



MAR 02 2018

The Honourable Denis Paradis, P.C., M.P.
Chair
Standing Committee on Official Languages
House of Commons
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6

Dear Colleague:

On behalf of the Government of Canada, we would like to thank the members of the Standing Committee on Official Languages for their work in developing the report entitled “Air Canada’s Implementation of the *Official Languages Act*: Aiming for Excellence” tabled in the House of Commons on November 2, 2017. We appreciate and value the important work undertaken by the Standing Committee in conducting a review of the Commissioner of Official Languages’ Special Report to Parliament “Air Canada: On the Road to Increased Compliance through an Effective Enforcement Regime”, tabled in the House of Commons on June 7, 2016, which examined possible solutions to improve Air Canada’s compliance with the *Official Languages Act*. We are also grateful to all those who appeared before the Committee to express their points of view and the effort put into crafting the recommendations.

The Government is pleased to provide its response to the seven recommendations to the Standing Committee on Official Languages.

Recommendations 1 to 5 focus on improving Air Canada’s data collection, accuracy, and the Government’s analysis of this information. The Government will continue to provide support to Air Canada, as it does with all institutions subject to the Act. To bolster the qualitative assessments of Air Canada’s annual reviews on official languages, the Government agrees that Transport Canada will also examine these reviews alongside Canadian Heritage and Treasury Board Secretariat.

While the Government encourages institutions to share their approaches and methodologies, ultimately the responsibility to act on this recommendation rests with Air Canada, and we expect that Air Canada will take the Committee’s recommendations into account. To that end, and in the spirit of constructive, collaborative and open dialogue, we are pleased to report that the Government has already held discussions with Air Canada about the Committee’s report, and that Air Canada is giving these recommendations their full consideration.

Recommendations 6 and 7 ask the Government to enact legislative amendments. The Government agrees that it would be useful to consider how the *Official Languages Act* could be modernized. However, before making a decision on an instrument for compliance, thorough consideration is needed to establish the scope and a full understanding of the impacts that any potential amendments would have. Further, the Government acknowledges other activities underway that will inform this work. These activities include the Senate Committee's ongoing study to modernize the Act, the Treasury Board Secretariat's review of the *Official Languages (Communications with and Services to the Public) Regulations*, as well as the legislative amendments currently being proposed to give the Information Commissioner new powers (Bill C-58).

Regarding the recommendation related to the *Carriage by Air Act* and the *Montreal Convention*, further analysis and consultation by the Government is required to determine the impact that such an amendment would have on Canada's international obligations as a signatory to the *Montreal Convention*. Moreover, further study of the 2014 Supreme Court of Canada decision in *Thibodeau v. Air Canada* and of the 2015 private member's bill (Bill C-666) that died on the order paper will help to better inform the way forward.

Throughout, the Government will continue to monitor the situation regarding the offer of services to Canadians in both official languages and the maintenance by the air carrier of a workplace that promotes bilingualism, as set forth in its obligations under the Act.

Once again, we would like to take the opportunity to thank you and the members of the Standing Committee again for your important work.

Yours sincerely,



The Honourable Mélanie Joly, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Canadian Heritage



The Honourable Jody Wilson-Raybould, P.C.,
Q.C., M.P.
Minister of Justice and Attorney General of
Canada



The Honourable Scott Brison, P.C., M.P.
President of the Treasury Board



The Honourable Marc Garneau, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Transport