

Canada – France
Interparliamentary Association



Association interparlementaire
Canada – France

Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation respecting its participation in the 47th Annual Meeting

Canada-France Interparliamentary Association

**Gard and Alpes-Maritimes, France
April 8 to 12, 2019**

REPORT

INTRODUCTION

From 7 to 12 April 2019, five Canadian parliamentarians travelled to France to participate in the 47th Annual Meeting of the Canada–France Interparliamentary Association (CFIA). The Canadian delegation was led by Member of Parliament Denis Paradis, Chair of the Canadian branch of the CFIA, and included Member of Parliament Ramez Ayoub, House of Commons Vice-Chair of the Canadian branch, Senator Jean Guy Dagenais and members of Parliament Rhéal Fortin and Gabriel Ste-Marie. The delegation was accompanied by Jean-François Pagé, secretary for the CFIA, and Raphaëlle Deraspe, CFIA advisor and Canadian Library of Parliament analyst.

The French delegation was led by Member of Parliament Annie Chapelier, Vice-Chair of the French branch of the CFIA, and Senator Claudine Lepage, Chair of the France–Canada Friendship Group in the Senate. The other members of the delegation were senators Dominique Estrosi Sassone, Pierre Yves Collombat, Michel Dagbert, Jackie Pierre, Marc Daunis and Vivette Lopez, as well as Member of Parliament Carole Bureau-Bonnard. The delegation was also accompanied by Thierry Deilhaes, secretary of the CFIA for the National Assembly, Alexandre Leonardi, intern at the National Assembly, and Bernard Rullier, administrative secretary for the groupe d’amitié France Québec du Sénat.

The themes discussed at the annual meeting were:

- violence against women; and
- sustainable and rural tourism.

This report provides a summary of the working sessions, discussions and site visits that took place within the context of this annual meeting.

OPENING OF THE 47TH ANNUAL MEETING

A. Opening Breakfast

The work of the 47th Annual Meeting of the CFIA commenced on 8 April 2019. The Canadian and French parliamentarians met for a breakfast to which members of the Start Women network were invited. This network, which was created in September 2018, is an association of about 40 female entrepreneurs who operate businesses in the Alès basin, considered to be the primary industrial centre of the Languedoc-Roussillon region.

The Chair of the French branch of the CFIA, Ms. Chapelier, welcomed the Canadian parliamentarians and thanked the members of the Start Women network for accepting her invitation. Mr. Paradis thanked the French parliamentarians for their hospitality and for the quality of the programming for the 47th Annual Meeting. The delegates then discussed with the members of the Start Women network the challenges women face when starting a business.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

A. Working Session

The first part of the working session, which took place on 11 April 2019, focused on violence against women. Senator Lepage opened the session by presenting the French perspective on the subject, and Mr. Fortin spoke about what is being done in Canada to address this issue. This was followed by a discussion among the delegates.

1. French Perspective

Senator Lepage explained that two recent cases involving the acquittal of two men who had raped 11 year-old girls had launched a debate on age of sexual consent.

She went on to talk about [Loi no 2014-873 du 4 août 2014 pour l'égalité réelle entre les femmes et les hommes](#) (gender equality law), which includes measures to improve women's daily lives, advance their rights and change attitudes in France.

The senator then spoke about the report of the Senate delegation for women's rights and equal opportunities for men and women, entitled [Prévenir et combattre les violences faites aux femmes : un enjeu de société](#) (preventing and combatting violence against women: a social challenge). The report includes 10 observations and areas to be monitored with regard to violence against women, as well as 36 recommendations to improve the situation. She said that the report's recommendations are divided into two categories. The first category is aimed at defending children. For example, recommendation 18 seeks to raise the threshold for sexual consent in the French penal code to 13 years of age. The second category is aimed at protecting victims of sexual violence. The senator highlighted recommendation 17, which she called a key recommendation in the report, and which extends by 10 years the limitation period for prosecuting sexual crimes against minors, from 20 to 30 years.

In addition, she explained that the five-year prison term and fine of €75,000 for the offence of sexual abuse in the French penal code (which is defined as the act, by an adult, of sexually abusing a minor under the age of 15 without violence, coercion, threat or surprise) may be doubled under certain circumstances.

Finally, the senator explained that street harassment (or harassment in public transportation, which is very similar) is largely punished by existing legislation. Online harassment is not covered by the French legal framework, and it is therefore difficult to combat this type of crime.

2. Canadian Perspective

Mr. Fortin provided some statistics on violence against women in Canada:

- in 2014, the self-reported violent victimization rate was higher among women than men;
- in 2016, the rate of intimate partner homicide was nearly four times higher for women than for men;

- according to police statistics from 2015, women represented 88% of the victims of sexual assault, and the accused were men in 97% of cases; and
- the rate at which sexual assaults are reported to police is very low, estimated at 5% in 2014.

He also outlined the economic consequences of violence against women. According to the Government of Canada, each year, intimate partner violence against women has economic costs of nearly \$5 billion, while the annual costs of sexual assaults and other sexual offences against women are \$3.6 billion. The main forms of violence against women are sexual violence, domestic violence, homicides, human trafficking, cyberviolence, and genital mutilation and excision.

Mr. Fortin then spoke about initiatives in Canada to address this violence, which particularly affects Indigenous women and girls, lesbian, bisexual and transgender women, immigrant, refugee and non-status women, women with disabilities, and young women and girls:

- creation of the Department for Women and Gender Equality in December 2018;
- the federal strategy *It's Time: Canada's Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence*, which was unveiled in June 2017;
- the Minister of Status of Women mandate letter in October 2017, in which the priority was the implementation and monitoring of a comprehensive federal gender violence strategy and action plan;
- Bill C-51, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Department of Justice Act and to make consequential amendments to another Act, which is intended to clarify and strengthen sexual assault laws (the bill received Royal Assent in December 2018);
- Canada's National Housing Strategy, unveiled in November 2017, which includes commitments for helping victims of family violence – the strategy documentation states that every night in Canada, “[nearly 3,500] women and their [2,700] children sleep in shelters because it is not safe to sleep at home; an additional 300 women and children are turned away ... because shelters are full”; and
- the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, which was announced on 8 December 2015 and recently completed its work.

Mr. Fortin concluded by pointing out the difference between Canada and France with respect to the notion of sexual consent. He explained that this notion was modified by Bill C-51, which among other things, clarifies that an unconscious person is incapable of giving consent. He added that there are grey areas associated with this concept.

B. Discussions and Site Visits

In support of the theme of violence against women, the delegates visited the following locations on 10 and 12 April 2019, and met with stakeholders involved in this field:

- the Centre national d'information des droits des femmes et de la famille (CIDFF) in Gard, which is part of a network of more than 100 CIDFFs across France, including its overseas territories, and which works to promote women's social, professional and personal autonomy, as well as gender equality;
- the Sainte Catherine residence, located in Nice, which is a shelter and social reintegration centre that has 20 housing units and provides assistance to adult women in vulnerable situations, i.e., women with or without children who are victims of domestic or family violence, are socially excluded or are struggling; and
- the Abri côtier in Nice, which is a day centre for adult women who are victims of domestic violence, whose mission is to welcome, listen to and inform these women and that offers various services, including providing material to help with administrative, professional or housing arrangements.

On 10 April 2019, the delegates also met with Christine Drouin, a researcher at the Centre de recherche interdisciplinaire sur la violence familiale et la violence faite aux femmes (interdisciplinary research centre on family violence and violence against women) in Montréal, Quebec. They attended a training session that this criminologist provided to French police officers on a femicide control tool called the Aide-mémoire, which is intended to help police officers assess the risk of homicide in situations of domestic violence. Following this training, a news conference was held on the subject of violence against women in which several people participated, including the Director of the Gard CIDFF, Ms. Drouin and Ms. Chapelier.

Finally, the delegates met Maty Diouf, deputy mayor of Nice responsible for women's rights and the fight against discrimination and harassment. They participated in a roundtable discussion at Nice city hall with Ms. Diouf, Senator Estrosi Sassone and representatives of various organizations that help women.

SUSTAINABLE AND RURAL TOURISM

A. Working Session

The second part of the working session, which took place on 11 April 2019, focused on sustainable and rural tourism. Mr. Ayoub presented the Canadian perspective on the subject, while Ms. Chapelier spoke about the French perspective. Following the presentations, a discussion was held among the delegates.

1. Canadian Perspective

Mr. Ayoub explained that although Canada is not as popular a tourist destination as France, more and more tourists visit Canada each year. Indeed, 2018 was the fifth consecutive year in which Canada experienced an increase in the number of international tourists, with more than 21 million tourists visiting the country. In 2017, Canada was the

16th most visited country in the world, and international tourism generated more than €20 billion in revenue in Canada.

He then spoke about the economic contribution of the tourism industry, indicating that it contributed 2% to Canada's gross domestic product (GDP) and employed 1.8 million people in 2017. This means that 1 in 11 jobs in Canada was directly related to the tourism industry.

In terms of sustainable tourism, Mr. Ayoub mentioned that a recent study by a team of Australian and Taiwanese researchers found that between 2009 and 2013, 8% of global greenhouse gas emissions resulted from tourism. The impact of this industry on the environment is significant, hence the importance of promoting sustainable tourism.

He went on to note that the notion of sustainable tourism is not included in the Government of Canada's policies on tourism or sustainable development. The federal tourism strategy aims to make Canada one of the top 10 most visited countries in the world by 2025, and, by 2021, to increase the number of overnight stays of foreign tourists by 30% and double the number of tourists from China. However, this strategy does not mention sustainable tourism.

Although the 2016-2019 Federal Sustainable Development Strategy for Canada makes no mention of tourism, the draft 2019–2022 Federal Sustainable Development Strategy for Canada does provide an example of responsible tourism in British Columbia.

Numerous sustainable tourism initiatives have been implemented in different regions of Canada, and some provinces have emphasized sustainable tourism in their tourism policies. For example, in 2005, Quebec adopted a tourism policy entitled *Toward a Sustainable Tourism*, while British Columbia developed a sustainable tourism guide in 2015.

Mr. Ayoub then spoke about rural tourism, specifically how rural communities can address the economic challenges threatening their existence and revitalize their local economies by increasing business, income and employment through tourism. He indicated that this type of tourism has a positive impact on social and economic development and the repopulation of rural areas.

He noted that all provincial governments and local communities are actively involved in the development of rural tourism and are supporting agritourism networks by providing rural and agritourism products and services such as agritourism, agricultural festivals, celebrations involving historic village sites, country fairs and theme-based farm travel routes.

Finally, Mr. Ayoub addressed the subject of national parks by explaining that Canada has 46 such parks. Each year, more than 22 million people visit Canada's national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas.

2. French Perspective

Ms. Chapelier began by saying that tourism is, in many ways, a real source of wealth for the economies of France and Canada. First of all, it represents a considerable injection of foreign capital, representing nearly \$130 billion for Canada and €160 billion for France,

which is 6% of Canadian GDP and 7% of French GDP respectively. Tourism is also responsible for a significant number of jobs: more than 500,000 for Canada and more than one million for France.

She then spoke of the need to shift from mass tourism to more sustainable tourism because the tourism industry can be predatory, aggressive and at times even destructive to the environment. For example, the direct consequences of mass tourism include the over-construction and concretization of coasts, as well as the pollution of oceans and mountainous areas. In addition to the visual pollution that this causes, the first victims are often fragile ecosystems, which become seriously threatened as a result.

According to Ms. Chapelier, it is for all these reasons that it is essential today to promote different and alternative practices that are more respectful of the environment and populations. It now seems more important than ever to return tourism to a virtuous activity and to consider how to create “better-living” tourism. In that context, rural and sustainable tourism could be one solution for addressing this very real challenge.

She then went on to describe rural tourism as an alternative model of tourism. Given that France and Canada have so many diverse and varied landscapes, she feels that rural tourism could be very attractive for both countries.

France has developed ecotourism products to respond to the new expectations and demands of tourists. In 2015, the government published a document with 17 suggestions for making France a top destination for ecotourism, and decided to create a centre of excellence in ecotourism. In addition, to enhance and promote its heritage among tourists, France will increasingly assign ecological designations to tourist sites whose management promotes the principles of sustainable development.

She went on to talk about national parks, which include a variety of land and marine sites whose total area represents nearly 9.5% of French territory (more than 60,000 km²). To increase their visibility in France and abroad, since 1 January 2017, these national parks have been the responsibility of the French biodiversity agency, a new public entity of the Ministry for Ecological and Inclusive Transition. These 10 parks (soon to be 11 with the Champagne-Bourgogne forest park project) attract more than 8.5 million visitors each year. Waterway tourism is important in France because the country has the largest navigable network in Europe, with 8,500 km out of a total 18,000 km of waterways. This navigable network has more than 700 ports and river stops and was used by more than 11 million passengers in 2017, 54% of whom were foreigners. To make this type of rural tourism even more attractive, France has developed bike paths along waterways. As a result, 87% of France’s waterway network is bordered by a bike path.

Ms. Chapelier noted that bicycle touring also represents a very important part of French rural tourism, and is one of the most dynamic tourism sectors in the French market. The economic benefits of this tourist practice are significant: at the national level, the sector’s income is estimated at €2 billion, and it employs about 16,000 people. France has a 22,800-km national network of cycle routes and greenway trails.

France has developed many initiatives to promote bicycle touring in recent years. She believes these efforts have clearly paid off, since cycling is currently the most popular touring practice in the country, placing France second in the world for bicycle tourism, just

behind Germany. France was also awarded the Most Popular Cycle Tourism Country 2017 prize at the International Travel Trade Show in Berlin in March 2018, in recognition of the importance and reputation of the European routes running through it.

Wine tourism and agritourism are also increasingly popular forms of tourism in France. Wine tourism represents, first of all, an important market for the French economy (with estimated revenues of €5.2 billion), but it is also part of the country's culture, with the vineyard playing an indisputable role in French cultural identity abroad. The Conseil supérieur de l'œnotourisme was created in 2009, bringing together stakeholders in viticulture and tourism to draw up a national plan around five themes: creation of the designation "Vignobles & Découvertes," whose objective is to bring more visibility to the destination; training; information; stakeholder networking; and the launch of a national wine tourism award called Prix National de l'œnotourisme. Ms. Chapelier noted that this policy has shown some success, with the number of tourists visiting France to discover its wines and vineyards increasing from 7.5 million in 2009 to 10 million in 2016.

According to Ms. Chapelier, agritourism seems to be winning over more and more nature lovers in search of authenticity, as opposed to the folk scenes found in large tourist cities that are often nothing more than a spectacle that distorts the reality of local populations. This form of tourism, which includes reception and accommodation services, restaurants, exploring the rural environment, and agricultural activities, allows many farmers not only to enhance and preserve their natural heritage and earn additional income, but also to meet people from various backgrounds.

Ms. Chapelier said that France supports this form of tourism through its chambers of agriculture. Specific training and stakeholder professionalization and networking have been established through the creation of the federal brand, "Bienvenue à la ferme," which currently represents more than 8,000 farmers willing to introduce vacationers to their profession and their farm.

She concluded by saying that in addition to support at the national level, agritourism also receives support at the European level through the Common Agricultural Policy, of which France is the main beneficiary. Since the reforms of 2003 and 2014, the Common Agricultural Policy has become greener. It has developed the LEADER system within its second pillar, which provides for supporting rural development projects at the local level in order to revitalize rural areas by promoting the development of rural tourism in particular.

B. Discussions and Site Visits

In support of the theme of rural and sustainable tourism, the delegates visited the following locations and met with employees and elected officials on 9, 11 and 12 April 2019:

- The Cévennes national park, which consists of four geographical entities: the Aigoual massif; the Méjean and Sauveterre causses, with the Tarn and Jonte gorges; Mont Lozère; and the Cévennes valleys, as well as its future tourism centre, accompanied by its director, Anne Legile. This is the only national park in

metropolitan France inhabited by a considerable permanent population (67,000 inhabitants). It includes 120 municipalities.

- The La Cocalière cave, accompanied by its two owners, to explore a cave that was carved out of the Jurassic limestone about 35 million years ago and is part of a vast underground complex extending over some 30 kilometres.
- The village of Lussan, which is a member of the association Les Plus Beaux Villages de France, accompanied by its mayor, Jean-Marc François. Lussan is a foot-traffic-only village surrounded by ramparts. It offers a view of the Cévennes, the Ardèche mountains and Mont Ventoux.
- The Villa Masséna (or Masséna museum), which was inaugurated in 1921 and is considered an architectural jewel of the Promenade des Anglais, in the company of its curator, Jean-Pierre Barbero. Through its collections, the villa evokes the art and history of the Riviera from the time Nice was annexed to France until the end of the Belle Époque. Among other things, it features Napoleon's death mask and the tiara belonging to Empress Josephine, Napoleon's first wife.
- The historic section of Nice (or old Nice), accompanied by the deputy mayor in charge of heritage, Jean-Luc Gagliolo.
- The Préalpes d'Azur regional nature park, which was created in 2012 in the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region. This park covers nearly 90,000 hectares and includes 45 municipalities with 31,300 inhabitants.
- The village of Gourdon, which is located in the Alpes-Maritimes department and is a member of the association Les Plus Beaux Villages de France, accompanied by its mayor, Éric Mele. This village is an eagle's nest in that it is perched at the top of a cliff 760 metres above the Gorges du Loup and the Mediterranean.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

On 8 April 2019, the delegates discussed the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) between Canada and the European Union with entrepreneurs belonging to the Gard Entreprises network, which was established in Alès in 2016 and includes some 350 companies. During this discussion, the entrepreneurs asked questions and shared their concerns about CETA. Given that Jean Baptiste Lemoyne, secretary of state to the Ministre de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères, was unable to attend the meeting, he sent a video in which he spoke about the benefits of CETA.

In addition, during their time in France, the delegates took the opportunity to visit a number of other interesting sites:

- On 8 April 2019, they visited the Cave Saint-Maurice winery, which was created by a dozen winegrowers in 1924. Today, the winery has 215 cooperative winegrowers and is the largest cooperative winery in the Gard region. The vineyard

covers 2,000 hectares of vines and 49 municipalities. It produces nearly 30 grape varieties.

- On 8 April 2019, they visited Senfas, a company specializing in organic products, as well as one of its production plants.
- On 8 April 2019, they visited the École des Mines d'Alès, which was founded in 1843 to train managers for the mining industry and is now a multidisciplinary engineering school. They met with its director, Thierry de Mazancourt. The school offers one general engineering program and three specialized engineering programs: computer systems and networking; construction design and management; and mechatronics.
- On 11 April 2019, they studied artificial intelligence and visited Accenture Innovation Labs, located in the Sophia Antipolis technology park. This park was developed in 1969 based on an idea of Senator Pierre Laffitte, who wanted to create “cross-fertilization” between researchers, teachers and businesspeople. This is Europe’s leading technology park and a global benchmark for innovation. The park has 2,230 companies employing 36,300 people of 63 different nationalities working with 4,000 researchers and 5,000 students. Following that, the delegates had a discussion with the park’s director of public and international relations, Xavier Taquillain, and the Sophia Antipolis foundation’s head of strategy and development, Philippe Mariani.

Finally, the delegates took the time during their stay in Nice to lay wreaths at the memorial erected in memory of the victims of the 14 July 2016 terrorist attack in which 86 people died and another 434 were injured.

CONCLUSION

The 47th Annual Meeting of the CFIA was another great success. The working sessions provided an opportunity for delegates to exchange views and learn more about the perspectives of both countries on the themes studied. They were also able to deepen their understanding and appreciation of the issues and challenges by meeting with experts in the areas studied during site visits and many discussions. The delegates believe, however, that Canada and France must continue to work to eliminate violence against women and provide better support for victims.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canada-France Interparliamentary Association
ACTIVITY	47th Annual Meeting
DESTINATION	Gard ans Alpes-Maritimes, France
DATES	April 8-12, 2019
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Hon. Jean-Guy Dagenais
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Hon. Denis Paradis Mr. Ramez Ayoub Mr. Rhéal Fortin Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie
STAFF	Mr. Jean-François Pagé Ms. Raphaëlle Deraspe
TRANSPORTATION	\$ 28,230.84
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 14,112.79
HOSPITALITY	\$ 0
PER DIEMS	\$ 3,858.93
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$ 352.69
MISCELLANEOUS	\$ 0
TOTAL	\$ 46,555.25