



ASSOCIATION OF LINGUISTIC  
SERVICES MANAGERS

## Committee for the Promotion of Canadian Language Services

Montreal, August 31, 2016

The Honourable Judy M. Foote  
Minister of Public Services and Procurement  
11 Laurier Street  
Place du Portage, phase III  
Suite 18A1  
Gatineau QC K1A 0S5

Re: Support for the recommendations made in the Report of the Standing Committee on Official Languages (May 2016)

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Dear Minister Foote,

Last month, the Standing Committee on Official Languages submitted a report further to its recent study of the Translation Bureau. The Association of Linguistic Services Managers (ALSM), through its Committee for the Promotion of Canadian Language Services, wishes to take a position with respect to this report.

The ALSM supports all the recommendations made in the report because, for the most part, they address the same concerns raised by the ALSM's Committee for the Promotion of Canadian Language Services in its various undertakings. For the same reasons, we also support the supplementary report submitted by the New Democratic Party.

We also wish to take this opportunity to point out certain distinct features of Canadian language services.

- Canadian language services continue to evolve in a highly competitive and innovative industry.
- They have available to them secure infrastructures that meet the highest standards.
- They make use of renowned and long-standing expertise.
- They rely upon highly qualified human resources educated by leading Canadian universities.
- They employ many professional translators who bear the title of certified translator, a title granted by organizations such as the *Ordre des traducteurs, terminologues et interprètes agréés du Québec*.

- Canadian language services are the best equipped to address the language needs of Canadians as well as international clients and prospects.

For all these reasons, the Committee for the Promotion of Canadian Language Services reiterates its full support for the recommendations made in the Report of the Standing Committee on Official Languages.

However, the Committee regrets that the report does not highlight the essential support that the Canadian translation industry provides to the Bureau in carrying out its mandate and to the Government of Canada in fulfilling its official languages obligations. In this regard, the Committee would want the report to recommend that the Bureau's expertise be directly used for developing a strong, robust industry through better use of federal purchasing power in translation. Given the extent of the federal demand for translation, this power has considerable potential for positive structuring. At present, this potential is not being realized due to the disorderly manner in which purchasing power is used by the entire federal government.

This letter has been sent to other major stakeholders in the Canadian language industry to seek their support. Attached is the list of organizations and entities that concur with our position.

Backed by the support of multiple organizations, we wish to express to you our unanimous support for promoting a strong and competitive language industry in Canada, and we offer our full cooperation in applying the recommendations put forward.

Sincerely,



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Encl.            1) Support of major stakeholders in the language field  
                    2) Summary of the Report of the Standing Committee on Official Languages

CC.              Hon. Denis Paradis, President of the Standing Committee on Official Languages and MP,  
                    Brome-Missisquoi  
                    Mrs. Donna Achimov, Chief Executive Officer, PWGSC



ASSOCIATION OF LINGUISTIC  
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## Committee for the Promotion of Canadian Language Services

### MEMBERS

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**Stéphan Gervais**, Certified Translator (OTTIAQ)  
Member, Committee for the Promotion of Canadian Language Services  
Managing Director, Adéquat Linguistic Services

## **STUDY OF THE TRANSLATION BUREAU**

### **Report of the Standing Committee on Official Languages**

#### **Highlights concerning the industry**

- Linguistic duality is a basic component of the Canadian identity and serves the country's unity. (page 7)
- We all know that Canada is a great translating country. Translation is written into the country's DNA, if you will, even though a good many Canadians consider it to be a necessary evil of Confederation. If this is true, then the same must be said about official bilingualism because translation and official bilingualism are inextricably linked. Far from being a by-product of bilingualism, translation is a concrete manifestation of it. (page 7)
- The Canadian language service providers, that government departments can turn to at any time, are increasingly competitive and innovative. (page 11)
- The TB wishes, in particular, to increase its cooperation with the private sector. Ms. Achimov also stressed the importance of having some flexibility in the TB and that its partnership with the private sector helps it manage fluctuations in demand.
  - [...] it is important for us to be flexible and to work with our professionals in fulfilling our federal obligations. I also said it was important to be flexible and to work closely with the private sector. I spoke about demand fluctuations. We have a great deal of work at certain times of the year. During this fiscal year-end and due to new processes, we are extremely busy. It is a good thing that there is a Canadian language sector to manage these fluctuations. Under our mandate, we are able to have that flexibility. As I mentioned, there is a good partnership with the Canadian language industry. (pages 12 and 13)
- Even though their per-word rate is high, the TB representatives mentioned several aspects that make them competitive with the language market in Canada: their expertise, their secure infrastructures for handling classified documents and documents designated "Protected B" and the fact that they provide services 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. (page 15)
- The number of TB client institutions that have done business with the TB over the past year went from 149 in 2013-14 to 143 in 2014-15 and to 128 in 2015-16. (page 15)
- [...] several witnesses have indicated that the end of the Traduca program is limiting the preparation of a qualified next generation and is reducing employment

opportunities for students in the translation field. The FCFA explained this as follows:

- [...] the budget cuts of 2011-12 also reduced the Translation Bureau's ability to offer internships. The ending of the Traduca program, which occurred at nearly the same time, further limited opportunities for internships in translation. Funded through the 2008-13 roadmap for linguistic duality and managed by the *Fédération de la jeunesse canadienne-française*, Traduca enabled the creation of 344 internships in three years. For students, the end of the program meant a loss of opportunities, while the Translation Bureau lost a new generation of professionals. (pages 21 and 22)

## **Recommendations from the Standing Committee on Official Languages** (pages 32 and 33)

### **Recommendation 1**

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada empower an existing federal authority to ensure that the *Official Languages Act* is completely implemented as concerns, among other things, the Translation Bureau. In particular, this authority would play a coordinating role to ensure that federal institutions apply and comply with the *Official Languages Act*.

### **Recommendation 2**

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada, pursuant to the *Official Languages Act*, provide all federal public servants with training regarding the Translation Bureau's role and the Government of Canada's obligations concerning translation.

### **Recommendation 3**

The Committee recommends that:

- a) the Government of Canada recognize the essential role that translation and translators play in Canada's linguistic duality;
- b) the Government of Canada determine which department the Translation Bureau should report to, and that translators, interpreters and terminologists participate fully in managing the Translation Bureau.

### **Recommendation 4**

The Committee recommends that:

- a) the Government of Canada allocate all necessary financial resources to the Translation Bureau so that it can provide high-quality translation services;
- b) the Government of Canada implement a program to regain its lost expertise in technical, scientific and multilingual translation;
- c) the Government of Canada implement a plan to ensure that preparing the next generation of translators, training them and offering internships in the language field is an integral part of the Translation Bureau's mandate.

**Recommendation 5**

The Committee recommends to the Government of Canada that the Portage language comprehension tool be used solely by federal public servants for the purpose of understanding a text and not for disseminating public or internal documents or information.

**Recommendation 6**

The Committee recommends to the Government of Canada that:

- a) users of the Portage language comprehension tool receive a notice stating that it is to be used solely for the purpose of comprehension and not for communication;
  
- b) clear guidelines be developed regarding use of the Portage language comprehension tool before it is implemented in federal institutions, and that a verification mechanism be put in place to ensure that the guidelines are followed.

**Recommendation 7**

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada:

- a) provide the funding required to develop a high-quality corpus for the Portage language comprehension software, and consult experts other than the tool's designers;
  
- b) ensure that the translations produced by the tool are revised regularly to ensure their quality;
  
- c) encourage communication between the tool's designers and translators;
  
- d) develop post-editing training workshops for translators.

**Recommendation 8**

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada reflect on the status of the Translation Bureau as a special service agency and the impact that privatizing certain translation services would have on the ability of federal institutions to meet their language obligations regarding communications with and services to the public.

## **Supplementary report from the New Democratic Party**

- [...] the NDP believes that the government must put a stop to the trend of bypassing the Translation Bureau and must acknowledge its unique role and mandate. We are therefore asking the government to implement recommendation 8 no later than October 31, 2016. (page 41)
- Moreover, it is imperative for the government to reinstate the necessary financial resources to the Translation Bureau so that it can fulfill its mandate. (page 41)
- In addition, lacking the perspective enjoyed by young people going through internship programs like Traduca, we are limiting the development of future interpreters and the quality of the work provided by the Translation Bureau. The government must therefore reinstate that program or introduce a similar one. (page 42)
- The decentralization model brought forward by the previous government is an utter failure. Since the arrival of the Liberal government, the NDP has questioned them on this matter, but to date, the Liberals have shown no real interest in strengthening official languages oversight. We urge the government to immediately implement the Committee's recommendation 1. (page 43)