fédération culturelle canadienne-française is a national organization whose mission is to promote the artistic and cultural expression of francophone and Acadian communities. As the president of the FCCF, I am speaking to you today on behalf of our 21 members, some 3,000 artists and 150 arts and cultural development organizations, working in the francophone and Acadian communities across Canada. I have been active in the FCCF since 2006, and I also serve as the executive director of the largest francophone cultural centre in Ontario, MIFO in Orleans, which runs a number of programs including professional artist residencies and an art gallery that features local artists, as well as a music school and summer camps that promote arts learning.

I would like to take the next few minutes to outline how investments in arts and culture that are included in the roadmap are significant, to demonstrate that the projects they have generated have had direct impacts in our communities, and to discuss why the next roadmap should include a specific arts and culture component.

We would like to thank the government for identifying the arts and culture sector as one of the five priorities in the current roadmap. Recognizing the priority was a step in the right direction. Moreover, there seems to be consensus on the importance of arts and culture in the roadmap, since several groups that have appeared before this committee over the last month have identified this sector as being one of the most important ways to promote the learning, practice and visibility of the language, as well as the rootedness of the people of our communities in a pan-Canadian francophone space.

With the roadmap, the arts and culture sector has obtained \$14 million through the Cultural Development Fund, \$4.5 million through the Music Showcase for artists from official language minority communities, and \$5 million through the National Translation Program for Book Publishing. In short, a direct overall

investment of \$23.5 million. The Canadian francophone arts and culture sector has also benefited from indirect impacts of the roadmap, which we will return to a little later in our presentation.

Let us take a brief look at each of these programs. The Cultural Development Fund has several objectives, one of which is to promote the contribution of arts, culture and heritage to the sustainable development of communities in Canadian society. As part of the evaluation process for applications to this fund, 110 community projects have been funded. The Cultural Development Fund has also funded priority projects in collaboration with the provincial governments of Ontario, New Brunswick, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. The fund's leverage effect is significant. Indeed, it can be said that one of the fund's many success stories is the creation by the Ontario Arts Council of two new pilot programs in visual arts and media arts at the Franco-Ontarian Arts Office, which involved total funding of \$500,000 from the CDF and the OAC. The projects funded by the CDF have also made it possible to establish interesting partnerships, increase professional development activities and develop new audiences, in addition to providing Canadians with access to the richness of the artistic, cultural and heritage expression of the artists in their communities. We repeat that this additional injection of \$14 million was greatly appreciated, but our task here is to evaluate the roadmap and therefore to look at aspects that could be improved should the roadmap be renewed.

In this sense, we would like to draw your attention to two weaknesses in this program. The CDF is a fund that finances one-time special projects. This type of funding does not allow for the creation of lasting real benefits. The fund the arts and culture sector really needs is a fund that strengthens existing arts and culture organizations by providing them with stable and ongoing multi-year operating funding and by making it possible to support all the stages of the cultural continuum. As mentioned by the representatives from the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada regarding the roadmap as a whole, there also exists a challenge in terms of transparency with respect to the CDF. Indeed, it is difficult to obtain access to clear and complete data about the fund.

As for the Music Showcases for artists from official language minority communities program, it was designed to respond to the following two main objectives: promote the artists' career development, and promote access for communities to musical performances in their own language. The program is greatly appreciated both by the Alliance nationale de l'industrie musicale and by the artists working in the song and music industry. Since 2008, it has funded 171 projects for a total amount of \$1,623,404. Without a shadow of a doubt, this success is due to the fact that the program criteria were developed with representatives of artists from official language minority communities. The criteria therefore reflects the needs of the community.

• (0900)

The program has fulfilled its mandate in all respects. A portion of the funding is allocated to events enabling artists from francophone and Acadian communities to offer a showcase of their work. The result is clear and measurable: the number of shows by our artists has seen a marked increase. Several of the artists are currently developing national or international careers, among them Damien Robitaille in Ontario, Surveillantes from Manitoba and Radio Radio in Acadia. This increase in artist tours has also ensured that the people of our communities have more access to music performances in their language, facilitating the emergence of the strong and necessary cultural identity that Ms. Pilon of the Commission nationale des parents francophones spoke to you about on December 1st.

Unlike the previous two programs, the National Translation Program for Book Publishing was not designed in response to the development challenges facing the publishers in our communities, but in order to promote linguistic duality. Even though it could be helpful, it does not meet the priority needs of small businesses like French-Canadian publishing houses and indeed very few of them have benefited from this program. The ecosystem of the book is fragile. This ecosystem has to be supported for books to be able to properly reach their audience. It is our hope that the next roadmap will offer a program based on the real needs of publishers, following exhaustive consultations with the community.

As promised, I will touch briefly on the roadmap's indirect impacts on the arts and culture sector. As you are no doubt aware, schools and school-community centres are at the heart of the development of French-Canadian communities. Schools and our communities have a double mission, namely to foster academic success, and to protect, promote and convey the language and the culture of the communities that they serve. The art-culture-education link is of paramount importance for ensuring the demographic renewal of our communities.

As mentioned by Mr. Paul from the Fédération nationale des conseils scolaires francophones, the roadmap made it possible to implement several projects from the federation's action plan, including the Table de l'axe action culturelle et identitaire, better known as TAACI. It is due to the cooperation made possible by this table that the spheres of education and culture jointly led the project *Trousse du passeur culturel*, a project that documents and catalyzes the contribution of arts and culture to identity building. This nationwide project has made it possible to offer training to all francophone school principals across Canada, thus enabling them to better integrate arts and culture into their educational projects.

We could continue for a long time sharing with you other success stories of projects funded by the road map that have had an impact on the arts and culture sector, but we would also like to use this time to talk about the roadmap's future. I believe we have been clear: the FCCF would like the government to renew the roadmap and even expand it to include an arts and culture component. During the forum "Être artiste dans la francophonie canadienne: Forum sur les pratiques artistiques de la francophonie canadienne", presented in June 2011, the participants took the time to report on the current state of the sector.

It is clear that over the last 40 years, the institutions that the communities have set up ensure that we can continue to build. The roadmap's programs have provided new funding, which continues to build and strengthen fragile but important and necessary gains. In short, these investments contribute to the profitability of previous investments and ensure that they remain profitable for a long time to come, providing better returns. According to the FCCF, this arts and culture component could be expanded to support the following areas of intervention: cultural development, arts infrastructure, artists, cultural industries and access to the arts.

We know that the members of this community share our vision, namely that it be possible for all Canadians to flourish in French throughout the country thanks to communities being able to assert, show, reinvent themselves and innovate. The FCCF firmly believes that this could be made possible through dynamic cultural development, accessible artistic creation, professional and visible cultural products and constructive strategic links established with other sectors, thus allowing for the emergence of life in French. We believe that an arts and culture component in the next roadmap can make this possible since this funding complements existing programs.

Once again, thank you for your warm welcome and for your attention. Eric Dubeau, the executive director of the FCCF, and I are available to answer any questions you may have. We look forward to reading the report that the committee will publish following this study on the impacts of the roadmap.

• (0905)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Doucet.

We will now hear from the Société franco-manitobaine.

Ms. Nicole Forest Lavergne (President, Société franco-manitobaine): Good morning, Mr. Chair and hon. members.

My name is Nicole Forest Lavergne and I am the president of the Société franco-manitobaine. Let me introduce Mr. Ibrahima Diallo, who is here with me today and who is the past-president of the board of directors of the Société franco-manitobaine.

We are pleased to appear before you as representatives of Manitoba's francophone community, in order to give you as accurate an analysis as possible of the impact of the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality 2008-2013 on the Franco-Manitoban community. We are also going to provide you with a few solutions to make adjustments and improvements in anticipation that the roadmap will continue after 2013.

As you know, the Société franco-manitobaine is the official organization that represents the francophone population of Manitoba. The Société franco-manitobaine calls for the full respect of the rights of francophones, as well as the enactment of new legislation and government policies in order to help Franco-Manitobans thrive in French.

The Société franco-manitobaine, as a leader, facilitates communication and co-operation between Manitoba's various francophone organizations and is involved in all areas of activity in the community. Activities include: developing our economy, training our francophones, normalizing life in French in Manitoba, forging ties between our communities, promoting our arts and culture, enhancing the status of the French language, promoting French-language services, conserving our assets, and promoting our resources and our activities.

Through its continued support for community projects, the Société franco-manitobaine encourages dialogue and community development. In Manitoba, many participants contribute to promoting francophone vitality. Our community structure is complex and varied. In order to give you an overview of some of the actual benefits of the Roadmap 2008-2013, we have taken the time to briefly consult some of the players in the development of Manitoba's francophone community.

Let's take the Conseil communauté en santé du Manitoba, for example. This organization, via Health Canada and the Société santé en français, received funding under the roadmap to move projects forward. The funding was especially for setting up community wellness centres for francophones in Sainte-Agathe and La Broquerie—francophone villages in Manitoba where French-language programming is offered—in addition to providing weekly or monthly access to a doctor and other health professionals.

The roadmap has also contributed to building the Centre Albert-Galliot in Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes, Manitoba. This one-stop service centre seeks to improve access to primary health care and to French-language social services for francophones in the region. In addition, the construction of a new hospital has been approved. The hospital will be physically joined to the Centre Albert-Galliot.

Telehealth programming—or *Télé Santé*—has also started, enabling the Conseil communauté en santé du Manitoba to bring various partners together and to develop French-language programming. This has also helped francophones across Manitoba to take their health in their own hands, without having to travel from rural areas to urban areas.

In addition, the roadmap has made it possible for the discussions of the Conseil communauté en santé du Manitoba with Manitoba's health minister and the Winnipeg regional health authority to come to fruition. It was confirmed that the new Centre de naissance de Saint-Vital—a district in Winnipeg—will be designated as bilingual and will provide services in French to the francophones in that community.

In terms of arts and culture, the Activités culturelles project in the Sculpture Garden allowed the Maison des artistes visuels francophones du Manitoba to develop an activity program in the sculpture garden in order to support and set up public art projects, as well as artistic and cultural projects in the community in order to stimulate the francophone, cultural and artistic vitality of French-speaking Manitoba. The project has also made it possible for the public at large to become familiar with sculptors in French-speaking Canada and to make the artists more known.

As part of the Cultural Development Fund, the money invested enabled the cultural community of French-speaking Manitoba to participate in organizing the very first celebration of Culture Days in Manitoba. Our province was in the spotlight that year. We consulted with the provincial committee to hire a bilingual co-ordinator and we helped with every step of organizing the celebration. As a result, the francophonie was an integral and significant part of Culture Days right from day one. In addition, it was a way to ensure bilingual promotion of the event in Manitoba. This is a great example of cooperation and of linguistic duality at work.

In terms of music, the 100 Nons—the organization responsible for the vitality and renewal of music in French in Manitoba—was able to set up the Boîtes à chanson communautaires project by using the Cultural Development Fund. It was also able to create an event called Festival de musique jeunesse that will be launched in 2012. With the Canada Music Fund, the 100 Nons created the musical showcase program and one of the things it will introduce is a Manitoban showcase with three Manitoban artists as part of the official programming at the Bourse RIDEAU 2012.

● (0910)

In education, the University of Saint-Boniface has also specifically benefited from investments under the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality 2008-2013. Through contribution agreements, the government has invested \$331,148 in scholarships for translation students, allowing the University of Saint-Boniface to attract a greater number of students to this program and, therefore, to address the shortage in this sector.

Actually, we believe that the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality 2008-2013 is a key strategy for developing linguistic duality in Canada. However, it appears that one of its major flaws is that there is no consistency or communication to align programs with community priorities.

We see that no strategy to bring the priorities of our community in line with the roadmap has been developed. We feel it is appropriate to ask that the priorities of communities and their provincial realities are factored in when the next roadmap is developed, especially since francophone communities in each province, together with the advocacy organizations of the Société franco-manitobaine, were asked to come up with a community strategic plan.

The plan was designed as a consultation and mobilization tool for the Franco-Manitoban community and its partner organizations. It targets the aspirations of the community towards linguistic and cultural vitality, and it suggests five areas for community development over five years in order to mobilize its partner organizations for action.

Since it is the federal government requiring us to create this plan, it would make sense to put in place a strategy connecting provincial priorities to those of the roadmap. Right now, the way funds are allocated seems to show a lack of coordination with our Manitoban process that places the Société franco-manitobaine at the centre of our community strategies.

The vast majority of roadmap funding is managed by national organizations and is then directly transferred to provincial organizations, without necessarily reflecting provincial priorities or actually keeping the whole community informed.

I would like to take this opportunity to point out that many of our community organizations that have received federal funding were not able to say clearly whether the funds came from the roadmap or from other sources. All this has led us to believe that we should develop a process that promotes more strategic and effective communication in line with community priorities.

We believe that, without increased funding to organizations and institutions, the roadmap will never reach its full potential. It is important to invest in organizations and institutions that can directly meet people's expectations.

As an advocacy group, we are responsible for managing an important decision-making process, which consists of making a recommendation for the distribution of funds under the collaboration agreement between the francophone community and the Department of Canadian Heritage. To get the job done, we have an effective community system in place and we believe it can certainly be used as an example for the roadmap.

Let's suppose for a second that the funding invested in linguistic duality is in line with provincial priorities and has the support of advocacy organizations. We would then be sure that we were making the most of it and maximizing the spinoffs of the overall investment in the communities.

So we must increase funding for the whole community.

Skilled human resources are needed to support, guide and focus organizations in their applications in order to get the results the public and governments expect.

Let us be clear. We are not at all criticizing the massive investment in Canada's linguistic duality that the Roadmap for Linguistic Duality 2008-2013 has brought to Manitoba. On the contrary, many great projects were possible because of it and they have certainly achieved the objectives of the government. However, as we were writing this brief, we realized that, unfortunately, the Société franco-manitobaine has very little specific information on the local successes of the roadmap, since we have not been involved at all in the current process. A future roadmap would have to rectify this lack of cohesion between the government, national organizations, provincial organizations and advocacy organizations responsible for managing priorities and processes.

In conclusion, the Société franco-manitobaine believes that a major investment in linguistic duality is needed and it recommends that federal investment in this sector be increased.

• (0915)

The Société franco-manitobaine is ready to offer its support in order for us to be able to work together towards concrete improvements on the linguistic duality funding process in the years to come.

Thank you for inviting us to appear before you. Thank you for listening to us and for your interest in our organization and in developing official language communities.

The Chair: Thank you, madam.

We now have one hour and ten minutes for questions and comments.

Mr. Godin, the floor is yours.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would also like to welcome you all. I have met some of you in the past and it is always a pleasure seeing you.

I would like to start with the Société Saint-Thomas-d'Aquin from Prince Edward Island. Prince Edward Island has the RDEE, which is funded by the federal government. Do you think that this organization, which is a partner in the economic development of Acadian communities, should be maintained? Its representatives were a bit worried about the future of their organization.

Mr. Gabriel Arseneault: I feel that the RDEE in Prince Edward Island certainly has a role to play. The Société Saint-Thomas-d'Aquin works closely with the RDEE. The RDEE takes care of training and helps francophone entrepreneurs set up shop. I think it is important for that to take place in all our Acadian communities, if we want to keep this francophone vibrancy and vitality in our regions.

The director of our organization might also have something to add.

Ms. Aline Bouffard-Cohen (Director General, Société Saint-Thomas-d'Aquin (Société acadienne de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard)): Yes, I do.

In terms of the economy on the island, I think that people are increasingly aware that, although the island is predominantly English-speaking, francophones are also consumers and that it is possible to consume and be served in French. Entrepreneurs have become aware that francophones are a clientele that can be served, and that serving them in French encourages consumers to come back. The RDEE made it possible to develop a francophone chamber of commerce, which, in turn, makes it possible to have more French-language services in the private sector.

Let me give you a very concrete example. You go to a restaurant, you get service in French and you decide to go back to that restaurant. Restaurant owners start realizing how important it is to serve the francophone clientele in French, especially in the summer. There are lots and lots of tourists especially from the Atlantic provinces. So, if they receive service in French, they will be sure to come back to the island. The economic sector and the RDEE are working on this issue and their representatives are aware of it. This partnership is new and important to us. The island has an economic development plan.

• (0920)

Mr. Yvon Godin: The roadmap allocated \$16.2 million to ACOA especially for minority communities. Of that amount, \$10 million were allocated to immigration in New Brunswick and \$6.2 million to economic development for the francophone segment of the Atlantic.

Do you think that Prince Edward Island received its share?

Ms. Aline Bouffard-Cohen: There are two things. First, we have not established where the funding went. So it is very hard for me to give you an answer.

Mr. Yvon Godin: That's the problem. I have heard all the witnesses point out how important the roadmap is, but no one seemed to be able to say whether the funding came from the roadmap or elsewhere.

Ms. Aline Bouffard-Cohen: We don't know.

Mr. Yvon Godin: I would like to ask everyone this question because everyone says that the roadmap is good. How can you say that the roadmap is good if you don't even know whether the money comes from it? You cannot determine which projects come from the roadmap. Does the roadmap do anything or not?

As I recall, the government used to give money for arts and culture. But, if I am not mistaken, it slashed \$45 million from arts and culture in 2006. Do you remember that? You now say that you received a lot because you got \$25.3 million. But if we subtract \$45 million from \$25.3 million, you are not left with a whole lot. So you suffered a loss.

Does the roadmap take you anywhere or is it just smoke in the air? We know what it is. When we sit in our backyard in the evening and we want to chase mosquitoes away, we light a little fire. Is that what the roadmap is? The government boasts that the roadmap works well, but every time we meet with organizations, it is always the same thing. And it is true, might I add, but I would like to hear what you have to say. I am going to give you time to do so. Could you tell me whether the roadmap is good and, if so, what are you basing that statement on?

The same thing goes for Manitoba. The government has given some \$300,000 in the past. Does that money come from other programs? Does it really come from the roadmap? How can you say that the roadmap is good? How can you justify it, when you are telling us that you are not even involved in the process and that you don't know where you got the money from? And you are not alone in saying that, since almost everyone who appeared before us did the same thing. You praise the roadmap and say you want it to be renewed, but you don't actually know if it did anything for you.

You can dive right in.

Mr. Ibrahima Diallo (Past-President, Société franco-manitobaine): Okay then, as long as you let me dive right in. Thank you very much for your question.

We pointed this out in our presentation. The roadmap is a broad concept, and I also think that it is not very well known on the ground. It is usually done at the national level and it goes directly to the interested organizations, to provincial organizations. It is like there was a national organization with subsidiaries—and that often takes place outside pre-established processes—such as advocacy organizations. We have to ask people what they got. Those organizations often don't even know whether the money came from the roadmap.

Perhaps the roadmap doesn't sell itself very well, though it may do things that take place on the ground. For example, we have talked about translation scholarships in our report. I am very familiar with that because I was the dean of a faculty. So I knew that the funding

came from the roadmap, just like the \$1 million for the digitization of translation programs at the University of Saint-Boniface, but it was sort of a piecemeal approach.

That is why we are saying that, in the next roadmap, it is important to find a way to circulate information and make it as clear as possible for both advocacy organizations and the groups that benefit from it.

We have a problem when a group receives money and they don't know if it comes from the roadmap, as you said. For example, we can see that infrastructure programs were happening everywhere. But we see nothing that says that it comes from the roadmap. So there is certainly work to do to make the roadmap better known as something that makes things happen, that brings about change, we must admit, but that essentially is not very well known.

• (0925)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Diallo.

Mr. Gourde, you have the floor.

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to thank the witnesses for being here this morning. It really is very interesting.

I have a question for the three organizations, the two *sociétés* and the *fédération*. You are facing challenges and I think you have mentioned them. Could you give us an example of the challenges you face and tell us what you have done to improve the situation? Could you also tell me how the roadmap has helped you?

Perhaps we could start with the representative from the Société Saint-Thomas-d'Aquin.

Mr. Gabriel Arsenault: Thank you for your question, Mr. Gourde.

As I mentioned in the presentation, one of the projects with considerable spinoffs is the school-community centres that were built in Prince Edward Island. It started with setting up the French-language education system in Prince Edward Island. As you know, Prince Edward Island is a small area, but there are still about 30,000 people of Acadian and francophone origin. Today, there are only about 5,600 who still speak French.

These school-community centres are new. Four centres have been built since 2000. Momentum was created, and promotion and awareness have increased in all the regions in Prince Edward Island. We are once again introducing French to the Acadians who had been assimilated. The situation is still delicate because we are in a sea of anglophones in Prince Edward Island. Acadians and francophones represent about 4% of the island's population.

It is important to continue. We still need support and assistance to continue our efforts in reversing assimilation and introducing French to our people who have lost their mother tongue, unfortunately.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Thank you.

What does Mr. Dubeau think, from the *Fédération culturelle canadienne-française*?

Mr. Éric Dubeau (Director General, Fédération culturelle canadienne-française): It is a very interesting question. We mentioned a number of examples in our presentation, including increased collaboration with the education sector, to follow on what you were saying. I think the challenge on the ground has to do with the stakeholders' desire for closer ties and a desire for active complicity and collaboration.

In our case, we have developed a tool box, the *Trousse du passeur culturel*, which is used as a reference and guide for school teachers and principals who want to incorporate arts and culture in education more effectively. We know that, in our communities, schools have a dual mandate: education and training, as well as building identities. Over the past few years, we have been working closely with educators to try and support them, to help them with integrating arts and culture in order to build identities as part of their mandate.

Let me also go back to some concrete examples of our work on the ground. One example is the music showcase program that made it possible to broaden the exposure of singers and musicians everywhere in Canada, including Quebec, which still remains a critical priority market for our artists and artistic organizations.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: What about the *Société franco-manitobaine*?

Mr. Ibrahima Diallo: One of the challenges our organizations are faced with is health services in French. The roadmap has helped us set up programs, especially since we have an aging population.

There is also another aspect. We are receiving more and more unilingual francophone immigrants, including a very large proportion of refugees. In 2007, almost 60% of francophone immigrants were refugees. So it is crucial for health care because these people often need mental health counselling, and so on. I think efforts have been made to address this.

The challenge with health services is being reviewed and corrected to address this new aspect caused by the two factors I just mentioned, aging and the diversification of the clientele.

● (0930)

Mr. Jacques Gourde: I think you have all talked about education. It is really important to have good services in education in order to be able to enhance our communities and make language learning possible. I am thinking about Prince Edward Island where you were confronted with an assimilation problem. Could you describe the situation to me? How critical has it been? How much improvement is there right now?

Mr. Gabriel Arsenault: In the late 1960s or the 1970s, there was only one French school in the *Évangeline* region, which is a homogenous region of Acadians and francophones.

During the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s, schools were merged. Several Acadian schools were assimilated into anglophone schools. But we started the French immersion program, which is still a very good program. Actually, in addition to the 5,000 to 5,500 Acadians and francophones, there are also 10,000 to 12,000 francophiles, who graduated from immersion schools. We also want to integrate the francophiles in our communities to help us further develop and promote French language and culture.

As I said earlier, we have only been able to reverse the assimilation trend since the French-language education system was set up. We will keep going, but we still need the support of the federal government through the roadmap.

As Mr. Godin was saying, sometimes we are not sure if the funding comes from the roadmap or from another program. There is always the danger of deciding to reduce funding and not knowing whether it will be funding from the roadmap or funding from an existing program.

All of this is to say that Prince Edward Island is now on the right track, especially in terms of reintroducing French to people who no longer use the language. But we need support to keep the momentum going.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Your turn, Mr. Bélanger.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I will get right to the point.

Mr. Arsenault, after what you have just said, I am tempted to suggest to the committee that we ask the Auditor General to keep the money from the roadmap and the money from departments separate. But I don't know if we could ask the current Auditor General because he might have trouble communicating with you. So I will restrain myself.

However, I am still going to take advantage of this opportunity to tell you what will happen at the end of the meeting, since we are likely to go in camera. This has been the new way of doing things since the fall. I think it is very unpleasant and undemocratic, but what can I say? That's the way things are. I intended to move a motion asking that the committee invite the headhunter who recommended the appointment of the unilingual anglophone Auditor General. But I wanted to do so when one of our colleagues was here because he made it clear in his comments that he was offended by this appointment. Since he is not here, I will refrain from doing it. I know that it is starting to bother my colleagues opposite that I do this at every meeting. Perhaps they have found a way to stop me, but we will never know because it will take place in camera. We shall find out. Mr. Chair, it was not my intent to introduce my motions this morning.

I would like to raise another point that gets on their nerves, but that greatly concerns me. Some Conservative members have been submitting petitions to the House, asking to eliminate funding for the *Société Radio-Canada* entirely. Do you have anything to say about that?

Mr. Éric Dubeau: I will be brave this time. From the FCCF's point of view, *Radio-Canada* is a critical player that is important not only so that our communities can develop but also so that Canadian arts and culture can flourish in French.

Let me quickly outline two factors that demonstrate that importance. First, access to French-language cultural products, whether in Calgary, Vancouver, Winnipeg or anywhere else. It is not common and it is not easy. I think everyone recognizes and is aware of this. Development aside, there is also Radio-Canada's role as an employer. It is an economic engine in our communities where economic support is sorely needed. There aren't a whole lot of jobs in French in Calgary. Nor in Moncton or Sudbury. It makes sense to keep it for that reason alone.

• (0935)

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Thank you.

Mr. Ibrahima Diallo: I feel that Radio-Canada is still vital for our communities. It has just celebrated its 75th anniversary. In a way, it is an information tool that gives communities a voice.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: I have to move quickly, because I get only one chance to speak this morning.

Mr. Gabriel Arsenault: If you take Radio-Canada out of Prince Edward Island...

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: The island goes with it!

Mr. Gabriel Arsenault:...you eliminate the only media outlet in French.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: In a moment, you are perhaps going to be told that it is not true, that Minister Moore is standing up for Radio-Canada. But on the first page of the web site of Rob Anders, M. P., you can see the petition. If that is what you are told, maybe you should ask about the results of the poll that the Conservative Party conducted among its members, asking their opinion about Radio-Canada funding.

This concerns me. I look at potentially abolishing CBC/Radio-Canada in the same way as you do. It's not just about the French side. People on the English side want to keep CBC/Radio-Canada too. I am taking this action because I think communities must be aware of the possibility. Thank you.

Sir, your statement was absolutely essential. To be fair to the government, I congratulate it for putting a cultural element into the roadmap. It is something the action plan did not have; I recognize that. But some of the elements of the action plan that preceded the roadmap should have been kept. You said that there was no tie-in between the roadmap and the global community development plan. The action plan called for a consultation mechanism every six months. Communities were consulted to see how things were going. Have you been regularly consulted since the roadmap was launched to see how it is being developed and rolled out?

Mr. Ibrahima Diallo: No, not to my knowledge. We were consulted right at the start when the roadmap was being workshopped and when Bernard Lord was going round all the provinces, I think. To my knowledge, that is the only time when we had a meeting like that at which we could express our interest and set out some milestones. As far as I know, no specific update meetings have been regularly held.

Ms. Aline Bouffard-Cohen: That answer goes for us too.

Mr. Éric Dubeau: We were consulted often, particularly about the implementation of programs like the Music Showcases Initiatives

for Artists from Minority Official Language Communities. I would also say that we were consulted a lot for the mid-term report.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Was the consultation worth it?

Mr. Éric Dubeau: We won't know that until we see the final report. We hope it was worth it.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: A decision has been made. It seems that we are going to be able to see the interim report, That is encouraging.

By the way, I would like to congratulate your two premiers, Mr. Ghiz and Mr. Selinger. If the roadmap is going to be implemented and the communities are going to develop positively, it is important for the provinces to be active participants. Having worked with Mr. Ghiz and Mr. Selinger, I can tell you that their governments' desire to respect those communities and have them develop in a positive way is clear. I hope you can agree with me on that.

Ms. Aline Bouffard-Cohen: Yes, provincial governments are good like that, at least, the Prince Edward Island government is. Now the challenge is to establish cooperation between departments. Each department must meet the needs of francophones. So harmonization is essential. We are working together in order for the needs of francophones to be heard in each department and for the programs to be tied to those needs. That is where the value is added.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Let me make a suggestion. Mr. Arsenault, you mentioned immigration needs. I know that the Société franco-manitobaine is a key player in immigration matters. My suggestion is that the Société Saint-Thomas-d'Aquin people talk to the Société franco-manitobaine people about it. I think that could be very useful for communities in both places. The Société franco-manitobaine has put in place some excellent, imaginative programs, which have made Manitoba the province with the highest rate of francophone immigration in the country.

• (0940)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bélanger.

Over to you, Mr. Trottier.

Mr. Bernard Trottier (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My thanks to our guests for being here this morning.

I was struck by your presentation because a number of themes kept coming up. You mentioned the lack of consistency that investments in minority official language communities suffer from. I know that you have been working in those communities for a long time.

Mr. Arsenault, you mentioned the changes that have taken place since the start of the 1990s, for example. Perhaps you could tell us what it was like beforehand. Surely, there were investments from different departments like Heritage Canada, Health Canada and Justice Canada. The roadmap was born from the idea of improving consistency, but I am hearing that no consistency exists. Do you have any suggestions? Should we perhaps go back to the old model whereby you asked each department to make investments. Could you tell me more, please?

You can start, Mr. Arsenault. Is there a way to improve the situation, to increase the coordination and the consistency of roadmap investments?

Mr. Gabriel Arsenault: As the other speakers have mentioned, I think there is the matter of the clarity of the roadmap. I don't think people in the street read the roadmap every day. I think our emphasis has to be put on our communities' global development plans, as all provincial governments are doing at the moment. That is where we should start, in my opinion. We have defined all our communities' priorities for the various sectors. The federal government should complement that work and collaborate on it. I am not saying that there is no communication. But there has to be some understanding of the priorities that have been established in our communities. That would be a good start.

Mr. Bernard Trottier: Okay.

What about Manitoba? Manitoba means a lot to me; it's the old country. My father and a lot of my family members still live there. That's why I feel Franco-Manitoban at heart. Maybe you can talk about the lack of consistency.

Mr. Ibrahima Diallo: I think the tie-in is critical. There is an excellent example in our report. This is the agreement we have with Heritage Canada that puts the Société franco-manitobaine at the heart of the arrangement. The Société, together with provincial organizations, is in a position to articulate its actions and establish its priorities from the needs. As a result, things work well. The example is worth following.

In terms of the roadmap, a number of departments intervene directly so that advocacy organizations cannot coordinate the process and move it forward. In other words, if we could follow the money, so to speak, things would work better.

Mr. Bernard Trottier: What do you think, Ms. Cohen?

Ms. Aline Bouffard-Cohen: I would like to make two points. Almost every province has an agreement with Heritage Canada, and that is the ideal situation. The agreement is reached and investments in the province are recommended. It works well. People even ask to be involved in the evaluation.

In terms of the roadmap, I would not say that it lacks consistency, I would say that it lacks transparency. By contrast, what we do with Heritage Canada is a perfect example of cooperative agreements to collectively manage investments, since we ourselves make recommendations as to where those investments might go.

I would add one thing to what my colleague said. We do have a kind of consistency interprovincially through the Federation of Francophone and Acadian Communities of Canada. Their priorities and ours are aligned. There is the leaders' forum. Overall, each province ties its global development plan with a Canada-wide plan.

• (0945)

Mr. Bernard Trottier: Thank you.

The roadmap was established in 2008. Was there a lack of consistency in the departments then? Let's take Heritage Canada as an example. Perhaps Ms. Doucet could talk to us about it.

Were the minority official language communities overlooked? Possibly, Heritage Canada concentrated too much on the franco-

phone community in Quebec. In English-speaking provinces, minority languages do not receive sufficient attention. Has the roadmap helped communities in any way?

Ms. Marie-Claude Doucet: I will let the director general answer that question, as he has more knowledge of what went on before 2008 than I do.

Mr. Éric Dubeau: I am not sure. But Heritage Canada is a very complex department. I would make a distinction between what we may see as a higgledy-piggledy approach that seems to go off in all directions at once, and the need in the trenches for approaches that are made-to-measure, that meet the needs of different regions, different functions and different sectors. They may be for arts and culture, for seniors, for youth or for anything else. The approaches are tailored to those needs.

Did we have the same adaptability before 2008? Sometimes yes, sometimes no. Do we have it now to a greater extent? The roadmap came with an implementation framework. I applaud that attempt to provide better focus for the implementation. I feel that we can acknowledge that, here and there, it did not have the desired effect. In fact, a community often does not know whether the investment came from the roadmap as such or not. It seems to me that there is one more step to take. It also seems to me that a community can be a significant partner in increasing the consistency.

I don't know what my colleagues think, but that's my view.

Mr. Bernard Trottier: I would like to go back to Mr. Bélanger's questions. You all talked about accountability, especially with taxpayers' money. Does the roadmap improve things in that respect?

You mentioned the lack of an accounting trail. If departments had a matrix and horizontal investments, would that get in the way of your ability to follow the money and make sure that taxpayers' money is well spent?

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Trottier.

The answer will have to be brief.

Mr. Éric Dubeau: That's a challenge. We have the roadmap and we have the programs that stem from it. My answer would be different for each of those programs.

In some cases, the transparency is excellent. We mentioned the music showcases program, for example, that allows us to follow the investments to the dollar.

The cultural development fund is another matter. Today, I can give you a number of projects that have been approved and I can tell you the amounts of money they have received. But I do not know what they asked for, and I do not know about the programs on the list that were not approved. That seems to me to be a lack of transparency and accountability. You could follow the same process for all the programs. We have the framework and we have the individual programs. We do not have a tie-in between the two.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Dubeau.

Ms. Cohen, what can you tell us about it?

Ms. Aline Bouffard-Cohen: I have to say that we in the trenches are perfectly capable of saying what we are doing and working with performance indicators. Heritage Canada helps us to use results-based management methodology. The process is not transparent in itself, but a community is gradually forming at street level that is able to use results indicators.

Our only regret is that the performance indicators for the roadmap are not necessarily linked to those performance indicators we are using. My supplementary comment would be that, for the next roadmap, performance indicators should be coordinated. We can do that, we can work together.

The Chair: Thank you.

The floor is yours, Ms. Bateman.

Ms. Joyce Bateman (Winnipeg South Centre, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My thanks to all the witnesses for their comments and the time they are spending with us this morning. I have some questions.

First, thank you to Ms. Doucet and Mr. Dubeau. We received a hard copy of your presentation. That was helpful and I found it very useful.

I gather that you received a direct investment of about \$23 or \$24 million. Now to the other witnesses; what amounts did you receive? For example, I heard that, in Manitoba, you received \$3.2 million in various amounts from Western Economic Diversification. I assume that you also received investments from Heritage Canada. What is the grand total of those investments and who are your partners?

• (0950)

Mr. Ibrahima Diallo: We have many partners in a number of places, madam. So at the moment, I cannot give you the exact amount of the funding, especially as some vary with the project.

Ms. Joyce Bateman: For the projects we have discussed today under the Roadmap for Linguistic Duality in Canada, how much have you received and where did it come from?

Mr. Ibrahima Diallo: We received funding from several departments.

Ms. Joyce Bateman: Yes, that is what I was asking.

Mr. Ibrahima Diallo: Health Canada is one example. There was also Public Works and Government Services Canada, I think, with the translation program I mentioned earlier.

So various departments fund us.

Ms. Joyce Bateman: You received funding for translation?

Mr. Ibrahima Diallo: Yes, we received funding for translation.

Ms. Joyce Bateman: But you did not translate your document for us? That is unfortunate; it would have been very useful for us to have copies of your presentation in both languages.

Mr. Ibrahima Diallo: Let me explain what that funding is, because it is very important for...

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Chair, I would like to raise a point of order.

The Chair: Just a moment, sir, someone is raising a point of order.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Chair, when witnesses come to make presentations, there is no requirement for them to be bilingual. They give the documents to the clerk who arranges for them to be translated and then circulated to committee members.

In a bilingual Parliament, I would not like witnesses to feel obliged to provide their documents in both official languages. Some organizations would not have the money to be able to do it.

I just want to make sure that organizations understand that they are not required to do it, because it is Parliament's responsibility.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you for the clarification, but it is not a point of order. Ms. Bateman just made a comment.

You have the floor, Ms. Bateman.

Ms. Joyce Bateman: My apologies, Mr. Chair. I understand Parliament's responsibilities and those of all Canadians in terms of our two official languages. But it is always useful to have copies in both languages. I am a visual person.

Thank you.

The Chair: The clerk will give you the documents in both languages when they have been translated.

Ms. Joyce Bateman: Thank you.

The Chair: Go ahead.

Ms. Joyce Bateman: I return to my question.

Which federal departments have partnered with you through the roadmap? Are there any other partners?

Mr. Ibrahima Diallo: We have many partners. I already mentioned that Health Canada and Public Works and Government Services Canada permitted the University of Saint-Boniface to offer a fully online bachelor's program, the first one in Canada, so that it can reach people anywhere in the world. This bachelor's program will soon be completed and it will allow us to prepare the next generation.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada is also working with our province, which has allowed us to have one of the best programs in terms of recruiting, attracting, integrating and retaining immigrants.

I only mention these three partners who have helped us to create successful programs.

Ms. Joyce Bateman: What is the total amount you received from the roadmap?

• (0955)

Mr. Ibrahima Diallo: From the envelope? I could not say. The essence of the problem is that, as an organization, we do not know. The money can end up anywhere without us knowing about it, unless the institutions receiving it tell us. I could not say how much the jurists have received. I think that there were presentations on justice here. It is done by sector.

Ms. Joyce Bateman: But you have the funds. For example, Ms. Doucet said that, in the roadmap, which is a five-year program, the investments came with regular increases.

I come from Manitoba, and I would like to know the exact amount you received from the roadmap. Unless I am mistaken, you have received other contributions, for example from Heritage Canada. However, I would like to know what investments with regular increases you have received from this program.

Mr. Ibrahima Diallo: Are you talking about the entire French-speaking community of Manitoba or only the Société franco-manitobaine?

Ms. Joyce Bateman: I mean you, the SFM.

Mr. Ibrahima Diallo: I cannot say how much the SFM has received directly from the roadmap. I cannot give you the amount. I have no exact figures for you.

Ms. Joyce Bateman: Thank you for that answer. This is interesting for me.

Unfortunately, I have no more time. Thank you, I am sorry.

The Chair: Mr. Diallo, if you give the numbers to the clerk, he can distribute them to all members of the committee. Would that be okay? Thank you.

Mr. Aubin, you have the floor.

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good morning, everyone. First of all, I congratulate you on your fight to allow your communities not only to speak French but also to live in French. As a resident of Quebec, I have been receiving all this testimony in the last few weeks as a lesson in the tenacious defence of French. So thank you for this reminder, it is much appreciated.

First of all, I would like to address the representative of the FCCF, probably because I was very close to these issues in the past. You mentioned earlier some successful achievements, such as those of Damien Robitaille or Radio Radio. At home, we consider them almost as being from Quebec. By hearing the accent, we recognize that they perhaps come from somewhere else. At the same time, I am thinking about our group Arcade Fire, which seems to be very well-known.

I am wondering if this was because of the language, or the musical genre, or if it was not also related to funding. For example, the distribution of the financial envelope that covers the Vitaines Culturelles program; if it is not equal, is it equitable and does it permit each language to evolve well in this country?

Mr. Éric Dubeau: Coming from the same area as Damien, I forgive you for adopting Mr. Robitaille. I welcome it and so does he, for sure.

Our counterparts in the English-speaking community of Quebec may not like the answer to your question, but I will answer you this way. Arcade Fire and similar groups originating from Quebec, who record, tour and produce songs and music in English have already achieved great success thanks to the main programs at FACTOR, which is the English-language equivalent of MUSICACTION. In any case, FACTOR receives 40% of the Vitaines musicales envelope and MUSICACTION receives 60%. That seems disproportionate to

us. We know that anglophones in Quebec already have access to a very high level of financing at FACTOR, while this is not the case for us. Our Damien Robitailles have a lot of difficulty obtaining financing from MUSICACTION. This is improving over the years, partly thanks to the roadmap investments.

However, we think that there is something not only asymmetrical, but also problematic in this distribution. I also think that we must recognize that Canadian francophone artists are distributed over 250 communities throughout our vast country, while this is just not the reality for our Quebec friends.

Mr. Robert Aubin: Thank you.

I will discuss a second subject and I would ask you to respond briefly, because I really have little time and I have a lot of questions to ask.

You mentioned earlier in your presentation that there was a problem in publishing. I think that books are often the most long-lasting works of culture. If we read in French, we speak French, at least in our heads, and we may even be able to write it.

What was the difficulty you referred to? You haven't really mentioned it since all this was very fast.

• (1000)

Mr. Éric Dubeau: In my opinion, we have double the difficulty. On one hand, very few publishing houses have been able to receive financing from this program. According to our information, there are only two of them, one in our field and the other in education. You must know that the amounts of money received are very modest, from an envelope of approximately \$2.5 million; so we are half-way.

On the other hand, we must recognize that, for us, book production is complex. This is not just a simple translation mechanism. Book fairs, festivals and activities require support. The authors require even more support. I was asked earlier if we have been consulted during the preparation of roadmap programs. Unfortunately, this is an example of a problem; it would have been better to consult with us more and better address our comments at the time when the program was developed. Something must be done about this.

Mr. Robert Aubin: Thank you.

Since I still have some time, I will ask a third question.

You would like to see an arts and culture stream in the next roadmap, if there is one. Once again, you spoke very briefly about this, since you only had ten minutes. Could you tell us in the remaining minute what your priorities would be in an arts and culture stream?

Mr. Éric Dubeau: I can try.

Mr. Robert Aubin: Good luck!

Mr. Éric Dubeau: When we spoke generally about programs and the roadmap, we had a feeling that the approach was somewhat disorganized. We would rather see a more complete and comprehensive approach to arts and culture, with five aspects.

The first aspect would be centred on cultural development, but with a long-term vision. These would not be one-time projects.

The second aspect would revolve around artistic infrastructures. We know that our communities do not have enormous infrastructures. More investment is needed in this field.

The third aspect would consist of support or support mechanisms for artists. Let us take the example of the Music Showcases. They represent a support mechanism for popular artists.

We would also need a support mechanism for cultural industries such as cinema, publishing, the record industry, and so on. All these sectors need more support or mechanisms customized to their needs in order to help them better compete with the majority in a globalized world.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Weston, you have the floor.

Mr. John Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Welcome to everyone who is with us today.

I could ignore completely what was said about the CBC, but I will not do that. While a member of Parliament may present a petition to the House, this does not necessarily mean that the petition represents the opinion of his party. As a resident of British Columbia who listens to Radio Canada with enthusiasm in English and in French, I do not agree with this opinion at all.

The lack of consistency that has been mentioned several times, including by my colleague Mr. Bernard Trottier, worries us all. I have one question and you have five minutes to answer it.

If you could choose one person from everyone in the country who would represent an initiative with the objective of spreading the French language in British Columbia, Ontario and in Canada, who would that person be? This person would meet with 10 or 12 other people in order to hear all pertinent opinions to make the initiative consistent.

[English]

Who is your champion?

Go ahead, Ibrahima.

[Translation]

Mr. Ibrahima Diallo: You asked me a question that surprises me a bit. Are you asking me to indicate the ideal person to sit at a table to discuss consistency?

I could describe a profile rather than an individual. This person would have to know the country and the official language communities, both English and French, very well. It would be someone with a national stature, believing in linguistic duality and the importance of not only the survival but also the development of francophones. This would be the profile in my opinion but I do not have any specific individuals to suggest.

• (1005)

Mr. John Weston: This is excellent, you provided a list of criteria. Would you be that person or perhaps someone else?

Mr. Ibrahima Diallo: It could be someone else.

[English]

Mr. John Weston: Gabriel?

[Translation]

Mr. Gabriel Arsenault: I think that the president of the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada, Marie-France Kenny, would be a champion. If I had a second choice, I would choose our premier, Robert Ghiz. He is also the minister in charge of Acadian and francophone affairs. I meet with him regularly. In my opinion he is a champion.

Mr. John Weston: What would you say, Ms. Doucet?

Ms. Marie-Claude Doucet: As for the arts and culture, I think that any Canadian francophone artist could represent the Canadian francophone movement. This could be added.

Mr. John Weston: What about you, Ms. Cohen?

Ms. Aline Bouffard-Cohen: I am also in favour of Marie-France Kenny, president of the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada. She speaks for us passionately and with an extraordinary knowledge of the area.

Mr. John Weston: What is your opinion, Mr. Dubeau?

Mr. Éric Dubeau: I am sorry but my answer is much more complex than your question. In fact, we here represent three organizations, and there are hundreds of organizations like ours. If you ask me to nominate a champion in the field of arts and culture, I think of the president of our federation. She is certainly the champion of our members who elected her.

I think that the situation is the same for all of us.

Mr. John Weston: Aren't you saying that to keep your job?

Mr. Eric Dubeau: Ha, ha! Good one.

Mr. John Weston: What do you think, Ms. Lavergne?

Ms. Nicole Forest Lavergne: I agree with Mr. Diallo that it is difficult to propose one person at this time. I also agree that our premier is a champion.

Mr. John Weston: Along the same lines, what is the best investment of money this department could make to expand the use of French in Canada?

Ms. Lavergne, could you respond first?

Ms. Nicole Forest Lavergne: Could you please repeat the question?

Mr. John Weston: Yes. The roadmap represents investments of \$1.1 billion.

[English]

If you high-graded, and took only a tenth of that, where is the best investment? What is really the most effective investment of these funds?

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Forest Lavergne: That is a complex question. There are so many different aspects that must be improved that I would hesitate to indicate a single department. It could be health, education, immigration - it is a huge area. I cannot select only one.

Mr. John Weston: Okay.

If the questions were too simple, this would not be interesting.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Weston.

Mr. Arsenault, you can respond briefly.

Mr. Gabriel Arsenault: The best investment that can be made in Prince Edward Island is in the education system in French, and more specifically in school-community centres. That is the concept adopted in all the regions of Prince Edward Island.

The Chair: Thank you.

Now Ms. Michaud has the floor.

Ms. Éline Michaud (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, NDP): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you for coming here today.

We often talk about CBC/Radio Canada. To answer the comments of my colleague, I would say that members of Parliament may in fact present petitions without necessarily endorsing the content. On the other hand, when a member of Parliament promotes the petition on his web page, his intentions are very clear, in my opinion. Please judge for yourselves.

Now I return to more pertinent questions. Of all groups present today, only the FCCF has been consulted during the preparation of the roadmap. Have these consultations also included the mid-mandate evaluation?

Mr. Éric Dubeau: We have been consulted often and in various ways.

Ms. Éline Michaud: This is interesting. How were you consulted? What were you asked to evaluate? What types of comments were you asked for?

• (1010)

Mr. Éric Dubeau: There were a number of mechanisms, but I will surely forget some of them.

Since last February, we have been consulted at various times, in particular during a meeting called a dialogue meeting. There was also a survey in the summer. Then there were two meetings with the Official Languages Secretariat in the fall.

We were asked questions in various ways. They wanted to know how satisfied we were with the programs and the overall roadmap framework.

Ms. Marie-Claude Doucet: There was also a validation meeting devoted to the Cultural Development Fund.

Ms. Éline Michaud: Was it possible for you to propose improvements or modifications, and have they been taken into account?

Mr. Éric Dubeau: Many elements of the content that has been discussed here, in particular those related to the Cultural Development Fund, have already been raised with Heritage Canada officials and senior management.

As to whether they have been taken into account, my understanding is that the roadmap exercise is an evolving process that is still in progress. We trust them, just as we trust your work. It is clear that we follow the matter very closely to find out if any corrections would be made next time.

Ms. Éline Michaud: So you are saying that the proposals you made could be used only at the very end, in the report, and that you cannot see any changes or improvements as you go.

Mr. Éric Dubeau: We would be very pleased to see the improvements sooner, but we have not noticed any so far.

Ms. Éline Michaud: Okay. Thank you very much.

My next question is addressed to everyone, but especially to the SSTA and SFM representatives.

You mentioned strategic development plans. I would like you to briefly discuss the priorities contained in these development plans. I think that this information would be very useful for us in order to evaluate what should be included in the next roadmap, among other things.

I would ask you to respond very briefly since I have another question for you.

Mr. Gabriel Arsenault: Our priorities focus around four areas determined in a process in which the whole Acadian and francophone community participated for one year. First of all, there is a question of identity and of living in French. Then there is the issue of demographic growth and economic development. There is also organizational vitality and strategic positioning, since we also want to examine the structures. We have all sorts of structures. It is one thing to try to finance them, but this would require money that could be otherwise used locally. Finally, the last area is that of health and well-being.

We have established these four areas as important priorities.

Ms. Éline Michaud: Thank you.

What is your opinion, Mr. Diallo?

Mr. Ibrahima Diallo: In the same debate, we have established five streams. The first stream consists of education and training. The second stream refers to expanding francophone space. This is a developing concept, open to all the communities, as long as the people speak French, no matter if they are anglophone, bilingual or immigrants. This element is extremely important for us. The third stream deals with health and social services. The fourth stream is community structures, or how people are organized, in particular in economic matters. Finally, the fifth stream deals with cultural life, which is also essential for our communities.

Ms. Éline Michaud: Thank you.

My question is specifically for the Société Saint-Thomas-d'Aquin.

I find the plan that you developed with the provincial government very interesting. Please tell us how this came about and the contents of the plan.

Mr. Gabriel Arsenault: It happened after the Société Saint-Thomas-d'Aquin made a request to the provincial government. The premier agreed to form a joint committee of community and government representatives. This group worked in parallel on the region's global development plan. Interestingly enough, by the end, the priorities of both groups resembled one another.

That is an overview of this committee that we called the joint working group.

Ms. Aline Bouffard-Cohen: Another feature of this is that for years the community worked to structure itself. Today, it is contributing to the province's development. The francophone community is finding its place on the island. It is developing in an English environment and, if I may say so, we want a strategy that will make us visible in that landscape.

We have a stake in the province's development. If we want to be fully connected with the province's development in all sectors, the role of the SSTA is to be involved with all the province's programs. That is why it is important to be connected with the government's programs, regardless of what they are. For example, the moment an education roundtable is created, it is extremely important that we be able to take part in it, whether it is an anglophone or francophone roundtable, and that we contribute to the province's development.

•(1015)

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Lauzon, you have the floor.

Mr. Guy Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would also like to thank the witnesses for being here this morning.

Mr. Arsenault, you mentioned some very interesting numbers. You said there are 30,000 people of francophone origin on Prince Edward Island. Approximately 5,600 people continue to speak French, representing approximately 4% of the population. However, there are also 10,000 to 12,000 francophiles, that is to say, people who have learned to speak French. There are therefore more than twice as many francophiles as there are francophones.

Is the situation approximately the same in Manitoba?

Mr. Ibrahima Diallo: There are approximately 50,000 francophones in Manitoba, but there are more than 100,000 people there who can speak French, some of whom are here this morning.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: I have experienced assimilation. I heard the term "franciser" today, which applies to people like me who have been assimilated. However, I am trying to return to my francophone roots.

However, there are challenges. I represent the city of Cornwall, near Ottawa, where approximately 50% of the population is of francophone origin. Of this number, approximately half still speaks some French. Just as in your situation, the municipality has many francophiles, anglophones who have learned to speak French. There are more and more of them. In fact, there are twice as many francophiles as there are francophones.

However, there are problems. In Cornwall, we have a cultural centre. When there is an event showcasing francophone artists, even if it is an incredible show, we cannot manage to attract a crowd since francophiles do not have the same culture as francophones. We promote bilingualism in Cornwall, but not the francophonie. It is a situation that poses a significant challenge.

Do you have anything else to add?

Mr. Ibrahima Diallo: Yes, I have a few comments because this mixing of languages is part of our reality. Let me give you a few

numbers. We know that 60% of 21-year-olds in Manitoba come from what we call exogamous marriages, that is to say, families where one parent is anglophone and the other francophone. We have made this dual heritage something to be celebrated, since the individual is exposed to both anglophone and francophone values.

In Manitoba, we have the Festival théâtre jeunesse, which is organized by francophone schools and immersion schools. This way, we give students from immersion programs the chance to participate in French theatre productions.

The other example I would like to present is the Festival du Voyageur, one of the largest winter festivals in North America. The programming draws not only francophones, but bilingual people and the entire community. When I see anglophones singing in French, I tell myself there is hope in this country.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: Do you have any solutions to propose for the challenges being faced currently by cultural centres? What can we do?

Ms. Marie-Claude Doucet: The problem that you raise touches mainly on audience development. We have to see what type of cultural entertainment people living in our community are interested in and what we can offer them. Also, there are several provincial groups, like the Alliance culturelle de l'Ontario and Réseau Ontario, that can provide support to cultural centres.

•(1020)

Mr. Guy Lauzon: Pressure is coming from the English language because English is everywhere. One show per month for the francophone communities cannot compete with the English shows. It is a real challenge. Because of this, the Centre culturelle de Cornwall is having a lot of difficulties.

Ms. Marie-Claude Doucet: Provincial groups exist that can support cultural centres looking to attract new audiences and that want to find ways of reaching out to the community. There is Réseau Ontario, among others, that works to promote shows.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: I have a quick question for Mr. Arsenault.

Your association has a very interesting name. What is its origin?

The Chair: It is the name of a Catholic philosopher.

Ms. Aline Bouffard-Cohen: Oh, no!

Voices: Oh, oh!

The Chair: No? I apologize.

Ms. Aline Cohen: I would be pleased to tell you why the Société Saint-Thomas-d'Aquin is called that. It was created in 1919 by Prince Edward Island teachers to develop the education system. Saint Thomas of Aquinas is the patron saint of students.

The Chair: Yes, but he was also a Catholic philosopher.

Voices: Oh, oh!

The Chair: I studied philosophy at the University of Toronto.

Mr. Yvon Godin: In French?

The Chair: No, in English. so I know Saint Thomas of Aquinas.

Mr. Harris, you have the floor.

Mr. Dan Harris (Scarborough Southwest, NDP): I want to thank everyone for being here today.

Questions were asked at the beginning of the meeting. You know that the government party has already suggested that the committee's work continue behind closed doors after this meeting. This is the reality of things these days. Each time there is a motion, a decision is made to discuss it in camera, regardless of the type of motion. We need to talk about things here and take the time to raise certain points.

Representatives of the FCCF, do you have member organizations in the territories?

Ms. Marie-Claude Doucet: The Association franco-yukonnaise, the AFY, and the Fédération franco-ténoise have a cultural component. They are two members of the FCCF.

Mr. Dan Harris: Thank you. I am asking that question because, during the last Parliament, this committee began a study on linguistic duality in the North. We have already spent \$100,000 in taxpayers' money on this study. However, no decision has been made to complete it and present it to Parliament, which would be the normal thing to do. When work is done, we submit a report.

What do you think? Do you have any comments to make?

Mr. Éric Dubeau: Ah... yes.

Voices:Ha, ha!

Mr. Éric Dubeau: We are for transparency in every sense of the word. I can tell you that, back home, in the arts and culture world, when you take on a job, you evaluate it and you report on it at the end.

Mr. Dan Harris: Well said, thank you very much. I apologize for taking the time to raise this issue, but we need to do this in public. Otherwise, the public will not know what is going on, or what is not going on.

A short while ago, Ms. Bateman asked a question regarding Manitoba. It clearly demonstrated that it is difficult to find out the source of funding. This raises a lot of questions. Is it coming from the roadmap or other programs? Were there programs in existence before and that are now in the current roadmap? Do we have more funding, less funding or about the same amount of funding as before? Is it targeting the right things?

This question goes to all the organizations. Since the roadmap was launched, have you seen changes, insofar as it is possible to do so, in the source of the funding? Have you noticed whether there is less or more funding than before?

The people on the left can start, followed by the others.

• (1025)

Mr. Gabriel Arseneault: Is there more funding than before? I do not think so. I know there is money going to Prince Edward Island. For example, as part of the Canada-community agreements, I know that approximately \$850,000 has been divided among community organizations. This amount has not changed in five years, whereas, because of inflation, the cost of living is higher today than it was five years ago. We know there is money from the official languages program for education. However, I could not tell you if part of the

funding is coming from the roadmap or another source. It needs to be a bit clearer.

Ms. Marie-Claude Doucet: The roadmap has created a significant leverage effect. That is to say it has made collaborations possible with provincial ministries, which is a new element. It is a positive change. We have indeed lost money in certain programs. Now, whether this money was taken and placed elsewhere or whether it is only the program title or its source that has changed, I am not able to say this morning. However, the funds that are there allow for things to operate properly, especially in regards to the cultural development fund and the Music Showcases initiative.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Harris.

Mr. Menegakis, you have the floor.

[*English*]

Mr. Costas Menegakis: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[*Translation*]

Welcome and thank you for being here today. I want to thank you for your presentations as well, they were very interesting.

I would like to begin with the CBC/Radio-Canada issue, because I do not want any misunderstandings to persist.

[*English*]

The responsibility for the CBC and Radio-Canada rests in the government structure with the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages. That's Minister James Moore. Individual members can voice their opinions and say whatever they like, but the position of the government is represented through the ministry.

I'd like to quote the very recent comments of Minister Moore to the heritage committee. He clearly said:

CBC, through their board of directors, has approved their 2015 plan. This is a plan that we support and that we have been pushing for and hoping that the CBC would implement for a long time: staying in the regions, digital technology, and protecting their mandate to ensure that it's all Canadian programming.

Those are the three things that we wanted the CBC to do, and they've done it with their 2015 plan. ... In the budget, they will have enough funding to deliver that plan.

That is the government's position. There is zero intention, plan, or discussion on the government side to abolish Radio-Canada. Any comments to the contrary are just personal opinions that we can characterize using a wide variety of words. The fact of the matter is that as a government we understand the importance to the francophone community that Radio-Canada plays, not only in Quebec, but particularly throughout Canada, and this government will not abolish Radio-Canada.

It might make micro-political good talk for people to bring that up, but it's not the intention of the government. I feel that you represent very important organizations and you should know what our intentions are.

I wanted to thank you very much for your presentations today. I found them very important, particularly when you spoke of cultural programs in Orleans, in Manitoba, and throughout Canada. I think they're very important for our youth and our seniors. I was encouraged to hear that the road map we are studying now is a \$1.1-billion investment for our government, a very important investment. One of the major reasons we are studying it in midstream is to see what its impact is, so I'm encouraged to hear that it has helped and will continue to help.

Your ideas are very important to us. We're going to take them very seriously on the government side, as I'm sure all members will, and I want to thank you for being here.

That's the comment I wanted to make. I'm sure I'm out of time, as I'm looking at the clock, Mr. Chair, so I will end it there.

•(1030)

The Chair: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Menegakis.

[*Translation*]

I have a question. The analyst asked me to ask the Fédération culturelle canadienne-française a question. I therefore have one question and three follow-up questions. It is for the analyst's report.

What link is there between artists in minority language communities and the community media, that is to say the community newspapers and radio stations?

In your opinion, do community radio stations and newspapers showcase the artistic productions of official language minority communities?

Should Canadian linguistic duality be recognized by the Government as a cultural vehicle?

In what way does the tandem of community artists-media promote the economic development of official language minority communities?

Ms. Marie-Claude Doucet: I will begin by answering the first part of the question.

The link between community media and artists in minority francophone communities is very important because it is often the first vehicle these artists are given to broadcast their talent, their works, etc. It must be preserved. It is more difficult for artists to break through, to access the mass media. This link with community media becomes very important in promoting their development.

I will let Mr. Dubeau answer the other part of the question.

Mr. Éric Dubeau: First of all, I thank you for asking the question.

The link is quite clear, relevant and close. This is to say that, for artists and artistic organizations, the community media are a primary ally in terms of showcasing their talents. Without these partners, our communities would not know if there is a show on a certain night in Cornwall or in any of the other 37 communities that have a cultural centre. Neither would they find out about what is new in book publishing or in music or film releases, etc. It is therefore a very important ally.

When someone asks what the economic benefits are, it seems clear to me that the action of our agencies, the community media and

our communication companies have a considerable effect on access to the cultural product, whether it is a show, a visual arts exhibit, a new book, a music CD or another product. They are primary allies.

Regarding whether the government should recognize the importance of cultural entities although these partners are not members of the cultural federation - I am taking the liberty of venturing into some dangerous territory here I know - it is clear that we feel that you should recognize them. In my opinion, an investment in these partners can only be beneficial for the arts and culture community.

The Chair: Thank you.

Thank you, witnesses, for your presentations. Your testimonies will help us greatly.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Could I have just a minute, Mr. Chair?

For the committee work, there is only Mauril Bélanger's motion. However, he has said he would not be going forward with it. In that case, perhaps we could continue with this meeting until 10:45 a.m.

The Chair: Would you like to discuss the school board's letter?

Mr. Yvon Godin: No, it is not on the agenda. We will discuss it next week.

The Chair: Okay.

We therefore have an additional ten minutes.

I will give the floor to Mr. Menegakis for two minutes.

[*English*]

Mr. Costas Menegakis: Thank you.

I asked, Mr. Chair, at the outset of the meeting that we allow 15 minutes at the end of the meeting for committee business, and there's something I would specifically like to discuss in committee business.

The Chair: Okay, then we'll do that, because it is on the orders of the day.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: A point of order. Should we submit a notice regarding what we will be discussing, even if it is in camera?

[*English*]

The Chair: I won't allow any motions to be put, other than the motions you've given notice of or motions that are not substantive in nature, such as those to go in public or in camera. So other than those two types of motions, I won't allow any motions to be put.

However, we do have committee business on the orders of the day. Therefore, if members want to have a discussion about committee business, as it appears they do, then I will allow that to take place.

•(1035)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: I am going to ask for a recorded vote on the motion to continue the meeting in camera.

The Chair: No problem.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Chair, I would like to add that the motion came from a member. As long as the MP does not wish to go forward with his motion, the committee cannot consider the motion.

[*English*]

The Chair: Agreed, but we can have a general discussion because there's interest in doing that.

We thank the witnesses for their testimony. It's been valuable and interesting today.

[*Translation*]

We will adjourn for a few minutes to let the witnesses leave the table.

Thank you.

●(1035)

_____ (Pause) _____

●(1035)

The Chair: Let us now continue with the meeting of the Standing Committee on Official Languages.

As Mr. Menegakis requested at the beginning of this meeting, I will now give him the floor.

●(1040)

[*English*]

Mr. Costas Menegakis: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

First I'd like to move that we go in camera for committee business.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Mr. Bélanger requested a recorded vote.

(Motion agreed to 6 votes to 5. [*See the minutes*])

[*The meeting continued in camera*]

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