



Chapter 3

Strengthening Québec's Action and Influence

Québec is aware that increasing numbers of international conventions and agreements have a direct impact on its responsibilities, and that, as a result, its ability to make collective choices, to pass laws and adopt regulations is affected by decisions made elsewhere. The Government of Québec will therefore need to pay special attention in the coming years to the deliberations of international governmental organizations which touch upon matters related to its responsibilities and interests.

The issue of cultural diversity was a concrete example where Québec demonstrated its capacity to exert influence on the international scene. By working with experts in academia and from society at large, negotiating alliances within La Francophonie, using its close ties with various countries and governments and joining forces with the federal government, Québec succeeded in moving the issue forward, from the stages of initial discussion all the way to the adoption by UNESCO of the *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*.

More than ever, Québec intends to use all the levers at its disposal to be active on the international stage. First and foremost, it wishes to participate more actively in the deliberations of international governmental organizations. To do so, it wants to draw upon the greater synergy in its ties with

the federal government. Second, Québec must maintain and expand its direct access

In 2005, the Québec government made public its position vis-à-vis international organizations and identified five mechanisms likely to strengthen Québec's role with regard to them.

- 1. Access to all information and participation during the initial stages of negotiations toward establishing Canada's position;*
- 2. Full member status in Canadian delegations and exclusive responsibility for designating its representative;*
- 3. The right to speak for itself at international forums on matters related to its responsibilities;*
- 4. Recognition of Québec's right to give its approval before Canada signs or declares itself bound by a treaty or agreement;*
- 5. The right to express its position when Canada appears before*

to foreign political and economic decision-makers. Bilateral relations are the best way to achieve this goal with countries, federated states, and certain regions. Finally, more concerted action with Québec's civil society and institutions are necessary.

Participation in the Proceedings of International Organizations

With the exception La Francophonie, where the Québec government is a participating member, the federal government represents Canada before international governmental organizations. The range of issues covered by these organizations clearly indicates the areas where the need for close cooperation between Québec and the federal government is most acute.

The Canada-Québec Accord concerning UNESCO

On May 5, 2006, the Government of Québec and the Government of Canada signed a historic agreement which, in recognizing the specificity of Québec and its role on the international scene, provides that a Québec permanent representative will be welcomed into the Permanent Delegation of Canada to UNESCO. The Government of Québec will have the opportunity to speak and to express its point of view at all UNESCO proceedings, meetings and conferences. In addition, a Québec representative will sit on the Canadian Commission for UNESCO.

This agreement, which was concluded in the spirit of a federalism of openness and is asymmetric in its application, inaugurates a new era of partnership between Canada and Québec on international issues.

On matters within its jurisdiction, the Government of Québec hopes that a formal and predictable framework will ensure its participation within Canadian delegations during the deliberations or conferences of international organizations. In order to make this possible, Québec must be able to participate fully in all stages of information gathering, negotiations, and implementation of decisions relating to its responsibilities.

Québec is convinced that the voice of Canada abroad must reflect both the preoccupations of the federal government and those of the provinces. That is why Québec is prepared to work within Canadian delegations, not only with representatives

of the federal government, but also with members of the Council of the Federation. It advocates the creation of appropriate mechanisms to those ends.

Several matters that have been debated before international organizations and forums will especially mobilize Québec's attention over the coming years. Some examples are the capacity of governments to establish effective public policy in the areas of culture, health and education; the preservation of collective marketing systems for agricultural products, such as supply management; the management of natural resources (water, forests, genetic heritage); environmental protection; human and labour rights; certain new issues concerning security; and internet governance. In each case, Québec's jurisdiction and interests are at stake.

Another example is the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), whose mandate addresses issues equally central to Québec's responsibilities and characteristics. For this reason, the Government of Québec negotiated an agreement with the federal government ensuring the full participation of an official Québec representative within the Permanent Delegation of Canada to UNESCO. This representative will have diplomatic status, will participate in the proceedings and conferences of the organization and will express the Government of Québec's viewpoint. The agreement requires official consultations between Québec and Canada before any votes or public positions concerning areas within Québec's jurisdiction. In case of disagreement, the Québec government has the right not to implement conventions, actions plans and other international instruments determined by UNESCO.

Québec is a member of La Francophonie since 1970 and places great importance on this institution's development. It is through La Francophonie that Québec best affirms its international personality in a multilateral setting. Québec's participation in the proceedings of this international organization is an important feature of its international strategy and provides it with the political leverage to make a difference on a number of international issues, by forging alliances and formulating common positions.

La Francophonie is made up of 63 states and governments, nearly one-third of the member states of the United Nations. A unique forum for international discussion and cooperation, La Francophonie made a firm commitment in 2000 to seek better solutions and responses to the common challenges and threats faced by its members. It contributes to major international discussions and is progressively becoming a political player on such global questions as peace and security, democracy and human rights, development and solidarity.

La Francophonie: A New Roadmap

Québec's priority initiatives are based on four major objectives enumerated in the Cadre stratégique décennal adopted by heads of state and government at the Xth Summit of La Francophonie, held in Ouagadougou in 2004.

- 1. Promoting cultural and linguistic diversity;*
- 2. Promoting good governance, peace, and democracy;*
- 3. Promoting the advancement of international solidarity;*
- 4. Promoting education that fosters sustainable development.*

Québec therefore intends to continue to actively participate in the official proceedings and activities of La Francophonie and to collaborate with its agencies. In this spirit, Québec will host the XIIth Summit of La Francophonie in 2008, coinciding with the 400th anniversary of the founding of Québec City.

Participation in the Negotiation of Bilateral and Regional Agreements

The approach outlined for international organizations must also serve as the model for the Government of Québec's participation in agreements which the federal government negotiates with other countries or groups of countries and which affect Québec's responsibilities. With respect to trade agreements, the current consultative mechanisms must be formalized and broadened to include the negotiations *per se*. A growing number of trade and investment agreements are affecting matters within Québec's jurisdiction, such as public works contracts, professional qualification equivalencies, the services sector, education, training, and labour standards. In this respect, the negotiation of a trade and investment enhancement agreement between Canada and the European Union are of great interest to Québec.

This is also true of other regional initiatives such as the *Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America* (SPP) between Canada, the United States and Mexico. Several of the initiatives planned within the framework of this partnership are likely to have consequences for Québec's immediate trading partners but also on everyday life. In an effort to balance the needs for security and prosperity, the new partnership will have an impact on such sensitive issues as the mobility of individuals, immigration rules, privacy rights and border crossing regulations. Given the very large scope of this initiative, it is obvious that the contribution of Canadian provinces and of American and Mexican states significantly increases its chances of success.

In Québec's areas of exclusive jurisdiction, the government's capacity to conclude fully valid and binding international accords ensures the integrity of its own laws, in particular those governing human rights issues such as adoption, relations between individuals, or between individuals and their property. Québec's civil law is based on

French law, and is therefore unique in Canada, since the other provinces' legal system is based on English common law.

Québec-U.S. Relations

Economic interests and common focal points with the United States are many, especially with the states of the East Coast and with those located along the St. Lawrence and Great Lakes waterways.

Québec shares an 813-kilometre border and one of the largest waterways in North America with the United States. It ranks among the top ten trading partners of the U.S. In 2005, Québec's exports to the United States amounted to \$158 million per day.

U.S. investments represent close to two-thirds of foreign investments in Québec, and visitors from the United States account for some 60 percent of the revenue generated by international tourism.

Québec has six Government Offices in the United States, including a Québec General Delegation in New York City. Québec is the only province in which the United States maintains two consulates general.

The Government of Québec is a member of the Conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers, and an associate member of the Council of Great Lakes Governors.

Several government departments are collaborating with various American committees and task forces on issues of common interest such as transportation, the environment, energy and, more recently, security.

The American Council for Québec Studies has a membership of some 300 researchers, and the Association for Canadian Studies in the United States has additional members who focus on Québec-related issues

Developing Bilateral Relations

Québec shares similarities and interests with a host of other countries, governments, and regions. It maintains offices or delegations in these countries and has created joint procedures with them for the purpose of promoting and expanding relations. Over the years, the Government of Québec has been consistent and determined in its conduct of bilateral relations. This enables it to rely on longstanding international partners and a well-established network of contacts.

Within North America, Québec has maintained continuous relations with a number of American states, especially along the U.S. East Coast and in the Midwest, and it is building stronger ties with Mexico.

Québec's proximity to the world's most powerful country creates both opportunities and challenges. Québec staunchly backed the free trade agreements signed with the United States and as a result has woven solid ties with its American partners. These ties have been strengthened by common affinities, personal relations, and even family bonds.

Four priorities will dominate the Québec government's initiatives in the United States over the coming years: trade and investment, security, energy and the environment.

These priorities will be dealt with at a continental level, by the three NAFTA member countries, working jointly on such important initiatives as the SPP. They will also be dealt with at a regional level, e.g. with American states and Canadian provinces. Québec likewise intends to further promote its priorities by developing its relations with the U.S. Administration and with Congress.

Endeavours to strengthen the North American partnership also demonstrate the relevance of Québec's ties with Mexico, ties that have existed for over 25 years. Through economic cooperation and sustained relations with the central government and a number of Mexican states, Québec will seek to bring its trade relation with Mexico closer to its full potential. The educational and cultural sectors also offer interesting possibilities. Québec wants to work with Mexico to jointly conceive and realize initiatives that will strengthen its relations and commerce in the area.

Across the Atlantic, the very special nature of relations that exist between Québec and France holds a unique place in Québec's international policy. Franco-Québécois relations have matured to the extent that the two partners are now able to lead joint initiatives in other countries and form alliances on multilateral issues. These relations have been formed as a result of history, cultural proximity, and shared economic interests. Virtually no area of scientific, economic, cultural, or social activity is absent from this broad dialogue, which is being constantly renewed by the younger generations.

A First: a Joint France-Québec Mission to Mexico

- In 2004, the Prime Minister of the French Republic and the Premier of Québec headed a joint economic mission to Mexico
- 90 firms from Québec, 70 from France and 200 from Mexico took part in these meetings
- An unprecedented event, the mission heralds a new type of partnership between Québec and France.

Over the past decade, European unification and the *North American Free Trade Agreement* have further deepened France's and Québec's ties to their respective continents. Yet far from weakening their bilateral relations, these important

developments have favoured a unique society-to-society dialogue between France and Québec on priority issues and joint projects. Scientific, economic, and cultural

matters should continue to be the focal points of France-Québec relations during the coming years. The emergence of important international issues linked to intellectual property and cyberspace will create new opportunities for cooperation.

Québec has also developed sustained ties with other European countries, regions, and communities,

Québec-France Relations

Since 1965, the Government of Québec and the French government have taken important steps to shape Québec-France relations and cement ties between the two societies.

France maintains two consulates in Québec. Its consulate general in Québec City is mandated to ensure direct government-to-government communications. Québec reciprocally maintains a Government office in Paris which enjoys the privileges and immunities normally granted to embassies, and ensures communications with the French government.

Since the 1970s, the Prime Minister of France and the Premier of Québec meet on a regular basis in the context of alternating visits.

Sixty bilateral agreements have been signed over the years between the two governments.

Created in 1965, the Commission permanente de coopération franco-québécoise (CPCFQ) backed 74 projects in 2005 involving researchers, artists, representatives from associations, the private sector, and the government.

The Office Franco-Québécois pour la Jeunesse (OFQJ), created in 1968, currently makes it possible for over 3000 young people from France and Québec to participate in internships or training programs every year.

The Québec-France and France-Québec Associations generate continued interest and curiosity on both sides of the Atlantic. Several other organizations, associations, and friendship groups help strengthen the bonds between France and Québec.

Over 330 French subsidiaries currently operate in Québec, generating production worth nearly \$ 19 billion and employing some 15000 people. There are 161 Québec businesses in France employing more than 13000 people.

France is Québec's number one cultural market and its second tourist market after the United States.

particularly with the United Kingdom, Belgium, Germany, Italy, and Spain. This has translated into economic, scientific, and cultural cooperation, all of which contribute to business development, the free movement of artists and cultural products, the sharing of expertise, and an increase in joint scientific research.

During the coming years, Québec will pay growing attention to Germany, which occupies a prominent place in the international arena. As the world's top exporting country, Germany has great economic potential. The size of its domestic market, its close ties to several new member states of the European Union and the innovative character of its products and expertise offer attractive prospects for Québec. Full advantage will be taken of the valuable relations that Québec has already established with Bavaria.

Québec's historic and institutional ties with the United Kingdom generate important economic, scientific, and cultural exchanges, which it hopes to expand. Québec likewise enjoys a high degree of multi-sector cooperation with Belgium, its regions and communities. Italy is Europe's fourth-ranking economic power and also the country of origin of a large Italian community that actively participates in Québec's development. Furthermore, given that the European Union is currently building bridges with countries in the Mediterranean basin, Italy is especially attractive due to its central location in that area. Spain and its regions, particularly Catalonia, deserve special attention owing to their vibrant dynamic political and economic environment. Most of Québec's initiatives in Europe will focus on these countries.

The fast pace of European development nevertheless makes it necessary for Québec to update its approach to dealing with Europe. The European Union has become a major political player on the international scene since member countries have ceded extensive powers to the EU over the years. Some of these powers directly concern Québec's interests. The Government will count on the general delegation in Brussels to further develop relations with the European institutions. It also intends to participate closely in negotiations regarding trade and cooperation agreements between the European Union and Canada, since they touch upon a number of Québec's responsibilities.

Québec's presence in Asia is modest yet longstanding. This is especially true with respect to Japan and China, where patient groundwork has resulted in access to key political, economic, and institutional decision-makers. Because of its growing trade with Québec, Japan remains a major partner. The Japanese economy plays a crucial role within the Asian market and constitutes a world leader in many high-tech sectors. Consequently, Québec can rely on what has been achieved so far through its existing relations to achieve new objectives in the areas of trade, investment, science and technology, tourism and culture. In the cultural sector, Québec will seek to strengthen Tokyo's role as the distribution hub for Québec culture in Asia by increasing its cooperation with local partners.

Among emerging economies, China deserves special attention because of the opportunities that its accelerated growth and huge market offer. This country is of marked interest for investors, and offers excellent prospects for technological and scientific collaboration, particularly in the areas of education and culture.

India's huge needs in the areas of infrastructure and services offer substantial trade opportunities. In addition, Québec intends to pay close attention to Brazil's economic development. It already maintains relations with some Brazilian states in the fields of health care, biotechnology, and information technology. The future prospects and growth potential of both India and Brazil are such that Québec is considering establishing a presence in these countries.

Finally, Québec has relations with several countries in Africa and the Middle East, with whom it shares priorities common to the Francophone world. Québec will focus specifically on countries with which it is involved in technical or institutional projects, where expertise from the public and private sectors comes into play.

Stronger Ties with Federated States and Large Regions

Like Québec, a number of federated states are realizing the greater impact international relations have on their areas of responsibility. They are striving to develop networks that will allow them to work together in finding common solutions to common problems. Québec intends to work actively within these networks.

The U.S. Northeast is no exception to this trend. States and provinces need to work closer together on issues such as air quality, regulation of the energy market and security of supply chains. The Conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers—of which Québec is a member—allows its members to make decisions on policies that will shape the region's future.

An International Instrument Signed by Federated States

Concluded in 2005 with Ontario and the eight American states bordering the Great Lakes, the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Sustainable Water Resources Agreement is an international instrument which for the first time links federated states from both countries for the purpose of preserving the integrity of the world's largest freshwater supply.

As an associate member of the Council of Great Lakes Governors, Québec, like Ontario, is also in direct contact with some of the most densely populated and industrialized states in the U.S. Québec shares a number of common interests with them, especially those concerning the management of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River basin.

In Europe, regions and federated states are becoming more active through the organization of joint policy forums. They are following the example of the Conference of Regions (which has legislative powers) and the Assembly of European Regions, where Québec sits as an observer. Among the participating members are the Walloon region, Flanders, Bavaria, Catalonia, and Scotland, with whom Québec has ties and who provide the added benefit of facilitating Québec's access to European institutions and markets.

Federated states also tend to look beyond strictly geographical considerations and to group together on the basis of other shared interests. For example, Québec participates in the *Hemispheria* summits, which notably include Canadian provinces as well as American and Mexican states. With Bavaria, Québec co-founded the Group of Partner Regions, which includes Upper Austria, Shandong, California, Western Cape and, more recently, São Paulo. Québec intends to continue participating in forums that will put it in contact with other regional governments.

The Search for Best Practices

The challenges related to present-day governance encourage public administrations to become interested in what is being done in the rest of the world. Québec regularly leads missions abroad in order to derive inspiration from best practices. Québec itself is, in certain ways, an observation point in areas as varied as immigration and language policy, government support for culture, the development of teaching aids, vocational training, the status of women, the administration of justice, police training, the taxation system, and electoral laws.

Several international organizations are also interested in various instruments, methods and practices developed by Québec. For example, Québec educational experts are often invited to do scientific work for the OECD or UNESCO. Other Québec experts provide technical expertise for the elaboration of La Francophonie's programmes.

Québec benefits greatly from these contacts with a number of foreign experts, which enable it to stay up-to-date regarding best practices, for the greater benefit of its citizens. This is why it cooperates with its main international partners, so as to work concretely on developing innovative solutions to the problems arising in today's world. For this reason also, it intends to increase its participation in the work of the technical committees of international organizations.

More Structured Ties with Civil Society

The expansion of the role played by international organizations and the growing presence of organized groups from civil society on the international scene are two facets of the same phenomenon: the internationalization of problems and solutions. The fact that a greater number of organizations such as NGOs, business associations and labour unions, institutions and firms actively participate in international debates clearly illustrates this trend. Moreover, these groups federate their efforts, create coalitions and develop international partnerships in order to bolster their influence and even impose their agenda.

Thus, relations between government and civil society are becoming an important factor influencing the conduct of international relations. The Government of Québec wishes to create greater synergy with the groups and organizations in Québec that are active internationally and it hopes to start that process by working more closely with the large public institutions that are cities and towns, and with institutions of higher learning.

Priorities and Key Initiatives

OBJECTIVE STRENGTHENING QUÉBEC'S ACTION AND INFLUENCE

Priorities

Increase Québec's presence and participation in international organizations, and in negotiations and discussions dealing with Québec's interests

Intensify relations with the political and economic decision-makers of countries, federated states, and regions having shared interests with Québec

Key Initiatives

Increase Québec's presence and participation in international organizations, and in negotiations and discussions dealing with Québec's interests

Presence in international organizations

- Negotiate the establishment of a stable and predictable framework with the federal government to facilitate Québec's participation in the proceedings of international organizations and forums
- Designate a Québec government representative at Canada's Permanent delegation to UNESCO
- Set up a plan of international action to support the ratification and implementation of the *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions* by the largest number of countries possible
- Step up Québec's presence in New York and Washington in order to better monitor the work of the Organization of American States and the World Bank
- Ensure the participation of Québec experts in the working groups of international organizations
- Increase the number of Québec interns in international organizations

Participation in negotiations and discussions dealing with Québec's interests

- Participate more directly in the Canadian negotiation teams at the World Trade Organization (WTO)
- Participate in establishing the *Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America* between Canada, the United States, and Mexico
- Participate directly in the negotiation of the *Trade and Investment Enhancement Agreement* between Canada and the European Union

Key Initiatives

To intensify relations with the political and economic decision-makers of countries, federated states, and regions having shared interests with Québec

- Redeploy Québec's network of delegations and offices abroad to strengthen its presence in certain priority areas
- Develop relations with federated states and large regions:
 - Reinforce ties with North American federated states in order to strengthen the regional space
 - Ensure representation at regional proceedings in Europe such as the Assembly of European Regions (AER) and the Group of Regions with Legislative Powers (REGLEG)
 - Participate in the Conference of Heads of Government of Partner Regions, so as to promote educational, environmental, scientific, and technological exchanges
- Work more closely with public institutions, especially large cities and institutions of higher learning as well as with representatives of civil society.