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Ensuring the prosperity of French-language scholarly publications in Canada and their influence around the world

**Brief submitted by Martin Maltais to
the House of Commons Standing
Committee on Science and Research**

Biography

Martin Maltais is a professor of finance and education policy at UQAR. He is a hands-on manager who plays a key role in developing higher education and digital policies in Quebec. He has written a number of articles, reports and papers on policies and funding for education, higher education and distance education. He has been an advisor to four Quebec government ministers and a deputy director to two of them since 2012.

1. Introduction and observations

I would like to thank the House of Commons Standing Committee on Science and Research for considering French-language scholarly publications during its 2022 fall sitting. As I have already noted in a recently published opinion piece, it seems clear to me (as confirmed by the individuals and organizations that were invited to testify before the committee) that the fate of French, not only in Canada but also around the world, is linked to that of science. My opinion pieces on this issue are available here [in French only]:

- <https://www.ledevoir.com/opinion/idees/768285/idees-le-destin-du-francais-est-lie-a-celui-de-la-science>
- <https://www.journaldemontreal.com/2022/10/28/le-destin-du-francais-est-lie-a-celui-de-la-science>
- <https://www.tvanouvelles.ca/2022/10/29/le-destin-du-francais-est-lie-a-celui-de-la-science>

A number of organizations have documented the challenges of French-language research in Canada, including Acfas, which published a report in June 2021 that presented the following findings:

- In Canada, English-language journals constitute the vast majority (over 90% since 2005) of all journals created, leaving very little room for new bilingual journals and even less room for French-language journals. In fact, French-language journals account for only about 10% of the journals created in Canada since the 1960s; and
- There has been a decline in French-language articles in both minority francophone universities and those in Quebec.

2. Recommendations

Many organizations, including Acfas, have already made a series of recommendations that I fully endorse, but I would like to add a few others here:

- The Government of Canada should explicitly support scientific journals and academic publishing houses that commit to translating the work of francophone authors who publish important scientific work in English.
- To illustrate the type of problem we are seeing, let me give you a very recent example. I have co-edited a book with three other international scientists in English, which will be published by Springer (analysis of higher education systems in the United States, Canada and Western Europe) next spring. I have approached Les Presses de l'Université du Québec to translate this book (Springer is willing to release the French publication rights and I have committed to do the translation myself in the coming year). The response from the Quebec scientific publisher?

After discussing the project with the PUQ team, I must unfortunately inform you that we will not be going ahead with this publishing project, mainly because of the technical difficulties of such a project (the French translation would undoubtedly amount to 800 to 900 pages, and the selling price would skyrocket). Also, in our opinion, this book, in Quebec, will be of most interest to researchers and graduate students who may have **already consulted the English version.** [translation]

No consideration for researchers who have a poor command of English or who cannot read it very well. The main disadvantage of not translating large-scale work is that it creates two classes of researchers.

- The Government of Canada should require that granting agencies
 - o award points to grant applications indicating that the research team comprises a minimum percentage of francophones (at least 25%);
 - o award points to projects for which researchers plan to and actually produce a certain proportion of publications resulting from their research in French (at least 25%);
 - o award points to projects that include plans to hold scientific events (seminars, conferences, etc.) in French (at least 25%);
 - o award points to projects that include French-language transfer and outreach activities (at least 25%); and
 - o provide financial support through additional dedicated funds to organizations that commit to any of the four points above and that these funds also be used in Quebec where too much work is done in English.
- The Government of Canada should provide dedicated funds to support international French-language networks and French-language dissemination of the research findings of Canadian francophones through the scientific francophone community.
- That the Government of Canada, along with the provinces concerned, including Quebec, play a significant role in what is called "francophone scientific diplomacy," which is the specific field of international relations where the interests of science, in French, and those of foreign policy intersect: an area where Canada's presence is weak and where, in my opinion, the future of the French language is at stake. That is where there is an enormous potential for development and collaboration in which Canada can play a strategic role.