



CANADIAN CONFERENCE  
OF THE ARTS  
CONFÉRENCE CANADIENNE  
DES ARTS

## THE 2006 FEDERAL ELECTION: CCA'S COMPARISON OF THE FIVE MAJOR PARTIES' OFFICIAL PLATFORMS FOR ARTS AND CULTURE ISSUES

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### OFFICIAL PLATFORM

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#### BLOC

<http://www.blocquebécois.org/fr/plateforme.asp>  
"2.6 Arts and Culture" (pages 55-59)

#### *Arts and Culture in a sovereign Quebec*

Arts and Culture are the foundation upon which Quebec's identity lies. One of the fundamental roles of sovereignty today is to preserve the ability of a nation to develop, preserve and promote its own culture. A sovereign Quebec could increasingly use a part of its collective resources to support Quebec's Arts and Culture community, while the influence and preservation of its culture would be at the heart of its foreign policy.

#### *Ottawa refuses to recognize the Quebec culture*

Quebec's culture is recognized in Quebec and everywhere in the world for its vitality and uniqueness. Quebecers truly enjoy radio and television productions made in Quebec, but they also enjoy movies, theatre and dance, while also very opened to foreign cultural productions. And yet, the federal government refuses to recognize the distinctive reality of the Quebec culture, nurturing the mentality that it is a mere regional component of the Canadian culture.

Moreover, federal cultural policies are often used to promote Canadian identity, pride and unity. But supporting culture should not be linked to any political agenda. The state must allow artists to express their points of view on all questions related to humanity, and not offer financial assistance based on requirements aimed solely at promoting Canadian unity.

The Bloc Québécois will continue to defend and promote Quebec's culture. It will expose all attempts by the federal government to use cultural programs for political propaganda. The Bloc will also continue to support Quebec artists and thrive to push cultural diversity across the country and abroad.

#### *Satellite radio: a threat from space*

In a decision made on June 16, 2005 and endorsed by the Liberal government in September 2005, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) had issued licences for satellite radio to two companies using American satellites. In so doing, Canada was agreeing to voluntarily give up complete and effective control over radio broadcasting in Canada. With this decision, only 10% of services are now broadcast by Canadian, with only 2.5% francophone representation, as opposed to 35% that was imposed as part of the policy on commercial broadcasting. Throughout the process, the Bloc Québécois was the only party that denounced the CRTC decision, stating that it was a breach of the existing broadcasting policy.

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The Bloc Quebecois will continue to fight to change the licensing terms and conditions pertaining to satellite radio.

*Better financial support for the Arts*

In order to continue to improve the financial support provided to artists, the Movement pour les arts et les lettres (MAL) and the Bloc Quebecois have been asking the federal government over the past two years to increase the Council for the Arts' annual budget to \$300 million. This would significantly increase the number and amount of individual grants awarded to artists and organisations. Not only would this increase the number of cultural productions, but it would also increase revenue for artists, artisans and workers of the cultural sector.

A few days before the elections were called on November 23, 2005, the Canadian Heritage minister had announced an increase in the Council for the Arts budget. The Bloc Quebecois will make sure that the federal government holds true to its pre-election promise and that the Council's budget will be increased to \$300 million.

*Policy on books and literature*

Defining the identity of a nation is done through its cultural production. In this respect, literature plays a fundamental role and we are collectively responsible for how our writers perceive us.

The situation for writers in Quebec is troubling. A mere 9% rely on their royalties as a main source of income. The absence of adequate measures by the federal government to provide support to that community is evident and a significant part of the problem. Since the Liberals came into power in 1993, writers have seen a reduction in their average payments by the Public Lending Right Commission from \$821 to \$679.

And yet, the federal government continues to impose public lending rights and copyrights whereas Quebec has decided to waive them for writers.

The Bloc Quebecois is asking the federal government to give writers a tax exemption for copyrights and public lending rights, and to raise public lending rights to \$40.

In 2001, according to the International Publishers Association, Canada was among the G7 countries that imposed the highest tax on reading material in the world. The United States, Japan, Great Britain, Russia and Ireland were among the countries that understood that it was important to not charge tax on books in order to make them more accessible.

In Quebec, the QST has not applied to the purchase of books since November 1990. However, GST is still applicable for new and used books, even though Liberal Party leader Paul Martin had committed to abolishing it in 1992. For a society that prides itself on promoting the acquisition, development and value of knowledge, the least we can say is that the notion of taxing books goes against such values. The Bloc Quebecois is asking the federal government to abolish the GST on the purchase of books.

*Documentary Fund*

Since April 1, 2001, Telefilm has been running the Canada Feature Film

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Fund whose main goal is to increase Canadian audiences in theatres for Canadian feature films, aiming to capture 5% of the domestic box office by 2006.

In Quebec, local film productions were responsible for 21% of all box office sales in 2004 and are by far the leading movie category. And yet, funding is strictly dedicated to fictional feature films, and in spite of the resurgence of documentary films, support for this category is clearly lacking.

That is why the Bloc Québécois is asking that a fund be created for long documentary film productions and for IMAX, and that the money allotted to Quebec film productions reflect the population's cultural spending habits.

*Artists' living conditions*

The work of artists in Quebec and in Canada is characterized by insecurity and by the fact that artists are only paid occasionally in single large sums for work that extends over a long period of time.

The number of independent workers in the cultural sector is more than twice and a half larger than the rest of the working population (27.4% against 10.4%). This reality reflects the precarious status of artists. At the same time, between 1991 and 2001, the number of cultural professionals in Quebec has increased by 23.9% according to a study made in January 2005 by the Quebec Institute of Statistics.

In light of the precariousness of the status of artists and professionals of the cultural and communications sectors, the Bloc Québécois believes that we must act quickly. The Bloc urges the federal government to extend the payments to artists over a five year period. Such measures already in place in countries like Germany, the Netherlands, France and Great Britain. It allows artists to absorb fluctuations in income and to be more aware of how they are paid.

The Bloc Québécois will propose a bill allowing for the averaging of income for artists over a five year period.

Moreover, because 25% of all workers in the cultural sector have an independent worker status, they are not eligible for employment insurance, as the program has not yet been adapted to non-standard work. Artists in television, movies and culture in general live under insecure conditions with a fluctuating income.

The Bloc Québécois is urging the government to create a framework that would extend employment insurance accessibility to regular and special benefits for independent workers who are for the most part the artisans of our culture.

*Artists in remote areas: better access to media*

Artistic and cultural expression in remote areas contributes significantly to Quebec's cultural diversity. And yet, the artists who need exposure through broadcasting (radio or television) often hit a wall and are faced with tremendous accessibility challenges.

Unfortunately, broadcasters tend to bid on a "sure thing", neglecting to promote artists who have not yet been acknowledged to their full extent in the community. In this respect, emerging artists in remote areas often

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have no other choice but to move to larger centres, where they have a better chance of gaining exposure.

It would be therefore important to establish minimum air time for artists in order to allow them to live and express their creativity with dignity. If regional media increased their local or regional cultural content, they could contribute to the improvement of cultural diversity while allowing artists of all talents to be discovered and appreciated in different areas of culture like music, song, theatre, dance and other disciplines.

The Bloc Québécois proposes to create an incentive program aimed at promoting the broadcasting and recognition of regional cultural works and emerging new talent. The Bloc believes that these measures should give access a minimum of 10% air time aimed at culture to regional artists.

*Community media support*

Community radio and television are very important to the population. The Bloc Québécois is committed to initiating a debate on this issue to increase financing for this type of media.

*Inclusive culture: closed captioned television*

Close to three million people in Canada suffer from a hearing impairment, of which 750,000 alone live in the province of Quebec. Faced with the problem of an ageing population, those figures are bound to increase. With a greater awareness of this fact, the Bloc Québécois will continue to advocate for better communication for the deaf and hearing impaired, mainly by promoting closed captioned access to all TV programs.

The Bloc Québécois will propose a bill aimed at forcing all television programs to be closed captioned for the deaf and hearing impaired.

*Globalisation and its impact on Quebec's culture*

Culture is not a marketable commodity. It is the reflection of the soul of a nation and of the imagination and creativity of its artists. Quebec's culture is at the heart of its distinction: the desire for Quebecers to live according to one's own genius. It is of vital importance to sustain the continued support and promotion of cultural expression in Quebec. Nothing in any international commercial agreement must diminish its importance. Technological advancements have given us new ways to learn about other cultures and to also have ours recognized, so long as we keep it alive.

The cultural diversity issue is explored more exhaustively in the Globalisation and foreign affairs section.

**CONSERVATIVE** <http://www.conservative.ca/EN/2590/>

**Promoting arts, culture and competitive sport, Page 39**

Canada is a nation of great artists and athletes. Arts, culture, and sport all make essential contributions to our national identity.

The Plan

A Conservative government will:

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- Establish a Francophone Secretariat within the Department of Canadian Heritage. Language is an integral part of culture and heritage and should form the basis of decision making for the Francophone cultural and artistic community.
  - Ensure that the CBC and Radio-Canada continue to perform their vital role as national public service broadcasters.
  - Preserve the role of the National Film Board, the Canada Council and other federal arts and culture agencies.
  - Give Canadians increased access to international and foreign-language television and radio programming.

## GREEN

[http://www.greenparty.ca/our\\_stories.html](http://www.greenparty.ca/our_stories.html)

### **Sharing Our Stories: Arts, Culture and Communication, Page 20**

At every level, arts and culture help define our identities and communities, they unlock our individual and collective creativity, and help Canadians share their ideas worldwide. From surreal circus to incisive films to renowned actors and singers, Canadians have been experiencing cultural breakthroughs on the international arts and culture scene. Today, over 600,000 Canadians are employed in the cultural sector. The Green Party wishes to salute their success by investing in our future musicians, dancers, painters, writers, and other artists. Often placed in a precarious financial situation, these up-and-coming artists will benefit from innovative financial tools and increased funding.

The Green Party understands that our future together, our sense of who we are, depends on policies that ensure a thriving, diverse and socially responsible cultural community as part of an inclusive Canada.

Green Party MPs will work to:

- Increase support for community arts programs and facilities across Canada by establishing stable base-funding at a set percentage of the federal budget.
- Establish stable base-funding for young artists.
- Protect Canada's cultural identity during trade negotiations.
- Expand support for regional arts festivals that bring new Canadian art to a wider audience.
- Share Canadian history by supporting more educational programming.
- Provide stable base-funding for the CBC to provide quality television and radio programming in both official languages.
- Direct the CRTC to reserve more bandwidth for independent and non-profit stations.
- Introduce a law mandating cinemas and video chains to have 20 per cent Canadian content.

## LIBERAL

[http://www.liberal.ca/platform\\_e.aspx](http://www.liberal.ca/platform_e.aspx)

### **Weaving an Even Stronger Cultural Fabric, Pages 63-64**

Liberals attach great importance to the cultural expression that helps to define the Canadian identity. Through culture we show the world who we

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are and what things are important to us. Through culture we discover our origins and our aspirations. Canadian culture reveals the uniqueness and richness of our society – its linguistic duality, aboriginal traditions and diverse population. It also shows our openness to the world.

Canada's authors, filmmakers, musicians and athletes are making a name for themselves internationally and demonstrating the vitality, creativity and innovation that set Canada apart. It is important to see government support for cultural expression through the arts, television, exhibitions, languages and heritage preservation as an investment and not simply an expense. As a vibrant sector of the economy, cultural industries create jobs here at home, increasing our prosperity. The Canadian cultural sector is a vital contributor to the economy, generating more than \$40 billion per year and providing jobs to nearly 600,000 Canadians.

Liberals applaud such excellence and will give their support so that culture can continue to strengthen our country, its unity, and our reputation abroad, all the while adding immeasurably to Canadians' quality of life. That is why a Liberal government will continue to strongly support Canada's culture through a range of programs and policies.

#### *Tomorrow Starts Today*

The Paul Martin government demonstrated a clear commitment to culture and the arts by making one of the largest long-term financial investments in our history. We provided in the last budget new funding of \$860 million over five years under the *Tomorrow Starts Today* initiative, in addition to the \$740 million already invested since it was created by the Liberal government in 2001. This predictable funding will give stability to the arts and culture sector in Canada. *Tomorrow Starts Today* supports excellence – promoting arts and culture to the general public and creating tools to help cultural industries flourish.

#### *Canada Council for the Arts*

The Liberal government continues to support professional artists and non-profit arts organizations in Canada through the Canada Council for the Arts. On the occasion of the Council's 50th anniversary, a Liberal government will double Council funding to reach \$300 million by 2008.

#### *Copyright*

Following several years of debate and consultation, the Martin government introduced legislation to amend the *Copyright Act*. Although this bill died when the opposition forced the election, a Liberal government will reintroduce it to give Canadian creators and their works protection without nullifying the great public benefits made possible by digital technologies.

#### *Cultural diversity*

Canada's idea to create an international body to protect cultural diversity and cultural sovereignty became reality last October when a majority of UNESCO member countries signed the *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expression*. A few weeks later, the Liberal government approved the Convention, making Canada the first country to ratify it. We will now work to persuade as many countries as possible to follow Canada's example so that the Convention can come into force as soon as possible.

#### *Vancouver 2010*

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Liberals recognize the importance of Canada's athletes, their commitment to excellence and their perseverance. Therefore, the Martin government made significant investments through Sport Canada in the *Own the Podium 2010* strategy and in national and international events. By being well equipped, Canadian athletes will be able to excel when the world comes to Vancouver for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.

*Commitment to official languages*

Canadian linguistic duality is at the heart of our identity, culture and pride in citizenship. Therefore, a Liberal government will unequivocally support investments to enrich and protect our two official languages. The centerpiece of our commitment is the *Action Plan for Official Languages*. Launched in 2003, and funded with \$810 million over five years, the Action Plan supports the development of official language minority communities in the areas of education, community development and excellence in the federal Public Service. A Liberal government will renew the Action Plan in 2008, and will provide annual funding of \$215 million going forward.

**NDP**

<http://www.ndp.ca/platform>

**Page 32**

Strengthen the status of Canada's artists by:

- Introducing a system of tax averaging to provide fair and equitable tax treatment for Canadian artists.
- Building on a model in Quebec, introduce an exemption for the first \$30,000 on copyright and certain royalty income.
- Protecting children in the arts with minimum standards and trust fund rules for income earned as performers.

Strengthen the arts in Canada by:

- Providing increased funding for the Canada Council for support of artists.

Strengthen Canada's homegrown film and television production by:

- Directing the CRTC to require clear, binding, monitored and enforced performance standards for broadcasters, including a significant and permanent increase in the production and broadcast of Canadian drama.
- Reviewing and restructuring the CRTC to avoid the mixed mandates and conflicts of interest that undermine the role of the commission in promoting and protecting Canadian cultural industries.
- Ensuring that Canadian television networks remain Canadian owned.
- Providing sustained funding for the Canadian Television Fund and Telefilm Canada.
- Enhancing federal film incentives to encourage film and television production.
- Establishing a forum with film distributors to agree on targets and a strategy to screen and distribute domestic films in Canada.

