



# MAINTAINING OUR CENTRAL ROLE IN CANADIAN CULTURAL LIFE →→

CBC|Radio-Canada is Canada's most significant cultural institution. It is indispensable in bringing citizens together and in communicating this country's values and stories to Canadians within Canada and around the world. We unite Canadians by offering high-quality Canadian programming that reflects this country and its regions on all available platforms, wherever and whenever Canadians want it.



deserve in the rapidly evolving broadcasting environment, the Corporation needs a new and effective long-term contract with Canadians.

Change is coming in many forms in Canadian broadcasting – new technologies, new services, new financial models, new audience groupings, and new industry structures. Each of these types of change must be faced squarely by the Corporation if it is to continue to play its central role as Canada's national public broadcaster – enriching the democratic and cultural life of Canadians, and providing a forum for debate on Canada, today and in the future.

Indeed, no matter how quickly and dramatically Canadian broadcasting changes, CBC|Radio-Canada must continue to provide a public space where programming that is fundamental to Canadians' civic, cultural and social well-being can find a home. No other broadcaster in the Canadian broadcasting system fulfils this role.

Some of these broadcasting changes are fundamental. For example, the transition from analogue to digital production and transmission, as well as the proliferation of new broadcasting platforms and devices, mean that the Corporation must reassess the

timely that the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage is investigating the role for a national public broadcaster in the 21st century. We believe that it would be appropriate that CBC|Radio-Canada's mandate and funding be reviewed and established on a regular ten-year cycle. CBC|Radio-Canada is heartened that the Government has confirmed additional funding of \$60 million for Canadian programming for the public broadcaster for each of the next two fiscal years. While this provides a measure of stability, in order for CBC|Radio-Canada to move forward in a meaningful way, and to provide Canadians with the programming they

Whether it is Television (*CBC News: The National*, *Le téléjournal*, *The Rick Mercer Report*, *Tout le monde en parle*), Radio (*The Current*, *Sounds Like Canada*, *Christiane Charette*, *Désautels*), Specialty Services (*The Passionate Eye* on CBC Newsworld, *Les grands reportages* on RDI), the Internet (*CBC Radio 3*, *bandeapart.fm*) or satellite radio, CBC|Radio-Canada broadcasts programming with a unique Canadian perspective.

At the same time, the swift and dramatic changes in the broadcasting world suggest that a review of CBC|Radio-Canada's mandate is appropriate, and for this reason, it is particularly



ways in which it reaches out to and serves Canadians. Less efficient methods of content creation and delivery – such as analogue over-the-air television transmission – must gradually give way to more cost-effective technologies. At the same time, CBC|Radio-Canada must make its content available on

**It is time for CBC|Radio-Canada to develop a new contract with Canadians to ensure that it continues to provide high-quality, public-value content, and that it has adequate, stable, long-term funding to fulfil its mandate.**

new platforms, as they arise, so that Canadians can gain access to the Corporation's programming content when, where and how they want it. With public service as its central objective, CBC|Radio-Canada must be proactive and responsive.

The fundamental changes in the broadcasting industry, combined with continuing audience

fragmentation, mean that the financial models relied on in the past are being severely challenged. In particular, the traditional advertising model for over-the-air television is under pressure and is not sustainable in the mid- to long-term. Conventional broadcasters still deliver over 80 per cent of all viewing to original Canadian drama and comedy programs on English-language television, and in the case of the French-language market, the share of conventional broadcasters is over 90 per cent. New ways of funding must be found, if this contribution by conventional broadcasters is to be maintained.

As well, new funding must be found for all of CBC|Radio-Canada's services if we are to be able to serve Canadians and provide them with the high-quality, engaging content they expect and deserve. For example, currently, some eight million French- and English-speaking Canadians do not receive a local CBC|Radio-Canada Radio service. We have developed a Radio Strategy that would create 15 new French- and English-language stations and production centres providing local coverage for 37 fast-growing communities ranging in size from 100,000 to 1.5 million people. This strategy

would also further our new multi-platform strategy, called *myCBC*, which will provide Canadians with tailored CBC News coverage – on Television, Radio, the Internet, and digital platforms – in those cities where local stations are currently located. The enactment of this strategy will require additional permanent funding.

All of these factors lead to one conclusion. It is time for CBC|Radio-Canada to develop a new contract with Canadians – a contract that will ensure that the Corporation is on the right track, providing high-quality, public-value content over both traditional and new platforms, in the way that best serves Canada and Canadians. And, that contract will also ensure that CBC|Radio-Canada has adequate, stable, long-term funding so that it will be able to fulfil its mandate in the most effective and efficient manner.



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