



NATIONAL ETHNIC PRESS AND MEDIA COUNCIL OF CANADA

Submission to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance Written Submission for the Pre-Budget Consultations in Advance of the Upcoming Federal Budget

We respectfully offer the following recommendations:

1.) Increase the Local Journalism Initiative Funding for Ethnic Press to a minimum of 15%.

Currently, ethnic media receives 6% (\$600,000 out of \$10 million allocated) annually of the Local Journalism Initiative funding. This amount has proven insufficient to support the ethnic outlets that have been approved to the program. In the spirit of fairness, we need to properly fund the hiring of Journalists to ensure the program's success. An increase in funding will allow us to properly fund outlets and enable us to admit more outlets into the program.

It is important to note that the Ethnic Press provides news in 120 languages in Canada.

2.) Create a Digital Modernization Fund for Ethnic Media.

Traditional Ethnic Media thrives in the print environment. However, as our population ages and our New Canadian readership demographic evolves, outlets need to invest in online platforms. This Fund would allow us to support the transition to online platforms.

Our membership has been hit hard by COVID-19 and cannot afford to make these investments on its own. The fund would provide assistance for modernization and monetization of digital products.

3.) Support the creation of a National Ethnic Press Marketing Board and Ad Co-Operative.

As experts in the ethnic media environment, we have first-hand knowledge of which ethnic outlets are most effective in reaching the largest audiences. It can be difficult to navigate the vast landscape of ethnic media and, in many cases, we are hearing reports of ad brokers who are "mistreating" ethnic publishers.

To correct this, we propose a non-profit Ad Cooperative that would enable publishers to be part of large media campaigns by major corporations and Governments. This organization would approach major advertising firms to encourage third-language advertising and would create new revenue streams for independent publishers.

4.) Direct the CRTC to create two new mandatory carriage licenses (9.1. (h) for third language news.

The NEPMCC is very troubled by reports that OMNI is engaging in exploitative practices with ethnic producers. OMNI's 'pay to play' model is a gross miscarriage of journalism – journalists are given TV shows only if they can sell the ad time. It encourages Journalists to charge their guests for appearances; this practice is not in keeping with NEPMCC ethics. Given that the CRTC refused to award the mandatory carriage license to a different applicant, the NEPMCC strongly urges the creation of two new mandatory carriage licences for multilingual, multiethnic news.

Omni/Rogers may be well served by “competition”. We believe whoever achieves the highest ratings (OMNI vs other two channels) should be able to keep a permanent mandatory license. OMNI has failed to live up to its commitments too many times – and its ‘pay to play’ model is a textbook breeding ground for systemic racism.

5.) *Ensure ethnic media receives fair advertising by issuing a new RFP for Government of Canada advertising campaigns in third language media.*

During the Covid-19 pandemic, ethnic media’s access to its share of the \$30 million advertising budget to inform the public has been a challenge. The current Agency of Record has not been transparent and there has been no communication provided on which outlets have received advertising. Some were allocated ads which were subsequently either pulled without explanation or ads were placed after asking for discounted rates. Some publications lost money running the ads.

The NEPMCC created a list of all outlets that have high readership in the 11 selected languages of the campaign. Four months after the creation of this list, few outlets have received advertisements. It is clear to the NEPMCC that ethnic media are not being treated in a fair manner by the agency of record. Accordingly, we request a new RFP be issued for government advertising in third-language media.

National Ethnic Press and Media Council of Canada (NEPMCC)

NEPMCC is a non-governmental and not-for-profit organization. It represents over 500 members of the ethnic press and media from across Canada with capability to read, write and translate over 120 various languages from different cultures.