

# QUEBECERS

## OUR WAY OF BEING CANADIAN

Policy on Québec Affirmation  
and Canadian Relations

### AFFIRMATION STATEMENT

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Québec is free to make its own choices and able to shape its own destiny and development. It has chosen to be part of Canada, and this choice is far more profound and significant for Quebecers than a mere cost-benefit calculation. Being part of Canada generates major economic benefits, but the choice to be part of Canada also relates to a sense of belonging.

Quebecers are attached to their Canadian citizenship, which is viewed with envy around the world. They can see signs of their history throughout Canada, and can note the progress of their shared venture and the hopes for a better world built on cooperation and solidarity. In addition, Québec has been able to grow and develop its national identity within the Canadian federal framework.

In short, the identity of a vast majority of Quebecers is based on an allegiance to Québec and a sense of belonging to Canada, and is deeply rooted in our nation's history. Canada is a richly diverse country, and must today recognize all dimensions of diversity and welcome national differences.

Quebecers, fortified by a deeply-held national identity that they hope to see rightfully recognized, have chosen to build the future alongside other Canadians.

## WHO WE ARE AS QUEBECERS

- Québec is free to make its own choices and able to shape its own destiny and development.
- Québec has all the characteristics of, and recognizes itself as, a nation.
- The Québec nation is predominantly French-speaking.
- The Québec nation also includes an English-speaking community that has specific rights and prerogatives.
- The Québec nation recognizes eleven Aboriginal nations throughout Québec.
- The Québec nation is enriched by significant cultural diversity that nourishes its shared historical narrative through interculturalism.
- The model of interculturalism developed in Québec aims to strike a balance between openness to diversity and the continuity of Québec's distinct and French-speaking identity.
- Québec's specific identity is based on certain fundamental elements, including:
  - its unique character;
  - its use of French as the language of the majority and the official language;
  - its civil-law tradition;
  - its own political, cultural, economic, educational and social institutions.

## **A RECIPROCAL WILLINGNESS TO COOPERATE**

- Canada must take Québec's affirmation into consideration, along with its consequences. Canada must recognize Québec if Quebecers are to see themselves better reflected in Canada.
- Québec intends to exercise leadership within Canada and will play an active role in the development of a constructive, harmonious and mutually beneficial relationship between all the partners in the Canadian Federation, within bilateral or multilateral frameworks.
- Québec will work alongside other governments in Canada to ensure the promotion, protection, continuation and vitality of French throughout the country.
- Québec will support the Aboriginal nations to ensure that their place is recognized.

## **THE PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING QUÉBEC'S PARTICIPATION IN CANADA**

- Québec will support the principles of federalism, including equality between the two orders of government and respect for the division of powers.
- Québec will ensure that it retains its fiscal autonomy in order to discharge its responsibilities, and will ensure that it receives its fair share of federal government expenditure, including, where appropriate, in the form of unconditional financial compensation or the transfer of tax points.
- Where necessary, Québec will give priority to asymmetry as a way to achieve genuine equality and to ensure the progress of the Federation, while respecting areas of jurisdiction and collective aspirations.
- Québec will seek cooperation and will uphold its interests in the most suitable way, bilaterally or multilaterally, or through direct dialogue with civil society.
- Québec will help shape shared institutions, including the Senate and Supreme Court, to ensure that they consider its nationhood. Québec will continue to argue that these institutions belong to the Federation and not to the federal government.
- Québec will continue to conduct its own international relations, within its jurisdiction, to complement Canada's actions. It will take steps to participate fully in the negotiation of international treaties when its interests are at stake.
- Québec will use all relevant tribunes to promote its vision of Canada in which a plurality of ways of belonging is supported on the basis of openness, mutual recognition and respect for individual and collective diversity.
- Québec will seek to extend the Canadian Francophone space.

