

## Standing Committee on Finance (FINA)

### Pre-budget consultations 2012

## Mouvement pour les arts et les lettres (MAL)

### 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?*

Le Mouvement pour les arts et les lettres (MAL) is asking the government to view its investment in arts and culture in Canada as a guarantee of economic recovery. The vitality of this sector, in the areas of research, creation, production and dissemination, and in the promotion of Canada internationally, depends on the ability of the Canada Council for the Arts to support artistic excellence, the productivity organizations and their engagement with audiences, as well as their contribution to the growth of domestic and international trade. In response to the challenges of globalization and changes in cultural habits with the advent of digital media, the Canada Council must expand the scope of its action. To continue playing a front-line role in developing and strengthening the arts and culture sector, MAL believes it is essential to gradually increase the Canada Council's funding by \$30 million annually to \$300 million by 2017. Similarly, the Canadian government must maintain and enhance the programs of the Department of Canadian Heritage, along with funding allocated thereto, because they make an essential contribution to: (1) the development of arts and culture infrastructure in Canada; (2) the construction, upgrading and maintenance of cultural equipment across the country; (3) the promotion and dissemination of works to various audiences; (4) the stimulation of private sector investments in arts and culture; and (5) the supply of artistic training meeting the highest international standards. In addition to these actions by Canadian Heritage, there are new imperatives associated with digital technologies. The sectors of the creative economy, including arts and culture, are experiencing faster growth than the conventional sectors. The Department of Canadian Heritage must have a strategic vision and the funding necessary to put in place programs and measures giving the arts and culture sector the means to become a forceful presence in this new economy. To that end, it must increase its capacity for advanced research in the creation of digital content and the development of innovative platforms and products; it must acquire high tech equipment and new management strategies; and it must enhance its power to attract and retain specialized skills. The Mouvement pour les arts et les lettres du Québec is asking the Canadian government to reconsider the \$191 million in cuts announced in the Minister of Finance's 2012-2013 budget. It is also focusing its attention on the recommendation the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage made in its report, *Emerging and Digital Media: Opportunities and Challenges* (February 9, 2011), "that the Government of Canada strengthen the digital media components of its programs for arts and culture."

#### 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 arts and culture sector plays a significant role in the economic development of the cities and regions of Quebec and Canada through the jobs it creates and the direct and indirect tax revenues it generates. It also contributes to an improved quality of life for citizens and helps build a strong, original identity

that is bound to enhance the appeal of Canadian know-how in the world. The job opportunities are real and diversified, an undeniable sign of vitality, of which the Canadian government must take advantage to increase the sector's productivity and competitiveness. The ability to improve conditions of work and practice would help meet standards of unequalled quality, innovation, excellence and efficiency. The capacity to offer young artists and managers, many of whom are looking for employment, the opportunity to acquire business experience would offset the employment shortage and mitigate the effects of demographic change. Choosing to invest in the creation of sustainable, value-added jobs, since it costs relatively less to create jobs in the arts and culture sector than in other sectors, contributes to the economic development of cities and regions and thus to stronger economic growth in the country. A study published by Hill Strategies in 2009 (*A Statistical Profile of Artists in Canada: Based on the 2006 Census*) shows that, in 2006, 140,000 artists in Canada spent more time on their art than on any other occupation. That number is slightly larger than the number of Canadians directly employed in the automotive industry (135,000). While a share of economic growth is related to job creation, another portion depends on the sector's vitality and creativity in the development of foreign markets. In a global context of high financial instability and declining markets, the Canadian government must provide more energetic support for the promotion and distribution of artistic and cultural products in order to remain competitive from the standpoint of supply and value for money and to maintain the level of revenues from exports.

### **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?*

The arts and culture sector is not immune to the consequences of an aging population, even though it has a talented and flourishing new generation of artists who aspire to earn a decent living from their art or trade. The efforts it has made in recent years to develop and renew its audiences by diversifying and its offerings and type of activities, for youth and cultural communities in particular, are starting to produce results. The Government of Canada, through the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Canada Council for the Arts, must continue to encourage these initiatives, which promote direct contact between citizens and the artists in their communities. It must also consider the impact of technology and digital media on the culture consumed by Canadians, more particularly by the new generations. While the aging population is a major demographic, economic and societal issue, the risk of generational cleavage, cultural gap and even acculturation is real. The Canadian government must make every possible effort to support Canadian artistic and cultural products, in any form and by any means, in order to maintain the values of cohesion, solidarity, mutual assistance and sharing within communities. Labour shortages are a reality that the arts and culture sector has always had to deal with. The retirement of a number of individuals who have held key positions in cultural organizations could prove to be a problem if nothing is done now to ensure that their knowledge and skills are transferred to emerging artists and managers. The Mouvement pour les arts et les lettres du Québec believes that the Canadian government must bring forward tax measures that encourage cultural workers to extend their working lives beyond the age of 65. At the same time, and in conjunction with other departments, it must enhance employment support measures or provide internships of medium duration for young art and management graduates and artists retraining for new careers.

#### **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?*

To improve the country's productivity, the Government of Canada must continue investing in its artists and cultural workers, its artistic and cultural businesses, its institutions and its cultural infrastructure. These are all levers for economic development at the local, regional, national and international levels. Improved conditions for work, research and creation, and enhanced means of production, distribution and market development, are an essential condition for high productivity in this sector. The resulting impact on the country's economy and the quality of life of its citizens will only be greater. Preserving and increasing the gains and expertise of a sector that is bound to undergo major transformation in a context of globalization, demographic transformation and profound cultural change call for strategic intervention, which is synonymous with enhanced sustained investment by the Government of Canada. In the cultural and artistic sector, productivity is often limited by difficult working conditions. The obsolete nature of certain premises, inadequate wages, excessive hours of work, unstable employment, all these factors undermine the ability of workers and volunteers to perform to their full potential. The Mouvement pour les arts et les lettres believes that, to enhance the productivity of the cultural sector, the Canadian government must continue to support the acquisition and upgrading of space and equipment that meets the requirements of creation, production, dissemination and the accommodation of audiences.

#### **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 entire arts and culture sector has been weakened and impoverished as a result of the amendments made to the Copyright Modernization Act (Bill C-11), which will deprive thousands of artists and their rights holders of \$126 million in revenue every year, based on an evaluation provided by the artists associations. However, it is difficult to ask the current government to put in place policies that contradict its recent positions, but the government must be aware of its responsibilities in this area. In the circumstances, and having regard to the impact of that act, the Mouvement pour les arts et les lettres du Québec reminds the government that it has the power and a duty to protect the cultural specificity of a country, its economy, policies and values.