

Canada – France  
Interparliamentary Association



Association Interparlementaire  
Canada – France

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**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation respecting  
its participation at the Visit to Paris of the Executive  
Committee**

**Canada-France Interparliamentary Association**

**Paris and Lille, France  
October 22-25, 2018**

# Report

## INTRODUCTION

From 21 to 26 October 2018, Denis Paradis, Chair of the Canadian branch of the Canada–France Interparliamentary Association (CAFR), and four members of the CAFR Executive Committee, namely Senator Ghislain Maltais and members of Parliament Mona Fortier, François Choquette and Jacques Gourde, travelled to Paris to meet with the chairs of the French branch of the CAFR. The Canadian delegates also took the opportunity to meet with Isabelle Hudon, Canada’s ambassador to France, and her staff; to visit the international food exhibition entitled Salon international de l’Alimentation (SIAL) Paris; and to discuss subjects such as populism, the Canada–European Union *Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement* (CETA), and the challenges faced by parliamentarians who represent overseas departments, regions and communities, as well as to discuss start-ups.

The delegation was accompanied by CAFR Secretary Jean-François Pagé, CAFR Advisor Raphaëlle Deraspe, and Political and Parliamentary Relations Officer Marc Berthiaume from the Embassy of Canada in France.

This report summarizes the discussions and decisions of the meeting regarding future CAFR business, as well as the activities during the mission.

## FUTURE BUSINESS OF THE CANADA–FRANCE INTERPARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION

On 24 October 2018, Mr. Paradis and the four members of the CAFR Executive Committee met with Annie Chapelier, Chair of the French branch of the CAFR, to discuss future CAFR business, including the location, dates and themes of the 47<sup>th</sup> annual meeting.

The Canadian and French parliamentarians decided that the 47<sup>th</sup> annual meeting will be held from 7 to 13 April 2019 in the Gard region and in the town of Vence. The key themes selected are gender equality, the environment, and rural and green tourism. Two spokespeople from each country will present their country’s perspectives on each of these themes.

## WORK MEETINGS

During the Paris mission, the Canadian delegates met with Canada’s ambassador to France and her staff and had lunch with French researchers who specialize in populism in France and Europe. They also met with overseas parliamentarians and visited SIAL Paris and a business incubator.

### A. Meeting with Canada’s Ambassador to France

The members of the Canadian delegation began their Paris mission on 22 October 2018 with a meeting with Isabelle Hudon, Canada’s ambassador to France, and her staff

(Graeme Clark, Vincent Klassen, Jérôme Picaud and Josiane Simon). The purpose of the meeting was, first, to receive an update on CETA, and second, to better understand the operating context for the new French government, as well as the embassy's priorities.

The ambassador began by explaining that the Chancery of Canada had moved to new premises close to Canada's official residence, and that major renovations had been carried out before the move. The sale of the old building covered the cost of these substantial renovations while bringing in several million dollars to the Canadian public treasury. She noted that the move to the new Chancery of Canada, which is also in a safer and more affluent neighbourhood, represented a significant change for employees as they are now in open-concept offices. She also pointed out that she had benefited from the good decisions made by her predecessors.

She then turned to the mission agenda arranged by the Embassy, which she described as robust and ambitious. She stressed the importance of getting out of Paris and meeting people in the regions, something she had done herself to get a sense of public opinion in various parts of France. In that regard, she said that she was happy to see that the delegation was going to Lille where the parliamentarians were going to feel the love that French people have for Canadians.

After that, she talked about populism and the rise of the far right and far left in a number of European countries. In her view, political extremists are using the issues of migration and trade to sway voters. For example, Italy has a government that many people describe as populist. The United Kingdom's Brexit movement and Germany's coalition government are also manifestations of European populism.

Regarding CETA, the ambassador noted that many French citizens still have environmental and food-related concerns about the agreement, including concerns about eating Canadian beef raised with hormones. However, she indicated that Europe as a whole imports very little Canadian beef and uses a very small percentage of the available Canadian quota. With respect to when France would ratify CETA, she said no date had yet been announced. In the past, there had been talk of ratifying it in September 2019. European elections will be held in May 2019, and the French president does not want to throw CETA ratification into the mix of election issues, including those related to migration. Consequently, CETA ratification may take place during Canada's federal election in October 2019.

In preparation for the meeting with overseas parliamentarians, the ambassador pointed out that CETA does not apply to overseas communities like St. Pierre and Miquelon.

Concerning Airbus, the ambassador said that in general, France is more protectionist than Canada and that the discussions surrounding CETA ratification reminded her of the Canadian negotiations on the original *North American Free Trade Agreement*. She added that the French public feels strongly about protecting its borders and prefers to reserve major contracts for large domestic firms.

Mr. Paradis talked about Canada's official languages and his role as Chair of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages. The ambassador said that in France, there is no debate between the French and English languages. French citizens approve of multilingualism and regard proficiency in English and the use of English words

as a window on another culture, whereas in Canada, the idea is to coexist with two languages. The Canadian parliamentarians expressed their disappointment with the fact that in many diplomatic and interparliamentary meetings, very few diplomats and parliamentarians speak in French, even when French is their mother tongue.

The discussion then turned to immigration rates. The ambassador pointed out that despite the announcement of lower immigration levels for Quebec following the election of the province's new premier, Canada will still have higher levels than France.

Mr. Paradis asked about the recent election of the secretary general of the International Organisation of La Francophonie (IOF), a post for which Canadian Michaëlle Jean had sought another mandate. The ambassador stated that the matter had been handled effectively by the Canadian prime minister and the French president. They discussed their respective positions, since they were supporting different candidates, and were eager to ensure that their difference of opinion did not harm relations between the two countries. The ambassador explained that both heads of state knew that on the eve of the summit in Yerevan, Armenia, one of them would have to accept the other's choice, while noting the uneasiness between Canadians and Ms. Jean. She added that the new Secretary General, Louise Mushikiwab of Rwanda, would be making substantial changes to the IOF, including focusing more on Africa and security matters. Mr. Clark noted that Saudi Arabia had withdrawn its application to join the IOF as an observer.

The ambassador then spoke about relations between Canada and Saudi Arabia and, in particular, the reaction to a message from the Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs expressing concern about the arrest of a women's rights activist in Saudi Arabia. She said that Canada was the only country to take a stand on the issue, and that as Canada's representative, she felt quite isolated. Nevertheless, she said that as a woman, she was proud of her country for taking such a position and that it had taken a great deal of courage.

The ambassador talked about what she had learned after one year in the position. She said that she had been told before her arrival about the embassy staff's high level of expertise, from which she had benefited in performing her duties. The Canadian Embassy in Paris has 200 employees, about 50 of whom are rotated among the various Canadian embassies. She ended by saying that the embassy was at the service of Canadian parliamentarians.

Lastly, Mr. Berthiaume provided an overview of the French political situation. The French president has been in office for about 18 months. He is going through some tough times, as the polls are showing his popularity is declining. He has endured a series of damaging events, including the recent resignation of two of his ministers. To make matters worse, they resigned without notifying him, and two weeks later, in mid-October, he shuffled his cabinet. The public reaction to the shuffle was that it had taken a very long time to make such minor changes. Mr. Berthiaume added that the party in power, République En Marche, is struggling with internal turmoil. The right-wing Front National party has changed its name to Rassemblement National, while the home of the leader of the left-wing France Insoumise party, as well as his party's headquarters, were raided in mid-October 2018. France's central office against corruption and financial and tax offences

carried out the raid in connection with an investigation into the party's 2017 presidential campaign spending.

## **B. Luncheon with French Researchers Who Specialize in Populism in France and Europe**

On 22 October 2018, Canada's ambassador to France hosted a luncheon for the Canadian parliamentarians at Canada's official residence. Since one of the mission's themes was populism, the ambassador invited several French researchers who specialize in populism in France and Europe: Pascal Ory, a historian and professor of modern history at the University of Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne; Guillaume Klossa, president and founder of the European think-tank EuropaNova; Jean Claude Monod, a philosopher and research fellow at the French National Centre for Scientific Research; and Jean Fabien Spitz, a professor of political philosophy at the University of Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne.

The ambassador began by welcoming everyone to the luncheon and introduced the researchers as four admirers of Canada. She said that the topic of conversation for the luncheon would be the rise of populism in Europe. She noted that although Canada is not unaffected by this increase, populism is not as prominent there as in Europe. She said she had become more sensitive to populist movements since being appointed ambassador to a European country. She added that she had invited to the luncheon a few colleagues with whom she discusses populism, including Vincent Klassen, Caroline Guimond, Jérôme Picaud and Cyrille Sanchez.

Mr. Paradis spoke next, warmly thanking the ambassador for her hospitality and adding that this was the second time in a year that a CAFR delegation had been hosted by the embassy. He also thanked the embassy staff for their support for the CAFR's work and said he hoped the friendly meetings between the embassy and CAFR members would continue. He said that it is always a pleasure talking with them and expressed his satisfaction with the agenda arranged by the Embassy, particularly the CETA items, the visit to SIAL Paris and the side trip to Lille. He also noted that another of the mission's objectives was to prepare for the CAFR's next annual meeting, which will be held in France. Lastly, he echoed the ambassador's comments regarding populism, stating that it is much less common in Canada than in Europe.

Next, all the guests introduced themselves briefly. Mr. Klossa said that he is the founder of EuropaNova and has in-depth knowledge of European institutions, including those working to help countries like Greece satisfy the exit conditions for economic reform programs. He added that the European Commission had asked him to study the future of the digital society, including artificial intelligence.

Mr. Choquette stated that he has been the member of Parliament for Drummond, Quebec, since 2011 and has been working to advance environmental protection issues. He is the chair of the All-Party Climate Change Caucus. He also works on official languages issues and is a member of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages. He noted that populism is often associated with immigration, but it could also be connected with other subjects, such as the environment.

Senator Maltais introduced himself and said he had been a member of the Quebec National Assembly before being appointed to the Senate of Canada eight years ago. He said he works on trade and agriculture issues and attends meetings of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

Pascal Ory said he always accepts invitations from Canada. He predicted a surge in populism in the next elections in Europe in 2019 and gave examples of populist parties, such as the True Finns party in Finland. He noted that, like terrorism, populism has been around for many years.

Jean-Fabien Spitz said he is interested in social justice issues. He stated that populism does not always deserve the treatment it gets and noted that he had taught in Brazil and Turkey, two countries affected by populism.

Ms. Fortier said she is the first female member of Parliament for the riding of Ottawa–Vanier and a proud Franco-Ontarian. She stated that she is a member of three House of Commons committees: the Standing Committee on Official Languages, the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics, and the Subcommittee on Sports-Related Concussions in Canada of the Standing Committee on Health.

Mr. Gourde said that he has been an member of Parliament since 2006 and that the House of Commons Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics is studying the influence of social media on elections. He said that a large segment of the population can be reached through social media and that many of those people exercise their voting rights. He noted that it is much easier to get people to share a negative opinion on a given subject than a positive one.

Mr. Monod introduced himself as a specialist in German philosophy. He raised the question of how to define a leader in a democracy and said there is a disconnect between democracy and liberalism.

Following the round table, the ambassador asked the four researchers for a one-sentence definition of the term “populism.” Interestingly, each one had a different description, though some ideas overlapped. For example, Mr. Monod stated that populism is a movement with certain characteristics, including pitting the people against the elite and building a cult of personality around a leader. He added that populism often arises in response to an authoritarian leader.

In Mr. Klossa’s opinion, the first countries to be affected by populism are imperial countries, such as the Netherlands, Austria, France and, to a lesser extent, the United Kingdom.

Mr. Ory said that as far back as 1880, with General Boulanger in France, there was a movement that appealed to the people and criticized elites. In fact, that movement was known as Boulangism. He said that populism plays on people’s emotions and puts cultural interests ahead of economic interests, so that immigration becomes a threat. He added that populism can be associated with individualism. With regard to immigration, Mr. Choquette stated that there is a wave of anti-immigration sentiment across Canada and that some people see limiting immigration as a solution to many problems.

According to Senator Maltais, the U.S. president was able to win the votes of people who had no voice by giving them hope.

The ambassador concluded by thanking all of the guests for attending the luncheon, particularly the French researchers, saying, “We fed you, but you returned the favour.” [Translation]

### **C. Interparliamentary Meeting on Major Issues in Overseas France**

On 22 October 2018, the Canadian parliamentarians met with French parliamentarians representing overseas departments, regions and communities: Mansour Kamardine, member for the Second Constituency of Mayotte; Stéphane Claireaux, member for the First Constituency of St. Pierre and Miquelon; Maina Sage, member for the First Constituency of French Polynesia; Michel Magras, senator representing Saint Barthélemy; and Olivier Serva, member for the First Constituency of Guadeloupe.

The ambassador welcomed the French parliamentarians. She outlined the agenda of the Canadian parliamentarians’ mission, noting that this was the first time it included a meeting with overseas parliamentarians.

Cyrille Sanchez, a political attaché at Canada’s Embassy in France, opened the discussion by setting out the objectives of the meeting, which were to discuss French overseas issues from the perspective of the government and the territories, identify problems common to both countries, find subjects for dialogue, discussion and possibly cooperation, and promote parliamentary diplomacy between Canada and France.

Senator Magras thanked the ambassador for arranging the meeting and said he was happy to be there. He added that Saint Barthélemy has an extremely cordial relationship with Canada.

In response to a question from Mr. Paradis concerning the difference between overseas departments and communities, Senator Magras stated that France has territories around the world. He explained that there are five overseas departments and regions (Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Martinique, Réunion and Mayotte) and six overseas communities (French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Saint Barthélemy, Saint Martin, St. Pierre and Miquelon, and the Wallis and Futuna Islands). While overseas departments and regions have the same status as the departments and regions in metropolitan France, they may adapt, or even make themselves exempt from, the statutes and regulations that apply in France in light of their specific characteristics and constraints under section 73 of the French Constitution. Overseas communities are governed by section 74 of the Constitution and have more autonomy than overseas departments and regions because of their special status. For example, overseas communities can take measures to protect local employment or heritage lands.

Senator Magras pointed out that the community of New Caledonia has special status and enjoys a certain degree of political autonomy. He noted that New Caledonia would be making a decision on its future as part of France in November 2018<sup>1</sup>. French Polynesia also has special status, as it enjoys administrative autonomy.

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<sup>1</sup> . In a referendum, New Caledonia voted to remain part of France. See CNN, [New Caledonia votes to remain part of France: What comes next](#), 5 November 2018.

In response to a question from Mr. Paradis about how CETA would apply in the overseas communities, Mr. Claireaux explained that the communities are, in a sense, countries associated with France and hence have their own fiscal autonomy.

Ms. Sage stated that while overseas French citizens make up about only 3% of France's total population, overseas departments, regions and communities account for 97% of France's offshore exclusive economic zone and 80% of its biodiversity. Senator Magras added that although the overseas territories are often criticized for receiving large amounts of public funding, they contribute a great deal to France, and he believes that contribution will increase in the future.

Senator Magras then explained how the community of Saint Barthélemy works: it has a territorial assembly or council composed of 19 members who are elected for a five-year term by direct universal suffrage. The council makes the rules in a number of areas, including income tax and other types of taxes and duties; urban planning and housing; surface and marine transportation; the environment; tourism; and energy. In addition, the council must be consulted on bills, draft ordinances and draft decrees that establish, amend or abolish provisions specific to the community. Two sub-councils, namely the executive council and the economic, social and cultural council, assist the territorial council in managing the affairs of the community.

With regard to the reconstruction of the communities of Saint Martin and Saint Barthélemy following the destruction caused by Hurricane Irma in September 2017, Senator Magras stated that reconstruction has been very slow in Saint Martin but is progressing well in Saint Barthélemy.

Mr. Claireaux mentioned the challenges faced by residents of St. Pierre and Miquelon who have criminal records and want to leave the island. Residents often have to go through Canada in order to travel to France or other countries, and those who have criminal records are frequently refused permission to enter Canada, even just to pass through on their way to another destination.

Mr. Serva spoke about Guadeloupe's special relationship with Canada due to the large number of students from his overseas department and region who choose to study in Canada. He said that Guadeloupe wants to further strengthen diplomatic relations with Canada and that that would be facilitated by the establishment of a Canadian honorary consulate in the territory.

In response to a question from Ms. Fortier, Mr. Kamardine explained that the overseas departments, regions and communities have no role in the IOF. Ms. Sage noted, however, that French Polynesia wants to join the IOF as an observer.

Mr. Paradis then asked the overseas parliamentarians what areas would be conducive to partnerships with Canada. Ms. Sage replied that partnerships in hydroelectricity and education would be beneficial to French Polynesia and noted that several hundred students from the community are already studying in Quebec. Senator Magras added that a large number of students from his community are studying in Canada and that it is fairly easy for them to do so, although some of them had a few difficulties obtaining the necessary permits. However, a challenge students face once they return to the community is in obtaining equivalency and recognition for certain credentials obtained in

Canada. Some students have to redo certain tests when they return to Saint Barthélemy, such as academic or driver's licence examinations.

In response to a question from Mr. Choquette, Ms. Sage stated that French island territories, including her community, are particularly affected by climate change, just like the Arctic Circle. Senator Magras raised the problem of waste management in the overseas territories and stated that the territories are suffering from the effects of climate change, even though they are not the ones causing it.

Mr. Paradis mentioned the labour shortage in Canada in French-language education outside Quebec and in the hospitality and food service sectors. Senator Magras said that his community is also dealing with a labour shortage in the hospitality and food service sectors.

Senator Magras provided copies of four information reports from the Senate Delegation for Overseas France<sup>2</sup>:

- *Rétrospective triennale sur une activité dense au service des outre-mer*, 6 July 2017;
- *Biodiversités ultramarines : Laboratoires face au défi climatique (Tables rondes du 7 décembre 2017)*, 13 April 2018;
- *Biodiversités du vaste pacifique : Quelle valorisation d'un endémisme exceptionnel?* for a colloquium held 31 May 2018, report dated 1 June 2018; and
- *Risques naturels majeurs : Urgence déclarée outre-mer*, 24 July 2018.

#### **D. Tour of SIAL Paris**

On 23 October 2018, the parliamentarians visited SIAL Paris, an international food exhibition that was held from 21 to 25 October 2018.

They were welcomed by Xavier Poncin, executive director of SIAL Canada. Mr. Poncin explained that SIAL Paris is a major event, expected to draw 150,000 visitors to view food-related products presented by 7,200 exhibitors ranging from distribution to food service companies from more than 100 countries. Companies exhibit a wide variety of equipment and foods, from raw ingredients to finished products, over more than 200,000 square feet of floor space. SIAL Paris, the largest food exhibition in the world, is held every two years.

Mr. Poncin said that the SIAL was established in Paris in 1964 to showcase the quality of French products. Because of difficulties in attracting exhibitors in the 1990s, other SIALs were created. There are now seven SIALs: Montréal, Canada; Toronto, Canada; Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates; Jakarta, Indonesia; New Delhi, India; Shanghai, China; and, of course, Paris, France.

According to Mr. Poncin, the three pillars of SIAL are innovation, its international scope and local strengths. He added that wine makes up a very small percentage of SIAL Paris and that wine industry exhibitors mainly present food processing equipment.

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<sup>2</sup> . The French Senate Delegation for Overseas France was established in 2011 to keep the Senate informed of overseas matters.

Mr. Poncin said that European representation at SIAL had exploded over the last three years because of CETA. By way of example, he pointed out that the cheese industry was now taking up three to four times more space. He added that there was also more participation by Canadian exhibitors.

SIAL Paris had more than 40 Canadian exhibitors. Mr. Poncin noted that the Canadian products on display were mainly raw ingredients such as grains, maple syrup and cranberries. There were not many Canadian processed products..

The Canadian parliamentarians visited Canadian exhibitors, SIAL's various pavilions, and representatives of the Agri-Food Export Group Québec–Canada. They also met with the Canadian ambassador to France and Line Beauchamp, Quebec's Delegate General in Paris.

### **1. Meeting with Representatives of the French Association nationale des industries alimentaires**

At SIAL Paris, the parliamentarians met with representatives of the French l'Association nationale des industries alimentaires, or ANIA, namely deputy director general Alexy Degouy and international and innovation project leader Emmanuel Gauny, to discuss CETA. While the representatives of this national association of food industries said that they support CETA, they explained that some French people are opposed to it and believe that France should stop exporting. They added that French companies are more concerned about the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union.

They noted that the French president is dealing with a number of issues, with the European Parliament elections just a few months away. In their view, the president needs at least 25% of his party's candidates to win in those elections. Since many French citizens are opposed to CETA, the representatives do not believe that France will be able to ratify it before the European elections.

However, they stated that North America is a good trade market and that Roland Lescure, the member of the French National Assembly who represents the First Constituency (North America) of French residents overseas, is a supporter of Canada and a strong voice for CETA in the National Assembly. They said that if any free trade agreement should be ratified, it is CETA. They said that they were confident it would be ratified and that Canada has a good reputation in France.

Lastly, they mentioned that there are 17,000 companies in the agri-food sector in France. They suggested arranging meetings between French and Canadian companies through the government agencies Invest in Canada and Investir en France.

### **D. Meeting with the President of the Fédération Française des Industriels Charcutiers, Traiteurs, Transformateurs de viandes**

On 24 October 2018, the parliamentarians returned to SIAL Paris to have lunch with André Coutu, chief executive officer of AgriFood Export Group Québec–Canada, and Dominique Bohec, vice-president of sales and marketing for La Petite Bretonne. They subsequently met with Bernard Vallat, president of the Fédération Française des

Industriels Charcutiers, Traiteurs, Transformateurs de viandes (FICT), a trade association established in 1924 to represent France's meat processing industries.

Mr. Vallat welcomed the parliamentarians and told them that the FICT represents 310 companies across France that make various charcuterie products, such as ham, sausages and rillettes. Those 310 companies employ some 37,000 people; 90% of them are small or medium-sized businesses with fewer than 250 employees. They support 135,000 jobs and generate €6.7 billion in revenues each year, 6.5% of which is from exports.

He noted that the companies represented by the FICT manufacture roughly 450 different products, most of them pork-based. He added that specific manufacturing processes are required for each charcuterie product to ensure quality control. The industry is subject to a code of practice for charcuterie, meat curing and meat canning.

Regarding CETA, Mr. Vallat said he supports the European Union in promoting French products in Canada. The FICT is planning to hold activities in Canada with chefs and grocers starting in January 2019. He added that he supports competition because it leads to progress. Although French cattle farmers are generally opposed to CETA because of the use of antibiotics in Canada, he said he is in favour of the agreement. In his opinion, it will help develop more charcuterie products for the upper-middle class. He believes that antibiotics are necessary but have to be controlled.

He also talked about the growing consumer demand for natural products, noting that businesses have to adapt. He stated that global meat consumption is expected to rise in the coming decades, because even though demand is declining in rich countries, it is growing substantially in emerging countries.

Lastly, the parliamentarians realized at the end of the meeting that Canada should provide a more detailed explanation of its existing sanitation controls to reassure French consumers.

## **E. Visit to a Business Incubator**

On 25 October 2018, the parliamentarians travelled to Lille to meet with David Descheemaeker, vice-president of operations for the business incubator Alacrité France, and to tour the incubator's offices.

Mr. Descheemaeker explained that the original incubator, Alacrity, was started in Ottawa by Terry Matthews, an English-Canadian entrepreneur, as a way to connect start-ups and young graduates.

Alacrité France, the sixth member of Alacrity, serves as a business incubator and accelerator and aims to launch about 15 innovative businesses in five years in the software-intensive digital technology and telecommunications industry. The mission of Alacrité France is to identify market opportunities arising from customer needs and guide young graduates in business creation.

Alacrité France was created in 2016 by Wesley Clover under Mr. Matthews's direction. The town of Lille was selected because Mr. Matthews avoids large cities, both on principle

and for economic reasons. In addition, according to Mr. Descheemaeker, Lille is an academic hotbed because of the number of graduates living there.

The other members of Alacrity are located in Canada, the United Kingdom and Turkey. Mr. Descheemaeker said that other Alacrity members in India, Mexico, Singapore and China were expected to begin operating in 2018.

Mr. Descheemaeker explained that young entrepreneurs spend 50% to 60% of their time looking for financing to start or grow their businesses. Providing office space and some administrative resources gives them a major boost.

He stated that each Alacrity member receives up to €10.5 million in funding, which comes almost equally from the private and public sectors, including €3 million from the Canadian private sector. He said that six business projects employing 22 people and involving 27 mentors have been developed to date. The six incubation projects are as follows:

- **ReactEvent** (since June 2017), which employs four people and provides web platforms and mobile applications to obtain real-time performance information about a remote point of sale or to automate certain tasks;
- **Whispeak** (since August 2017), which provides multipurpose voice-based biometric authentication tools;
- **Diskyver** (since October 2017), which employs four people and provides system management tools such as real-time alerts, incident reports and a continuously updated dashboard;
- **LISSYS** (since October 2017), which provides solutions to improve long-range narrowband communication network coverage with minimal impact on computing device battery life;
- **LotA** (since November 2017), which is a cloud management platform that helps users aggregate their billing data to monitor and optimize expenditures; and
- **ADEquate**, a brand-new digital technology and telecommunications project.

Lastly, Mr. Descheemaeker noted that 10% to 15% of workers in the digital sector are women.

## **OTHER ACTIVITIES**

During the Paris mission, the parliamentarians were invited to have breakfast at the National Assembly with the members of the French branch of the CAFR and met with the vice-president of the HautsdeFrance region and mayor of the municipality of Wallers-Arenberg.

### **A. Breakfast Hosted by the Canada–France Interparliamentary Association**

On 24 October 2018, Ms. Chapelier hosted a breakfast for the CAFR members and Canada's ambassador to France. The theme of the breakfast was a review of Canada's G7 presidency for gender equality and the transition to France's presidency.

Ms. Chapelier thanked the guests for accepting her invitation and said she was delighted to be hosting the Canadian parliamentarians. She also thanked the ambassador, whom she described as an outstanding ambassador who does amazing work and garners international support. She said that diplomacy has grown thanks to people of extraordinary humanity like the Canadian ambassador. On the subject of gender equality, Ms. Chapelier noted that the CAFR had studied the topic at the 46th annual meeting, which was held in Canada in April 2018, and she took the opportunity to thank the Canadian parliamentarians for their hospitality during that meeting. She lamented the fact that France is dealing with a savage anti-abortion campaign, and she congratulated the ambassador for speaking out on that subject and on women's sexual health at the G7 Summit held in La Malbaie in the Charlevoix region in June 2018. She closed by saying that France would host the next summit in Biarritz in August 2019.

Mr. Paradis spoke next, thanking the chair and the members of the French branch of the CAFR for their hospitality. In reference to the CAFR's 46<sup>th</sup> annual meeting, he noted that the delegates who attended the meeting had the good fortune to visit the constituencies of all four members of Parliament present at the breakfast. He stressed the importance of having more meetings between the members of the CAFR's two branches to reinforce the ties between Canada and France and to promote the exchange of best practices. Lastly, with regard to gender equality, he stated that it is vital to take concrete action to promote the status of women in every sphere of society. He cited the example of the cabinet of Quebec's new premier, which has equal numbers of women and men.

The ambassador said that gender equality is an issue she cares about deeply and for which she has been advocating for two decades. She said that she had stepped up her efforts to promote the cause since she became an ambassador. She informed the parliamentarians that a few months before the G7 Summit in Charlevoix, the Canadian prime minister established the Gender Equality Advisory Council for Canada's G7 Presidency. The Council's mandate is to "promote a transformative G7 agenda and support leaders and ministers in ensuring that gender equality and gender-based analysis are integrated across all themes, activities and outcomes of Canada's G7 Presidency."<sup>3</sup> The Canadian prime minister personally appointed the 21 members of the Council, which includes women, men and transgender persons. The ambassador stated that the Prime Minister did not give the Council members any strict instructions, but he told them he had chosen them for their expertise and their desire to live up to their convictions. He urged them to do their job and promised that he would do his.

The ambassador said that the Council had decided to submit a lengthy report with recommendations. On 4 June 2018, the Council issued its report, entitled *Make Gender Inequality History*. The report contains 102 recommendations, grouped under several themes, including health, safety, and education for girls and women. In addition, there are two types of recommendations, one addressed directly to G7 member countries, and the other to be used by G7 leaders to sway other countries. She challenged the parliamentarians to read the report. She noted that she initially had a North American perspective on the issue and was mainly focused on breaking the glass ceiling and increasing the number of women on boards of directors and in positions of power.

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<sup>3</sup> G7 2018 Charlevoix, [Gender Equality Advisory Council](#).

However, she quickly realized that the situation of women is very different in some countries, which made it necessary to formulate the following recommendation: Provide policy and funding support to developing and conflict-affected countries to improve access to a minimum of 12 years of free, safe, quality gender-responsive education.

The ambassador stated that attendance at the G7's Saturday morning breakfast had not been compulsory, but that she had asked the seven leaders to be there. She explained that contrary to media reports, the U.S. president did not arrive late but missed the photo session that took place before breakfast. He sat across from her and participated in a 90-minute conversation among the leaders. The discussion focused on women's sexual health and abortion. Canada, the European Union, Japan, the United Kingdom and the World Bank pledged \$3.8 billion to promote access to education for girls in the world's poorest countries. Canada announced an investment of \$400 million over three years for that cause.

The ambassador concurred with Mr. Paradis regarding the need to take concrete action every day to achieve gender equality. She concluded her speech by saying that her only disappointment with the Council's report was the lack of performance indicators for each of the 102 recommendations.

In response to a question from Ms. Chapelier, the ambassador stated that Canada has a feminist policy regarding international aid because it earmarks funds specifically for women. The aim is to include women in decision-making and support women's empowerment. She added that Melinda Gates, who is a Co-chair of the Gender Equality Advisory Council, strongly believes that giving women financial autonomy is part of the solution for achieving gender equality.

Senator Claudine Lepage raised the issue that many children are not included in civil registers in a number of developing countries. In her view, that is a serious obstacle to children's education. The ambassador replied that one of the Council's recommendations is closely related to that issue. Annie Genevard pointed out that for gender equality, educating boys benefits girls.

Concerning education for girls, the ambassador noted that Canada still has a great deal of work to do, particularly regarding Indigenous Canadian girls and women. She added that even though girls are more likely than boys to attend school, girls stay in school longer, and girls have a graduation rate twice that of boys, men still hold more positions of power than women do in industrialized countries.

Ms. Chapelier concluded by thanking the guests, especially the ambassador, and pointing out that no one knows how the next G7 Summit in France will turn out.

## **B. Meeting with Elected Representatives of the Municipality of Wallers-Arenberg**

On 25 October 2018, Salvatore Castiglione, vice-president of the Hauts-de-France region and mayor of the municipality of Wallers-Arenberg, welcomed the parliamentarians and took them on a tour of the Arenberg Creative Mine located in the municipality.

Following the introductions, Mr. Castiglione noted that Quebec is the primary destination for young locals who decide to study abroad.

Mady Dorchies-Brillon, the member of the HautsdeFrance Regional Council who is responsible for remembrance, stated that during the night of 20 to 21 October 1918, Canadian soldiers liberated the town of Wallers-Arenberg, which was occupied by the German army. To celebrate the centenary of the liberation, on 20 October 2018, wreaths were laid at the foot of the Wallers Monument to the Dead and on the graves of 11 Canadians who were killed in Wallers-Arenberg and buried in the Auberchicourt British Cemetery. On the same day, the mining site memorial pathway was inaugurated and a presentation on the Great War was given. On 10 November 2018, the town of Wallers-Arenberg hosted the 13th Battalion Royal Highlanders of Canada to mark the centenary of the town's liberation.

Ms. Dorchies-Brillon said that it was a pleasure and an honour for her to speak with Canadian parliamentarians because of the very strong connection that the region and, in particular, the town have with Canada. She said that every meeting with Canadians brings out new emotions, since Canada and France share a rich history. In particular, she mentioned the battle of Vimy Ridge, where Canadians fought with distinction in April 1917.

She added that it is important for young people to take an interest in their history, because they cannot move forward unless they know where they come from. To prevent memories from fading away, the town of Wallers-Arenberg encourages children and young people to participate in commemorative events and study their history.

She also mentioned the Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial in northern France, which was erected in honour of the many Newfoundlanders who died on the battlefield in that region.

Mr. Castiglione explained that the town's coal mine, which ceased operations in March 1989, had been converted into a centre of excellence in digital media and images. In 2005, restoration work was undertaken to renovate the mine buildings, and in 2012, the Wallers-Arenberg mining site was classified as a historical monument and added to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage List. The parliamentarians' visit ended with a tour of the mining site.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Canadian parliamentarians' Paris mission was a resounding success. They were able to meet with the members and chair of the French branch of the CAFR and plan the CAFR's future activities, including the 47<sup>th</sup> annual meeting. They also met with the Canadian ambassador and her staff, and had work meetings on matters of importance to both countries, such as the food industry, CETA and start-ups.

Respectfully submitted,

The Honourable Denis Paradis, P.C., M.P.  
Chair of the Canada-France Interparliamentary Association

## **Travel Costs**

<b>ASSOCIATION</b>	Canada-France Interparliamentary Association
<b>ACTIVITY</b>	Visit to Paris of the Executive Committee
<b>DESTINATION</b>	Paris and Lille, France
<b>DATES</b>	October 22-25, 2018
<b>DELEGATION</b>	
SENATE	Hon. Ghislain Maltais
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Hon. Denis Paradis, Mona Fortier, Jacques Gourde, François Choquette
STAFF	Jean-François Pagé, Raphaëlle Deraspe
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	20,907.22 \$
<b>ACCOMMODATION</b>	10,684.22 \$
<b>HOSPITALITY</b>	393.31 \$
<b>PER DIEMS</b>	6,812.43 \$
<b>OFFICIAL GIFTS</b>	0 \$
<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>	0 \$
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>38,797.18 \$</b>