

# Brief prepared for the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage as part of the study of Bill C-10, An Act to amend the Broadcasting Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts

February 2021

Ottawa, April 7, 2021

**Scott Simms**

Chair of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage  
MP for Coast of Bays–Central–Notre Dame  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. Simms:

**Subject: AFO brief prepared as part of the study of Bill C-10, An Act to amend the Broadcasting Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts.**

On behalf of the Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario (AFO) and the 744,000 Franco-Ontarians that it represents, I would like to thank you for giving us the opportunity to send you this brief about Bill C-10, An Act to amend the Broadcasting Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts.

The AFO believes that the changes introduced by Bill C-10 are positive. Bill C-10 adds several provisions that will increase and showcase Canadian diversity in Canada's media environment. We are pleased to see that it highlights issues of representation by adding objectives to include Canada's Indigenous Peoples and racialized communities in Canadian programming.

However, the AFO has observed a lack of recognition for official language minority communities (OLMCs) in the bill. Despite the many briefs submitted by the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadiennes du Canada (FCFA) calling for more French-language Canadian content, this bill lacks details regarding the broadcasting and promotion of said content.

Our industry members, including Clarence-Rockland Community Television, have told us that for several years, French-language Canadian content has been underfunded, which has contributed to the erosion of many of the resources used to create it.

The community strategic plan for French Ontario ([PSC: Vers 2030](#)) [in French only] describes the threat posed by assimilation and the lack of attachment to our community. More French-language content would strengthen our community. In order to address this problem, the bill should include quotas for French-language content, including for producing it outside Quebec. Without clear quotas, the bill gives discretionary power to the CRTC, and, as a result, does not guarantee the inclusion of Canadian content that takes the unique characteristics of OLMCs into account.

**Recommendation 1**

That Bill C-10 be amended to ensure that OLMCs are targeted for the creation of new Canadian content and to include quotas for content created by, for and with francophone minority communities.

**Recommendation 2**

That the CRTC's mission be modified to ensure that it takes into account the broadcasting realities of OLMCs.

The AFO is also concerned about the fact that community media and television are sparsely mentioned in Bill C-10. The [White Paper on Francophone Media in Ontario](#), which was released in September 2017, points out that community media are not receiving the funding that they need under the current status quo, despite them playing an essential role in the community life of French Ontario. Bill C-10 would benefit from including more references to Francophone community media.

Community media were poorly defined in the 1991 legislation, which directed most funding to the private sector at the expense of the not-for-profit sector. The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the importance of local news broadcasts in both official languages. It is critical for communities to have access to local news. And for that to happen, we need to ensure that community media have the resources that they need to fulfill their role.

#### Recommendation 3

That not-for-profit community media outlets be defined as community-owned media organizations that produce content by, for and with the communities that they serve.

#### Recommendation 4

Ensure that community-owned media outlets receive the financial, material and technological resources that they need to create content made by, for and with the local communities that they serve in a sustainable manner.

More information about the AFO's expectations for community media is attached in the appendix.

In addition, we are also disappointed by the bill's lack of changes regarding Radio-Canada. Radio-Canada's mandate and operations are significantly important to the Franco-Ontarian community. For several decades, Radio-Canada has been too focused on Quebec issues. The [AFO's brief prepared for the Broadcasting Notice of Consultation CRTC 2019-379 \(license renewal requested by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation/Société Radio-Canada\)](#) [in French only] in February 2020, revealed that "45.58% of survey respondents 'disagree or strongly disagree' with the statement that Société Radio-Canada adequately and appropriately represents minority language communities." [translation] French-language television news is very important to many Franco-Ontarians who live in rural areas without reliable access to Internet.

#### Recommendation 5

That Radio-Canada's mandate be modified to provide more programming for and media coverage of issues that affect Francophone minority communities, in addition to more French-language content produced outside Quebec, mainly through introducing a requirement to systematically cover a minimum of two news items from regions outside Quebec in various national newscasts.

In closing, while the AFO appreciates certain provisions of the bill regarding cultural diversity in broadcasting, we believe that its lack of recognition of the unique situation of minority language communities and its lack of a definition for community media are problems that should be addressed. The AFO also believes that this bill is a missed opportunity to modify the mandate of Radio-Canada to give more airtime to Francophone communities outside Quebec.

Thank you for reading this brief.

Yours sincerely,

The AFO President,

[SIGNED]

Carol Jolin