



Chapter 8

Deploying Québec's International Activity

The Role of the Ministère des Relations internationales

The Ministère des Relations internationales is responsible for developing Québec's relations with foreign governments. It ensures Québec's participation at the proceedings of La Francophonie, and the presence of Québec representatives within Canadian delegations involved in the deliberations of international governmental organizations. It establishes, jointly with other departments and agencies, Québec's positions on international issues affecting its responsibilities, and ensures concerted efforts with the federal government to this effect.

The Ministère drafts and negotiates Québec's agreements and commitments with its international partners, and grants foreign diplomats and international organizations located on its territory the privileges and immunities that fall under its jurisdiction. The Ministère des Relations internationales also manages Québec's network of general delegations, delegations and offices abroad and coordinates the international activities of the Government departments and agencies.

The Ministère des Relations internationales is mandated to coordinate the action plan accompanying the present International Policy and will also be responsible for monitoring the plan's progress and reporting to Government on the results obtained and the follow-up required.

To better exercise its coordination mandate, the Ministère will increase its capacity to monitor and analyze the international economic, political and social environment. It will measure the impact of this environment on Québec's development and, in collaboration with the other departments and agencies, will advise the Government on measures to be taken in order to protect Québec's interests.

Partners in Québec's International Action

To implement its action plan, the Government will rely on a renewed and strengthened partnership with the Canadian government. It also intends to work more closely with institutions and public agencies as well as with various organizations in civil society whose international actions help reinforce Québec's presence and influence abroad. By fostering partnerships and complementarity, this policy is aimed at creating a greater synergy of efforts deployed by:

- **Québec's cities, towns and regions**, particularly Montréal and Québec City, as well as their agencies, which notably contribute to attracting foreign investment as well as international organizations to Québec and thus enhance its international visibility and prestige
- **Universities, cegeps and research centres**, that keep Québec on the cutting edge of knowledge and offer educational programs designed to meet the demands of the international environment. Added to these are Québec Studies centres abroad that contribute to spreading knowledge about Québec, its identity, uniqueness, culture, and institutions.
- **Civil society**, including the business community that is instrumental for the export of Québec goods, that supports foreign companies which establish a presence in Québec, and helps to defend Québec's commercial interests; unions and professional organizations that protect the interests of their members before various international forums, and contribute, through their expertise, to work done by the international community.
- **Québec artists and creators**, who have forged ties with their counterparts in other countries and who, through innovation and excellence, have significantly raised Québec's international profile and are the Government's first partners in defending the diversity of cultural and artistic expressions
- **Youth exchange organizations**, such as the Office Franco-Québécois pour la Jeunesse (OFQJ), l'Agence Québec-Wallonie Bruxelles pour la jeunesse (AQWBJ), and the Office Québec-Amériques pour la Jeunesse (OQAJ) that have provided 125 000 young Quebecers with the opportunity to travel abroad, and have hosted an equal number of young people from other countries. The bonds formed contribute to ties between societies.

- **Cultural communities** in Québec that help build bridges to their countries of origin and contribute to the integration of newcomers.
- **Québec's international cooperation organizations** that frequently represent Québec on the ground, working with the populations of developing countries.

Priority Areas of Action

To act efficiently, Québec needs an international policy that outlines a clear view of the geographical areas where it wants to act on a priority basis, i.e. where it intends to strengthen its alliances, exert influence, and collaborate in arriving at international solutions when the issues fall within its areas of responsibility.

To identify these international priorities, it must first define itself as an international player, by taking into account its specific characteristics: its geographical location in Northeastern part of North America, its unique cultural and linguistic identity on this continent, its strong reliance on export markets, and its status as a federated state empowered with important responsibilities.

Thus, based on these characteristics and on priority interests, Québec's International Policy marshals resources towards the following countries and institutions:

- The two strategic countries that are the United States and France;
- La Francophonie and certain international organizations;
- Other priority countries in Europe, including institutions of the European Union;
- Certain emerging markets in the Americas and Asia.

The Government's Plan of Action

The Government of Québec has identified a number of actions and projects it intends to realize over the next three years in order to achieve these international objectives

and priorities. The plan will involve all government departments and agencies by channelling existing resources towards agreed priorities. The Ministère des Relations internationales has consulted with its government partners to work efficiently to these ends. As a result, the action plan is oriented around the following elements:

- Redeploying resources abroad;
- Reorganizing services at headquarters;
- Reviewing international programs and procedures, in collaboration with other departments and agencies;
- Implementing in the short-term approximately 100 concrete measures

Redeploying Resources Abroad

The Ministère des Relations internationales manages a network of several delegations and offices abroad. In consultation with the departments and economic and cultural agencies that have personnel within this network, a redeployment plan reflecting the International Policy priorities has been devised.

First, regarding the United States, the importance of relations with this country and Québec's active participation at various regional forums require a greater presence. The Québec Government Office in New York City will continue to be the main actor representing Québec's political, economic, and cultural interests in the U.S. The New York office has the responsibility of the Québec office in Washington, D.C., where additional resources will allow greater business activity with neighbouring states as well as with international financial institutions. The Washington office will also be mandated to monitor the work of the Organization of American States (OAS).

Greater synergy in New England and in the New York corridor will be sought, particularly in science and technology, as well as in promoting Québec's cultural industries.

Certain regions of the United States, particularly the South and West, are experiencing strong growth rates. Québec has important interests in these regions, particularly in

aeronautics and information technologies. To take better advantage of business opportunities in these geographical areas, the status of the Québec Government Office in Atlanta will be upgraded and its budget, as well as that of the Los Angeles office, will be increased.

The Québec Government Office in Mexico City will maintain its active presence. Québec's interests in Mexico are defined by the need to strengthen economic integration within NAFTA, the issue of regional security, and increased cultural exchanges with Mexico.

In South America, Brazil's political weight within MERCOSUR, its influence in international organizations, and its economic importance for Québec argue in favour of gradually developing closer ties with this country. The opening of a Québec representation in Brazil will clearly underline this new dynamic.

In Europe, Québec's resources will be refocused to better serve the entire geographical area. The Québec Government Office in Paris will remain the primary hub of Québec's presence in Europe in all areas of activity, including cooperation on questions of joint concern and in matters relating to cultural, economic and scientific development. The Paris Office will also continue to be the seat of the Québec delegation for La Francophonie and for multilateral affairs

In London, the Québec Government Office will continue to promote Québec in the economic, cultural and political networks that have been well established over the past 40 years. The Québec General Delegation in Brussels will be in charge of relations with the institutions of the European Union. Cooperation in science and technology will be expanded within European Union programs. Exchanges with governments of European federated states and regions, particularly in matters of culture, education, governance, and federalism, will also be stepped up.

Québec's presence in Germany will be increased. Staffing in Munich and at the Berlin office will be increased to reflect rising interest. Resources will be increased. Strategically located at the heart of Europe and linked to neighbouring countries, these offices, once reinforced, will make it possible to better benefit from the region's economic growth, and to develop political ties and cooperation.

Given Italy's economic importance and central position in the Mediterranean basin, Québec will strengthen its presence in that country. The Italian market offers real potential for the promotion of Québec's expertise. Québec will increase the budget and elevate the status of the Rome office accordingly. Finally, Québec will maintain its office in Spain in light of that country's growing role in Europe and in view of the fact that Catalonia is a driving force in this regard.

Given Asia's prospects for growth, Québec will strengthen its presence in Tokyo. As for China, Québec will increase its staffing in Beijing and Shanghai. It will also establish representation in India in order to position itself in that country. In addition to trade relations, the goal in these countries is to develop ties in the areas of culture, education, and immigration.

Reorganization of Services at Headquarters

The Ministère des Relations internationales will implement five important organizational changes at its headquarters.

- It will strengthen its capacity for action within international organizations by devoting more resources to that end and developing its analysis of the normative and legal effects of international conventions and commitments affecting Québec's responsibilities.
- It will improve its capacity for economic analysis by assigning additional resources to that end and by networking with economic teams from Québec's Institut de la statistique, Ministère des Finances, and Ministère du Développement économique, de l'Innovation et de l'Exportation.
- It will set up a unit mandated to monitor on-going international security issues and to liaise with the relevant departments and agencies, primarily the Ministère de la Sécurité publique

- The Ministère des Relations internationales will ensure a better linkage between the expertise Québec has to offer and the specific needs of developing countries. In conjunction with this effort, a unit will be responsible for developing relations with CIDA, major international funding institutions, and the École nationale d'administration publique's new centre for the promotion of Québec's expertise.
- Personnel in charge of bilateral relations will be redeployed to better reflect the priority areas targeted in the present International Policy.

These changes will be made by reorganizing present tasks and functions and by reassigning resources to the new priorities. The department will also continue modernizing its management practices and upgrading its computer tools.

Revising Current Programs and Procedures

A number of Québec's departments and agencies active in international relations have also undertaken a major review of their programs and procedures.

With regard to trade, the new approach consists in focusing support on exporters who are already active on foreign markets.

A new strategy for the promotion and attraction of foreign investments will be proposed, with a view to improving Québec's notoriety among international investors and to organizing prospecting efforts around specific targets.

The mandate of economic advisers posted abroad will be modified to take into account the new realities of international trade, most notably the impact of integrative trade.

The parameters for exempting foreign students from developed countries from paying higher tuition fees will be reviewed in consultation with universities, with the aim of attracting more postgraduate students.

Agreements determining the criteria for granting these exemptions will now focus on developing a better linkage between the needs of developing countries and Québec's educational opportunities. Universities will be closely involved in the candidate selection process.

The offer of foreign internships made available to young Quebecers will be improved by merging the administrative aspects of the three youth-exchange organizations: the OFQJ, the AQWBJ, and the OQAJ. This will create new synergies, by linking together various internship programs, thereby increasing the opportunities for young people. Private financing for these programs will also be sought.

In the cultural sector, current practices abroad will be examined so that new strategies are more in line with cultural poles rather than with geographic borders. This will particularly facilitate the development of projects on a European and American basis, rather than limiting them to a single state or country. Gradually building economic indicators in order to more efficiently monitor market penetration by Québec's cultural products should improve the effectiveness of existing programs as well as new ones at improving the management capabilities and international marketing expertise of cultural industries.

With respect to immigration, a closer working relationship is planned with chambers of commerce, universities, and professional corporations to facilitate the recognition and accreditation of foreign degrees and qualifications of candidates for immigration. Security considerations will be given the highest attention at every stage of the immigration selection process, an illustration of Québec's strong commitment to its international responsibilities in that matter.

Last, a new unit will be created at the Ministère de la Sécurité publique, charged with the integrated management of information related to security issues. It will allow for the establishment of a more direct channel of communication with Québec's

international partners and more effective management of actions taken in emergency situations as a result of foreign threats.

Government Measures

Added to the above-mentioned initiatives regarding Québec's foreign network and the review of its programs and procedures, some 75 measures are being undertaken by the Government's various departments and agencies, and are intended to address Québec's international policy priorities. Applying these measures will extend over a three-year period, after which the results will be assessed and the plan updated. These measures are described in the 2006-2009 action plan outlined at the conclusion of each chapter concerning the five major policy objectives.