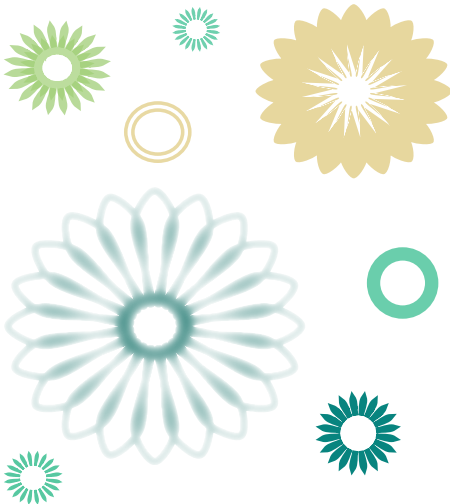




JUSTICE IN OFFICIAL LANGUAGES – NEWSLETTER

ACCESS • SERVICES • COMMUNITIES • TRAINING

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WORD OF WELCOME

In March 2013, the Government of Canada renewed its commitment to promoting Canada's official languages and enhancing the vitality of official language minority communities. The *Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages 2013-2018: Education, Immigration, Communities (2013-2018 Roadmap)* calls for a renewed investment of \$1.1 billion over five years and capitalizes on the social and economic benefits for Canadians of having two official languages. This new federal strategy focuses on three priority areas: education, immigration and community support.

For the Department of Justice Canada and its *Access to Justice in Both Official Languages Support Initiative*, the 2013-2018 Roadmap includes investments in two key areas. The investment under the *Education* component will allow the Department to continue working with justice professionals to offer services to Canadians in both official languages, thereby helping to make the justice system more accessible. The investment under the *Communities* component will enable the Department to support projects and initiatives that help Canadians find legal information in the official language of their choice.

This issue presents an outline of the strategy that the Department has developed in light of the federal strategy. Upcoming issues of the Newsletter will provide additional details on the Department's priorities.

In this issue you will meet the new Director and General Counsel of the Office of Francophonie, Justice in Official Languages and Legal Dualism, Michel Francoeur, who has been on the job since November 2012.

Happy reading!

The Justice in Official Languages Team

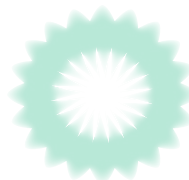
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2013-2018: DIRECT SERVICES AND CONCRETE RESULTS

The new federal strategy introduced in the *Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages 2013-2018: Education, Immigration, Communities*¹ focuses on delivering services directly and achieving concrete results for Canadians.

With this in mind, the Department of Justice Canada has developed a strategy for 2013-2018 based on two priorities: information and training.

The Information Component: Direct Services for Canadians

Access to justice is a major challenge for Canadian society, as well as for the court system. The hallmarks of better access to justice are a system that can handle requests for information in both official languages, and a citizenry that is well-informed in legal matters and aware of its rights and responsibilities. According to data collected by the Department of Justice, more and more Canadians are trying to handle their legal issues themselves, very often because they cannot afford lawyers' fees or the costs of going to court². The situation becomes even more complex when a person seeks legal services in a minority official language.



Source: Provincial Court of New Brunswick

Access to justice remains a key concern for the Department, and the purpose of the *Access to Justice in Both Official Languages Support Initiative (Initiative)*, launched in 2003, is to ensure that Canadians living in an official language minority community have access to justice in the official language of their choice. Major strides have been made in the last ten years, and it is important to look briefly at the history of these efforts in order to understand why the focus is now on delivering services directly to the Canadian population.

Since 2003, the Department of Justice Canada has worked with its governmental and non-governmental partners to increase the justice system's capacity to offer services to Canadians in their official languages. From 2003 to 2008, the *Initiative* provided financial assistance to projects and initiatives aimed at educating official language minority populations about their rights and obligations and at promoting the availability of justice services in both official

languages. Legal and language tools in both official languages were developed to help justice stakeholders, especially jurists, offer services in the official minority language in their communities. This phase also saw the beginning of our efforts to promote careers in justice and training programs for Crown prosecutors.

The main activity from 2008 to 2013 was the development of a training component to intensify the efforts aimed at improving the language skills of those working in the justice system. Building on the progress made since 2003, this second phase of the *Initiative* was also aimed at recruiting and training young bilingual Canadians interested in pursuing careers in the area of justice.

For the next phase, from 2013 to 2018, the information component will focus on promoting projects and initiatives designed to inform Canadians directly about their right to use the official language of their choice in dealing with the justice system, while building on what has been accomplished since 2003. In short, the Government of Canada wants to work more closely with the public to make sure that Canadians have full access to legal information in the official language of their choice.

The Training Component: Improving Our Ability To Deliver Services In Both Official Languages

The *Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality 2008-2013: Acting for the Future*³ designated the justice sector as one of five essential service areas for Canadians. In light of this, it was important to intensify our training efforts to improve the language skills of those already working in the justice system and to provide them with development opportunities to substantially improve the availability of services in both official languages. During this phase, we developed and implemented many projects to increase the number and frequency of professional training activities and continuing education opportunities for the various stakeholders working in the judiciary. The federal investment for the period also allowed us to continue developing initiatives and projects to train and recruit young bilingual Canadians interested in pursuing justice-related careers.

¹ Canadian Heritage (2013), *Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages 2013-2018: Education, Immigration, Communities*

² Department of Justice Canada (2007), *The Legal Problems of Everyday Life - The Nature, Extent and Consequences of Justiciable Problems Experienced by Canadians*

³ Canadian Heritage (2008), *Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality 2008-2013: Acting for the Future*

Between 2008 and 2013, the *Initiative* provided financial support for projects and initiatives that were in line with the training needs identified in the *Canada-Wide Analysis of Official Language Training Needs in the Area of Justice*⁴. For example, this phase saw the implementation of a national program that used innovative learning tools to train justice stakeholders in legal French. Legal information portals were also created especially for Quebec's Anglophone community and for Francophone minority communities in Canada. These efforts tangibly improved the availability of services in both official languages.

For the next phase, the training component comes under the *Education* section of the *2013-2018 Roadmap*. The aim of this component will be to maintain efforts to ensure that Canadians have access to justice services in the official language of their choice from their very first interaction with the justice system, including in criminal cases. The Department of Justice will work to

encourage the continuation or creation of training programs and activities, both classroom-based and online, for the various justice stakeholders, while providing education about the official language rights of citizens. The Department also plans to use new information technologies to reach justice professionals directly. In addition, the Department is looking into the development of a Canada-wide group of partners that could provide training activities.

Watch for upcoming issues of the Newsletter, which will contain more details on the Department's priorities.

The members of the Justice in Official Languages Team urge governmental and non-governmental organizations to contact them with their ideas, projects or initiatives in relation to any area of

the Department's strategy. Team members can be reached by e-mail at jol@justice.gc.ca.



Source: Provincial Court of New Brunswick

⁴ PRA (2009), *Canada-Wide Analysis of Official Language Training Needs in the Area of Justice*

We encourage you to visit our Web site regularly for updates on how the Department is implementing the 2013-2018 Roadmap.

FOCUS ON MICHEL FRANCOEUR

Since November 2012, the Office of Francophonie, Justice in Official Languages and Legal Dualism of the Department of Justice Canada has a new Director and General Counsel, Michel Francoeur.

A native of Montreal, Michel received his university education at Bishop's University (BBA), the University of Montreal (LLB) and Université Aix-Marseille III (Diploma in Superior Studies). He was called to the Barreau du Québec in 1989 and his legal career started in a major law firm in Montreal, where he worked as an articling student and lawyer. Since 1992, he has held various positions in the Department of Justice.



A Career in Language and Law

Four of the five positions that Michel has held at the Department have been related, in whole or in part, to official languages. Yet, when looking at his career before joining the Department, no one would have imagined that much of his legal career would be dedicated to language rights. In his previous and current positions, Michel was quick to learn that Canada's official languages are an invaluable asset to all Canadians, and that official language minority communities have to be protected. Furthermore, because language law in Canada is so specialized, Michel was rapidly exposed to a wide variety of experiences; for example, as a litigator, as a witness before parliamentary committees and in briefings with Cabinet, Ministers and Deputy Ministers. He became passionate about his work in the area of language rights and is now pleased to contribute to the support of official language minority communities, such as through the Access to Justice in Both Official Languages initiative.

A New Vision

Michel believes that the presence and vitality of official language minority communities and the protection of official languages must be seen and understood over the long term rather than the short term. He feels that while there are still many challenges facing all stakeholders, including the federal government, the progress made since the late 1960s is remarkable. In Michel's view, there are plenty of reasons to believe that this progression will continue, but that this can only be done if all stakeholders continue to work collaboratively.

Did You know?

Michel considers his native French language and the acquisition and mastery of the English language crucial to both his personal and professional development. He attributes much of his English learning experience to his career in amateur football, from the mosquito-league Ville St-Laurent Trojans to the Bishop's University Gaiters. Indeed, the French-speaking players of the St-Laurent and Bishop's University teams were a minority and the coaches were generally English-speaking and unilingual. As much as learning English was essential to his football career in Canada, having French as his mother tongue became an asset in Europe, where he played with and coached American football teams from Paris, Aix-en-Provence and Toulon, in addition to coaching France's National American Football Team.



Bishop's University Gaiters (1983)

Did you know that in France, while teams speak only French, they use exclusively the English terminology such as *touchdown* and *quarterback*?

Come visit our website at the following address:
<http://canada.justice.gc.ca/eng/csj-sjc/franc/justice/index.html>