

Standing Committee on Finance (FINA)

Pre-budget consultations 2012

Fédération culturelle canadienne-française

Responses

1. Economic Recovery and Growth

Given the current climate of federal and global fiscal restraint, what specific federal measures do you feel are needed for a sustained economic recovery and enhanced economic growth in Canada?

The FCCF is asking the federal government to step up its investment in arts and culture because it promotes economic recovery, growth and job creation and ensure greater quality of life. In its study, *Valuing Culture: Measuring and Understanding the Canadian Creative Economy*, the Conference Board of Canada states that arts and culture generate approximately \$25 billion in taxes, more than three times the total public investment by all levels of government combined. The multiplier effect of investment in arts and culture stands out, since every dollar invested in the sector generates \$3.20 worth of economic activity. Furthermore, performing arts organizations generate \$2.70 receipts for every dollar they receive from the various levels of government. Given the extensive impact of investments in arts and culture, it is imperative that the government increase its support for the operation and programming of artistic and cultural organizations in Canada's Francophone community and index them to the annual increase in the cost of living. Knowing that our sector enables Canadians across the country to live and work in French, the government must also plan to renew the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality. This platform is a prime opportunity for investment in arts and culture for French Canadian communities, artists, craftspeople and cultural workers. We urge the government to ensure the permanent continuation of its investments under the current Roadmap, since every one of the initiatives targeting arts and culture in Canada's Francophone community is still relevant. The government must seize this opportunity to increase the return on its investment by supporting new initiatives brought forward by certain Crown corporations and agencies (Canada Council for the Arts, National Arts Centre, CBC/Radio-Canada, National Film Board, Telefilm Canada, Musicaction and others). These bodies are entirely capable of developing and bringing forward new initiatives while ensuring active consultation of the community, impeccable transparency and rigorous accountability.

2. Job Creation

As Canadian companies face pressures resulting from such factors as uncertainty about the U.S. economic recovery, a sovereign debt crisis in Europe, and competition from a number of developed and developing countries, what specific federal actions do you believe should be taken to promote job creation in Canada, including that which occurs as a result of enhanced internal and international trade?

The government has already taken one considerable measure to ensure job creation in the arts and culture sector by maintaining funding for the Canada Council for the Arts for the next three years. On behalf of artists and cultural workers in Canada's Francophone community who will benefit from this commitment, we thank the Finance Committee and the government as a whole for this decision. Continued funding for the Canada Council is all the more important since that agency – together with the programs of the Official Language Support Programs Branch (OLSPB) – supports the operation and programming of the many artistic and cultural organizations. Note that these operating and programming grants contribute directly to the sector's financial stability. Through these investments, sectoral organizations can acquire human resources to carry out their mandates and thus offer Canadian citizens good employment opportunities. Note that the association community is a major employer in

Canada's Francophone community. Government investment in artistic and cultural organizations leads to jobs that affect thousands of families and employees engaged in the continuing and sustainable development of our communities. The network's economic impact is even more considerable for organizations that manage artistic and cultural sites. The association community would be incapable of playing its role as an economic driver and employment leader without stable, recurring government investment. In addition, some federal artistic and cultural agencies are also major employers for our communities. Canadian Heritage, Radio-Canada and the NFB all operate regional satellite offices that, over the years, have become local institutions within federal institutions. We therefore recommend that the government continue its investments in those bodies and require that they undertake to maintain their regional presence and their investment in arts and culture in Canada's Francophone community so that they can continue to be both key partners in our sector and significant sources of employment for our communities.

3. Demographic Change

What specific federal measures do you think should be implemented to help the country address the consequences of, and challenges associated with, the aging of the Canadian population and of skills shortages?

According to the same Conference Board study, some 640,000 Canadians hold jobs in the cultural sector, more than twice the number of workers employed by banks in Canada. For the Canadian Francophone community, there is definitely a scarcity of specialized resources, and the staff turnover rate is high. Investment in initiatives targeting resource mobility and sharing among various regions of the country would be beneficial. The consolidation of operating and programming grants is nevertheless still the most decisive long-term course of action to enable the sector to provide its resources with competitive compensation. This would have the effect of consolidating the capacity of artistic and cultural organizations and could thus help counter the migration of young people from rural areas to the urban centres and promote the integration of Francophone immigrants in French Canadian communities. Access to French Canadian arts and culture is a solution to the isolation that seniors sometimes suffer, creates opportunities for gathering together and reinforces linguistic vitality in all its diversity. The government must conclude its review of the terms and conditions of support for the sector's human resources needs. A comprehensive government strategy would include: a consolidated investment in operating and programming funding for artistic and cultural organizations, thus enabling them to increase their human capacity, in particular by creating new positions; giving priority to investment in initiatives for ongoing training and occupational development; support for mentoring, and other such initiatives, all for the purpose of promoting sustainable long-term development. The government must also encourage the introduction of programs for audience development initiatives. These activities are essential in renewing audiences at auditoriums, cultural centres, art galleries, artist centres, libraries, book fairs and other venues. We must attract a new clientele and explore ways to increase seniors' interest in modern art and to involve them, for example, in cultural mediation projects

4. Productivity

With labour market challenges arising in part as a result of the aging of Canada's population and an ongoing focus on the actions needed for competitiveness, what specific federal initiatives are needed in order to increase productivity in Canada?

The productivity of the arts and culture sector is closely linked to infrastructure (associative, physical, virtual and so on), and yet French Canadian artistic and cultural organizations, industries and businesses do not have enough capacity (human, technical, financial and so on) to take advantage of those facilities and thus increase their productivity. Access to the creative works of French Canadian artists and artistic organizations calls for a strategy that takes into account both conventional means of dissemination and

new trends. Artists and cultural workers have always needed adequate premises in order to create, produce and present artistic works. Canadians deserve facilities that enable them to take full advantage of works presented. In the past two years, the government has made significant investments in artistic and cultural infrastructure projects. We are very grateful for those investments, which in many cases make it possible to access comparable investments by other levels of government. We encourage the government to continue its investments in new facilities and in the redevelopment of existing ones, while developing new measures to provide permanent infrastructure over the long term. In particular, this program must include access to funding for the purchase and maintenance of the specialized equipment that these facilities need to represent themselves as facilities with leading-edge technology. Artists and the public must have access to modern resources to optimize their artistic and cultural experience. Artistic creation and dissemination increasingly involve the use of digital and new media. Artistic and cultural creators and entrepreneurs acknowledge the importance of integrating new media in their efforts but do not always have the necessary technical expertise to use those new tools and platforms properly. We urge the government to establish a digital strategy that includes measures in support of training and knowledge-sharing in these fields and the development of organizational capacity.

5. Other Challenges

With some Canadian individuals, businesses and communities facing particular challenges at this time, in your view, who is facing the most challenges, what are the challenges that are being faced and what specific federal actions are needed to address these challenges?

The artistic and cultural organizations of Canada's Francophone community are facing fund-raising challenges. Although many organizations are making considerable efforts in this area, the results of those efforts do not always meet the sector's needs or objectives. A sustained, long-term approach is required to consolidate the sector's capacity so that it can cultivate and develop better opportunities to diversify revenue and, in particular, to increase revenue from independent sources. The sector is also facing challenges as a result of the provinces' asymmetrical approaches and commitments to funding the Francophonie and arts and culture. These numerous support models are a disadvantage for Canadian Francophone stakeholders, who must do business and compete with their Quebec counterparts, who enjoy a considerable level of provincial investment. In these times of fiscal restraint, we urge the government to focus on initiatives that generate a leverage effect. Consider the example of the intergovernmental component of the Cultural Development Fund, one of the initiatives under the current Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality. The signing of intergovernmental agreements under the Cultural Development Fund between the federal government and those of Ontario, New Brunswick, Manitoba and Saskatchewan has already increased funding by 10%. We encourage the government to introduce similar measures targeting the private sector and other levels of government across the country.