

Section canadienne de
l'Assemblée parlementaire
de la Francophonie



Canadian Branch of the
Assemblée parlementaire
de la Francophonie

Report of the Canadian Branch of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie

Meeting of the APF Political Committee and the Working Group on Reforming the APF Constitution

Paris, France

April 17 to 20, 2023

REPORT

The parliamentary delegation of the Canadian Branch of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF) that took part in the meetings of the Working Group on the Revision of the Statutes (the Working Group) and the Political Committee of the APF, held in Paris, France, from 17 to 20 April 2023, is honoured to submit its report.

The delegation consisted of the **Honourable Éric Forest**, Senator. He was accompanied by Gabrielle de Billy Brown, Advisor to the Canadian Branch.

Parliamentarians from eight branches of the APF took part in the Working Group's deliberations, while 22 branches contributed to the Political Committee's work.

Working Group on the Revision of the Statutes

The Working Group convened on 17 and 18 April 2023. The group is chaired by Senator Christophe André Frassa (France) and is tasked with reviewing and proposing amendments to the APF's constitutional documents: its Statutes, By-laws, Financial Rules, Democratic Oversight Mechanisms and Procedure Manual.

The Working Group began by ratifying the changes made to the APF statutes at the APF Bureau meeting of 30 and 31 January 2023. The amended APF statutes will be submitted to the member branches for approval at the Plenary Assembly, to be held in July 2023.

The Working Group then examined the By-laws and Financial Rules. The **Honourable Éric Forest** proposed an array of amendments to these two documents on behalf of the Canadian Branch of the APF to strengthen the organization's internal controls. The Working Group also began discussions on the APF's oversight mechanisms and reviewed comments from the group's members, including those of the Canadian Branch. It was agreed that this document and the procedure manual be studied in more detail at a future meeting, to be held in the fall of 2023.

Political Committee

The Political Committee, chaired by Senator Christophe-André Frassa (France), convened on 20 and 21 April 2023. The meeting began with the now-traditional round table on political news in each branch. The **Honourable Éric Forest** took the floor to share news about Canada's recently released 2023 federal budget, including its plan to combat the higher cost of living and international policy measures, such as support for Ukraine and Canada's commitment that multinationals pay their fair share of taxes in every part of the world. Finally, he explained the recent joint announcement by the governments of Canada and the United States about the processing of refugee claims.

The members of the Political Committee then learned more about the work accomplished in recent months and the current political situation in the francophone world from rapporteur Mesmin Ngabikoumou Wasa, Member (Gabon). On this subject, Léonie Guerlay, Acting Director of Political Affairs and Democratic Governance at the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF), discussed the OIF's work in francophone countries.

The Political Committee took an interest in the fight against misinformation and digital interference. To that end, it heard from two French experts: Roch-Olivier Maistre, Chair of France's communications regulator, the Autorité de la régulation de la communication audiovisuelle et numérique (ARCOM), and Chair of the French-speaking media regulators' network, the Réseau francophone des régulateurs des médias (REFRAM), and Gabriel Ferriol, Head of France's anti-digital interference agency, the Service de vigilance et de protection contre les ingérences numériques étrangères (Viginum). The **Honourable Éric Forest** asked the experts for more details on access to reliable and verified information and the support that can be offered across the francophone world. The two experts believe that the REFRAM plays a key role in this regard.

Next, the **Honourable Éric Forest** presented the new draft of his report on the role of French on the international stage, which was prepared jointly with the Education, Communication and Cultural Affairs Committee. He outlined the additions made since the last meeting of the Political Committee in July 2022, namely, the responses to the questionnaire the Canadian Branch developed and sent to branches last fall. A lively discussion on the future of the French language ensued.

The Political Committee also discussed the campaign against the death penalty and the role of multilateralism in promoting democracy. The committee agreed to change Georgia's status from observer to associate member and approved the application of the Verkhovna Rada, Ukraine's parliament, to become an APF observer. The Political Committee also heard an update on the APF's draft application for observer status at the United Nations. The Honourable Éric Forest expressed his support for this initiative and encouraged the members of the Political Committee to spread the word among their governments and diplomatic corps.

The Political Committee's next meeting will take place on 6 July 2023 in Tbilisi, Georgia, during the APF Session.

Respectfully submitted,

Francis Drouin, M.P.

President of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie

Chair of the Canadian Branch of the

Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canadian Branch of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie
ACTIVITY	Meeting of the Working Group on the Revision of the Statutes and the Political Committee of the APF
DESTINATION	Paris, France
DATES	April 17 to 20, 2023
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Hon. Éric Forest
HOUSE OF COMMONS	
STAFF	Gabrielle de Billy Brown
TRANSPORTATION	\$ 14,362.00
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 3,036.94
HOSPITALITY	\$ 0.00
PER DIEMS	\$ 1,426.54
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$ 96.50
MISCELLANEOUS	\$ 0.00
TOTAL	\$ 18,921.98