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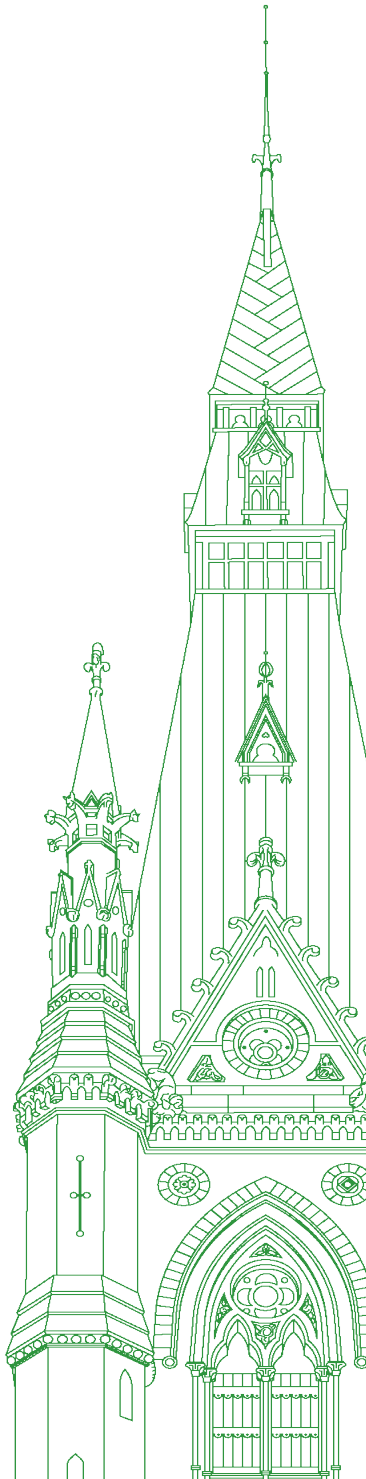

Chair: Salma Zahid

Standing Committee on Science and Research

Thursday, September 24, 2026

● (1535)

[*English*]

The Chair (Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre—Don Valley East, Lib.)): I call this meeting to order.

Welcome to meeting number 44 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Science and Research. We are meeting today to resume our study on the report of the external advisory panel on the creation and dissemination of scientific information in French.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format, pursuant to the Standing Orders. Members are attending in person in the room and remotely using the Zoom application.

Before we continue, I would ask all in-person participants to consult the guidelines written on the cards on the table. These measures are in place to help prevent audio and feedback incidents and to protect the health and safety of all participants, including the interpreters. You will also notice a QR code on the card, which links to a short awareness video.

I would like to make a few comments for the benefit of witnesses and members.

Please wait until I recognize you by name before speaking. For those participating by video conference, click on the microphone icon to activate your microphone and please mute yourself when you are not speaking.

For those on Zoom, at the bottom of your screen you can make a selection of the appropriate channel for interpretation: floor, English or French. For those in the room, you can use the earpiece and select the desired channel.

I would like to remind witnesses that committee members may ask questions in either French or English. If you will need interpretation, please take a moment now to prepare your earpiece and select the listening channel you need in advance to take full advantage of the time allotted for questions and answers.

As a reminder, all comments should be addressed through the chair.

For members in the room, if you wish to speak, please raise your hand. For members on Zoom, please use the “raise hand” function. The clerk and I will manage the speaking order as best we can. We appreciate your patience and understanding in that regard.

With that, I would like to welcome our two witnesses for this panel.

We are joined by Linda Cardinal, emeritus professor, University of Ottawa by video conference. We are also joined by Tanja Neimann, executive director, representing Consortium Érudit.

Welcome. Thanks to both of you for joining us today.

Both of you will have five minutes for opening remarks. We will then go to the rounds of questioning.

We will start with Professor Cardinal.

Please go ahead. The floor is yours. You will have five minutes for your opening remarks.

● (1540)

[*Translation*]

Linda Cardinal (Emeritus Professor, University of Ottawa, As an Individual): Madam Chair, distinguished members of the Standing Committee on Science and Research, guests and colleagues, thank you for the invitation to testify before this committee.

I appear before you as the former co-chair of the external advisory panel, whose report you are currently studying.

My presentation will include three points and two recommendations. I'm going to briefly go back to the notion of substantive equality, talk quickly about the report's recommendations and then about your work, so the next steps. I will then share my two recommendations.

You are all aware that the notion of substantive equality is a principle of interpretation of language rights that has been enshrined in the Official Languages Act since 2023. It's a principle based on the idea that there are forms of discrimination based on contextual factors. The courts have also pointed out in a number of cases that these contextual factors, whether normative elements or unconscious biases, for example, impose constraints on the possibility of fair treatment for French-speaking people. Here, I would obviously refer you to the DesRochers v Canada (Industry) decision, in the field of employability, which actually led to an initial filter, the forerunner of what is now called the francophone lens.

There are also studies, particularly those led by Acfas and the Association des collèges et universités de la francophonie canadienne, that have shown that there are systemic biases against francophone or French-speaking researchers in Canada's research ecosystem.

Data from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council show that, in some cases, the success rate of projects in French is higher than those in English. However, this is inaccurate for research in a francophone minority context, where the success rate, according to the data, is 10% below the average of 42%. In Quebec, for example, only 8.9% of applications are submitted in French, particularly to the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, and 12% in the case of the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada. This means that when we talk about higher success rates, we must also remember that, in absolute numbers, the number of applications in French is still clearly inadequate, even if we include those coming from Quebec.

The task force also looked at contextual factors. Looking at the issue of unconscious bias or perceptions of unconscious bias, we saw that those could have harmful consequences for professors' careers, or even for students' future careers and their socialization in the scientific research community. We noted a significant lack of programs in French at postgraduate levels, particularly in minority settings, and that, in general, this bias towards English in research did not allow the country to benefit from French as an official language in its international visibility. It prevents us from contributing to the scientific and professional vocabulary in French or to research heritage.

Cases we have studied have shown that, in many respects, in Canadian research, French is treated as a minor language, not as an official language. This situation distorts the economy and the research ecosystem in favour of a subjective prestige economy with an English bias. You could say this is a situation that is not unique to Canada. However, in Canada, given that French and English are the two official languages, there is reason to be outraged at this situation and to want to change things.

This brings me to my second point: the recommendations in the report.

As you can see, we made three main recommendations, with positive measures for their implementation. Among those recommendations, I would like to highlight a very important one, in our opinion, which is to establish a research in French support and promotion fund investing $40 million Canadian annually to research in French, complimenting existing investments. We also recommend to strengthen governance in official languages by creating a secretariat for research in French. We also recommend that the government set an example.

As a reminder, the $40 million we are requesting represents only 1% of total annual research funding, so it's not unreasonable. It can also be used to create research programs that we've called “francophone missions”—

● (1545)

[*English*]

The Chair: Can you please wind up your remarks in the next 10 seconds?

[*Translation*]

Linda Cardinal: Yes, I'm at my recommendations.

In closing, I have two recommendations.

First, the Canadian government should accept all the external advisory panel's recommendations and measures to establish a strategy for research in French based on our three key ideas, which are that research in French is a matter of substantive equality, a lever for economic development and a strategic resource for Canada's international visibility.

Second, the Canadian government should publish a road map for the report's implementation, including a timeline for next steps and a list of actions to take.

Thank you very much.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

With that, we will go to Madame Niemann for five minutes.

[*Translation*]

Tanja Niemann (Executive Director, Consortium Érudit): Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Members of the committee, thank you for inviting me in my capacity as the executive director of the Consortium Érudit.

Let's use the example of a social worker who supports a family in a francophone minority community. She needs research on this reality, in her language. She will find this type of work in the Canadian Social Work Review.

I have another example: A municipality dealing with climate change will be able to freely consult work published in a scientific journal such as Le Naturaliste canadien.

These two examples show the value of research when it can be made available to those who need it. Every year, Canada invests in the production of new scientific knowledge. For this investment to have a real impact, this knowledge must be communicated and used.

For research in French, this communication is not a given. In an environment largely dominated by English, research can be excellent, but if it's hard to find, it won't be as read and used, and it will have less impact.

Work devoted to francophone or Canadian realities meets real needs, even if it is sometimes of little commercial interest to major international publishers or international journals.

In addition, the challenge has intensified with the advent of AI. If our journals and their content are poorly identified by these tools, Canadian and francophone knowledge may simply be less visible in the results they produce.

The advisory group report recognizes many of these challenges.

Érudit is Canada's digital platform dedicated to research dissemination. It was established by universities and developed with the support of governments and many organizations, including the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, the Canada Foundation for Innovation and the Fonds de recherche du Québec. We want to acknowledge that support, for which we are very grateful.

Today, we publish nearly 400 Canadian scientific journals and more than 250,000 scholarly documents. Every year, more than five million people around the world consult the publications published on our site, erudit.org.

Research in French has its audience: 75% of our consultations come from outside Canada, and in the bilingual Canadian journals we broadcast, articles in French are consulted on average twice as often as those in English.

That said, a digital library like Érudit is more than just a web platform. Behind every article and every book, there is a staff that must prepare the files, add the metadata that will make it possible to find those articles and books and ensure that they remain accessible over time. This often invisible work enables a person, a search engine, a specialized database or an AI tool to properly find and use Canadian research.

In a system largely dominated by English and large foreign platforms, this collective capacity allows us to keep the necessary expertise and governance in Canada while sharing our knowledge with the world.

We particularly welcome the establishment of the post-secondary sector and scientific knowledge in French support fund, by Canadian Heritage.

The report we're talking about today proposes to go further. We support the recommendation to spend at least $40 million a year on research and scientific dissemination in French.

For this investment to fully bear fruit, it must support not only the production of knowledge, but also the journals and tools that make it possible to find, consult and retain it.

However, this work is ongoing, while its funding too often remains ad hoc. Technologies and uses change and needs do not end along with a funding program. We therefore invite you to recognize infrastructure such as Érudit as an essential service in Canadian research and to ensure stable and predictable funding. Discoverability, preservation and adaptation to AI are ongoing responsibilities that require sustainable investments.

By giving our digital infrastructure the stability it needs to evolve, we can maximize the impact of Canada's investments in research while strengthening our scientific and digital sovereignty.

Thank you. I'm happy to discuss this further.

Thank you very much.

● (1550)

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

With that, we will start our rounds of questioning. Our first round of questions is six minutes each. We will begin with MP Godin.

MP Godin, please go ahead. You have six minutes.

[*Translation*]

Joël Godin (Saint-Augustin—Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you, Ms. Niemann.

Thank you, Ms. Cardinal. I've had the opportunity to work with you on the Standing Committee on Official Languages, so I'm pleased to see you here today.

Actually, I'll start with you, Ms. Cardinal. I know you were the co-chair of the group that wrote the report, so I'd like to hear your answer to the following question: Does Canada support research in French? Did [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] before and during your research?

Linda Cardinal: Thank you for your question, but I need some clarification. When you say “Canada”, do you mean the Canadian government through the research councils?

Joël Godin: Actually, Ms. Cardinal, I'm going back to what is in the report you tabled, if I remember correctly. I'll try to find it quickly. You mention…. I can't find it quickly, so you—

Linda Cardinal: One could argue that Canada does not support research enough.

Joël Godin: Yes, that's right. In fact, it is set out in the summary of your report.

Is Canada doing enough when it comes to research in French?

Linda Cardinal: I think the Canadian government recognized that there was room for improvement. That's why it created our working group and said it was important for the government to adopt a strategy for research in French in Canada. To help the government with this strategy, we gave it a report that you might consider turnkey, a report that contains recommendations and measures that should be implemented so that we can begin to change the culture.

I want to be clear that this is just a start. We want this committee to recommend the implementation of our report and the associated funding. We hope you will agree and that this will be a starting point. We would like to see that in the next action plan, as well as very clear responsibilities for the Department of Industry. We want this to become a starting point for real work in the public service and with the granting agencies, so that there is genuine equality in terms of the advancement of French and English in research. Otherwise, it's not normal.

Joël Godin: No, it isn't.

My understanding is that the Canadian government's order, issued in 2023, was aligned with the modernization of the Official Languages Act. This confirms that it didn't do enough before. That's how I read it.

Am I interpreting that correctly?

Linda Cardinal: I think we've been harping on this since at least 2017, Mr. Godin. When we noticed it was included in the action plan and that a working group would be created, we considered that an ultimate recognition that there was work to be done, that it was, in fact, a blind spot for the Canadian government. However, the Commissioner of Official Languages has been talking about it since 2008. It's in our report. It wasn't the first time we saw this. By making this decision, the federal government said it was finally listening to us and moving forward.

● (1555)

Joël Godin: Yes, that's one way of looking at it.

Isn't it more a way of saying we're going to take another action? Let's be honest, for governments, it unfortunately takes a long time to come to fruition. You say it has been raised since 2008. I don't want to play politics, but unfortunately, we create committees, we prepare reports, but what do we do with them? Are they shelved or enforced? That's kind of what I'm afraid of.

I'm going to address the issue more specifically, Ms. Cardinal.

In your report, you recommend a new amount of $40 million, and you say it represents 1% of the total envelope. You know money doesn't grow on trees, so is it better to add $40 million and risk not getting it, or to reduce other amounts from the total envelope and spend that money on research in French?

If we reduce research in English, we will increase the proportion of research in French. The $40 million will therefore be taken from the existing envelope. That may be a quicker, more tangible step.

Linda Cardinal: I think that proposal would provoke a backlash from our anglophone colleagues, who will say we're taking their money and giving it to francophones. I can't even imagine how poorly it could be received.

This additional money is not a play, Mr. Godin. The members of the advisory group understood that as the discussions went on. We've had 160 consultations, we've met with people, we've received briefs, and so on. I think it's necessary.

Today, the government finds money for all kinds of things. In research, $1.7 billion was announced for research chairs. The amount we're asking for is not huge.

Joël Godin: Forty million dollars is not a lot.

Linda Cardinal: I don't think it's complicated. That $40 million is a drop in the bucket right now.

Joël Godin: The drops accumulate and, at some point, it's more difficult for the managers of public funds to manage, but I understand your vision.

In terms of official language minority communities, you talked about a 10% difference in less urban areas. Instead of being in large centres, these francophone communities are more isolated. Do you have a specific recommendation for those regions?

Linda Cardinal: In our report, we say that special attention must be paid to the Canadian francophonie. We are seeing, for example, that training the next generation of researchers has emerged as absolutely essential for the future of research in French. In minority communities, these are small institutions. We have the University of Ottawa, but—

[*English*]

The Chair: Can you please wind up?

[*Translation*]

Linda Cardinal: Are you talking to me?

[*English*]

The Chair: Your time is up. Please wind up the answer quickly.

[*Translation*]

Linda Cardinal: Minority communities have major needs in terms of master's and doctoral programs, as the next generation must be trained. In our report, it's clear: Research in minority communities and the work we do are done in collaboration with the community. That has an impact on economic development—

[*English*]

The Chair: I'm sorry for interrupting.

[*Translation*]

Linda Cardinal: This is especially true for colleges, which receive only 4% of research funding. They are the poor relations in the research funding family.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you. Your time is up. We have gone beyond our time.

We will now go to MP McKelvie for six minutes.

Please go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Jennifer McKelvie (Ajax, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

My questions are for Ms. Cardinal.

How were francophones outside Quebec involved in your study? Do you have any recommendations specific to their needs?

Linda Cardinal: Thank you. This gives me an opportunity to continue answering Mr. Godin's question.

Eight of the 10 members of the advisory panel belong to the Canadian francophonie, so I think the representation is very faithful to the reality of the Canadian francophonie. We have members from just about every province. We are attached to large or small universities, so the various members of the Association des collèges et universités de la francophonie canadienne, for example, are well represented.

Moreover, as I was saying, training programs for the Canadian francophonie are very important. In our report, we recommend the creation of a pan-Canadian coordination table for the development of programs in French. The table has merit because it's pan-Canadian. It includes Quebec, since we want the Canadian francophonie and Quebec to work together on a pan-Canadian vision for research and training.

We also talk about review in committees, and we say that research in French outside Quebec gets less funding, but it should be noted that, in some cases, less than 1% of applications submitted are in French. There is the Service d'aide à la recherche en français—French-language research support service—which provides a lot of assistance to minority communities, but funding isn't guaranteed.

A major difficulty in minority communities is that a lot of research is done there on francophone issues, and those issues are devalued in research programs and by colleagues in anglophone communities. However, in minority communities, francophone issues are closely linked to the development of knowledge and the economic development of communities. Despite that, it's as if working on the francophonie isn't relevant. Some young people feel that, if they work on the Canadian francophonie, their doctorate won't be as valuable as if they work, for example, on the Belgian economy, the Swedish economy or the Canadian economy. This poses very difficult challenges for young people who want to study the Canadian francophonie, which, for us, is a very valid topic of study.

I hope that answers your question.

● (1600)

Jennifer McKelvie: Yes, thank you.

I have other questions. What role did the three granting agencies play in your study? Have they responded to your recommendations?

Linda Cardinal: We consulted the granting agencies, including the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, and the Canada Foundation for Innovation. Some, including SSHRC, told us about positive measures they had put in place for the francophonie. It's the same thing at NSERC, among others. However, we realized that coherence was lacking. Each agency has its own positive measure. That's why we talk about an enabling framework in our report. We really need coherence, a strategy for developing positive measures to promote research in French.

Those are the discussions we've had with the granting councils. We've had very good exchanges with them. I think they all recognize that more needs to be done for research in French.

I can't say that they have begun to implement our recommendations. We look forward to your committee's support and the Canadian government's response to ensure that these recommendations are implemented. We obviously hope that we will be included in the next action plan for official languages.

Jennifer McKelvie: Thank you.

I have one last question.

Are there differences between sociological, scientific and medical studies? Do you have different recommendations for the various disciplines?

Linda Cardinal: We don't.

Your question is an important one. We often see that, fundingwise, the success rate is higher in some disciplines than in others. In the field of history, for example, we see that more funding applications are submitted in French, compared with other disciplines where none of the applications are in French. There are definitely differences among the disciplines.

That said, we have noticed that the granting councils—for instance, CIHR—have very few reviewers who can review applications in French. Even if they say they are bilingual, when the time comes to review applications and submit them to the committees, we see that the reviewers do not have that ability. Only 26.8% of reviewers are able to review applications in French. This is something that could be improved within the research councils.

In terms of statistics, we don't have a breakdown by language. We are given percentages, but we don't know how to break them down. We don't know what really comes from the Canadian francophonie or from Quebec. We don't have the numbers. Recently, SSHRC released data indicating that success rates are very good for francophones, but we don't know what those rates are. We don't know how SSHRC obtained those results.

We would like to see more ongoing monitoring of the data so that we can determine if there are improvements or not, especially when it comes to the numbers. I can tell you that, in the case of CIHR, I was once the only one to submit an application in French.

● (1605)

[*English*]

The Chair: We will now proceed to MP Blanchette-Joncas for six minutes.

Please go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Mitis—Matapédia—Les Basques, BQ): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would like to welcome the witnesses who are joining us.

My first question is for Ms. Niemann.

The advisory panel explicitly recommends increasing support for Érudit—including for metadata updates—and also describes your funding as fragile.

If the government really wanted to implement this recommendation properly, how much sustainable funding do you think the Érudit platform would actually need and what form should that funding take?

Tanja Niemann: Thank you very much for the question.

As I mentioned earlier, three granting agencies support us: SSHRC, the CFI and the Fonds de recherche du Québec. However, most of these funds have different renewal cycles. So these funding cycles aren't really aligned, except for some of them. We're actually putting a lot of effort into orchestrating these different funds.

If there was a strategy that could give us more predictability and stability regarding this funding, particularly by establishing longer cycles, such as 10-year cycles instead of five or six years, it would greatly help us increase our efficiency, since we wouldn't spend as much time on accountability and writing funding requests.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: In your opinion, should digital research infrastructure like Érudit be funded in the same way as the major physical infrastructure that is regularly funded?

Tanja Niemann: Yes, absolutely.

I think that, in 2026, the question is no longer whether there is research infrastructure, buildings and physical equipment like a telescope. A lot of infrastructure is based on digital technology, research data and the physical infrastructure that must support all that. It is entirely normal, in 2026, to have ongoing support for this type of infrastructure, as it must be maintained over time, not in two- or three-year project cycles.

You're absolutely right.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Understood.

You talked about instability in funding. There also seem to be gaps. In the report, we see that NSERC and CIHR provide no support for scholarly journals or comparable dissemination platforms. SSHRC, on the other hand, does provide support. That links this gap to the lack of francophone or bilingual journals in the natural sciences or even in health.

I'm trying to understand. In your opinion, should these two agencies also provide concrete funding to Érudit, as SSHRC does?

Tanja Niemann: I think that the production of health, science or engineering research is funded by NSERC or CIHR, but publication and dissemination in French are not funded at this time. That's something we note in the system. At this point, the last link in the chain is missing. I think that, for science in French to flourish, it must be available in all disciplines. So the answer to your question is yes.

Érudit has had very good meetings with the NSERC and CIHR management teams. One of the things they recognized is the great work the platform does. They also recognize the importance of open-access dissemination and open science in this field, as well as the importance of the digital availability of research results in French. However, there is currently no firm commitment or aligned support strategy among these three agencies.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Understood.

We know that the Érudit platform was created in Quebec. The Fonds de recherche du Québec, in particular, already supports the platform. Quebec also has the Circé network.

In implementing the report's recommendations, how do you think we can ensure that new federal investments will strengthen existing Quebec infrastructure, rather than create parallel structures?

● (1610)

Tanja Niemann: It's this whole issue of alignment in which Érudit is immersed, often using Quebec funds as a lever to have funding added at the federal level. However, we're often in a situation where that alignment has to be done operationally for us. We actually don't have a strategy or vision for developing this infrastructure in a more aligned or harmonious way.

This often requires re-explaining where we come from and what we do, reasserting our position, reaffirming who we are in the research ecosystem, the value we have as a Canadian platform, as a national platform, and the influence that Canada has thanks to these initiatives, even internationally.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: I understand.

The report describes open access as a double-edged sword, meaning that it increases the visibility of research in French, but it also destabilizes the economic model of journals. The report also recommends funding the transition to full open access now.

In your opinion, what funding model would be needed for this transition to strengthen francophone journals instead of weakening them further?

Tanja Niemann: We follow the diamond open access model. This means that there are no costs for authors or readers and that the dissemination of knowledge and the production of scientific articles are supported by public funds.

Right now, other models are in use, commercial-type models, where large commercial publishers charge researchers for publishing these articles. On the other hand, these publication fees fund open access. As a result, a lot of money from research funds and public funds is given to commercial publishers. In addition, less money is invested in the cycle. It's not at the same level and not at all to the same extent in diamond open access. This puts Canadian journals, non-profit journals with which we mostly collaborate, at a disadvantage by default.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

We will now start our second round of questioning for five minutes and two and a half minutes, starting with MP Baldinelli for five minutes.

Please go ahead.

Tony Baldinelli (Niagara Falls—Niagara-on-the-Lake, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses for being with us this afternoon.

I'm going to begin with Ms. Cardinal.

The advisory panel's report recommends that the federal government improve federal institutions' compliance with the Official Languages Act. In what area is the federal government falling short when it comes to implementing the Official Languages Act, particularly with respect to scientific research?

[*Translation*]

Linda Cardinal: Thank you very much for your question.

I think our report makes it quite clear that the federal government has a lot of work to do when it comes to implementing the new Official Languages Act in the area of research. The concept of substantive equality is a concept that we have adopted and turned into the lens through which we study the situation of French in the field of research. The federal government is lacking a great deal when it comes to the granting agencies, where we've seen that improvements have been made.

We also know that the federal government has departments with research responsibilities. There are research offices in departments, but there are also departments that conduct research, such as the Public Health Agency of Canada, Health Canada, through CIHR in particular, as well as Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and Environment and Climate Change Canada. When we met with the various departments with research responsibilities and Treasury Board, we realized that they had no idea what we were talking about when we asked them what positive measures they had taken to advance research in French. They told us they were waiting for the new regulations or Treasury Board directives. However, when we met with Treasury Board, we weren't very satisfied with its answers.

You've seen the regulations that were proposed. I myself testified that the drafters of the regulations had to go back to the drawing board. We even asked the Commissioner of Official Languages to take charge of this issue. I feel like we opened a Pandora's box when we met with officials.

There is important work to be done. We have clearly seen that the task is considerable when it comes to intramural research.

● (1615)

[*English*]

Tony Baldinelli: Thank you for that.

I'd like to follow up with regard to other agencies in the various departments.

One of the actions under measure eight—compliance and accountability—which is in recommendation three, to “Strengthen Government of Canada Leadership”, is to task the Office of the Chief Science Advisor of Canada with leading a coordination table to promote French within the federal scientific community with the support of the secretariat for the coordination of research in French and Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat.

What has been the response to this recommendation so far?

[*Translation*]

Linda Cardinal: Let's just say that, in general, the responses have been quite positive. However, we'll learn of the Canadian government's official response largely through your committee. We're eagerly awaiting that response.

If you look at the newspapers, the media or the responses in Quebec—such as the feedback from researchers, the Université de Montréal and the University of Ottawa—you'll see that our report has been quite positively received. This is certainly the case with Érudit, whose representative is here with us today.

On the government side, we've generally received positive feedback so far in our informal discussions with officials. However, we really expect your committee to do the necessary work to elicit this official response from the Canadian government.

[*English*]

Tony Baldinelli: I'll go to your opening comments, in which you talked about publishing a road map and a timeline to implement. I believe this could be considered the third report in over three years. What has been the reaction of the government to that? In fact, is the recommendation you're putting forward a result of not getting satisfactory responses to the reports that have been prepared over the last three years?

[*Translation*]

Linda Cardinal: This is actually our recommendation to you.

People shouldn't think that nothing has happened over the past three years. Last Tuesday, you heard the testimonies of Ms. Montreuil and Mr. Maltais from Acfas. They have, in fact, received funding from the Canadian government to supplement the funding provided by the Quebec government and the Power Corporation for the Service d'aide à la recherche en français, or SARF. It was a measure—

[*English*]

The Chair: I apologize for interrupting. The time is up for MP Baldinelli.

[*Translation*]

Linda Cardinal: That's fine. We can continue the discussion during the next round of questions, if there is one.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

We will now proceed to MP Deschênes-Thériault for five minutes.

Please, go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

My first question is for Ms. Cardinal.

You spoke about francophone missions programs. Can you tell us what these would look like? Can you elaborate on this initiative?

Linda Cardinal: The recommendation regarding the $40 million includes $10 million for infrastructure-related initiatives, such as funding for Érudit. We developed three francophone missions programs. The whole concept of francophone missions stems from discussions that took place regarding the new umbrella organization. The government wanted the new umbrella organization to allocate funding to government missions, or missions for Canada. We consider that the francophonie is one of Canada's missions.

These three francophone missions would include, for example, a program of chairs of excellence on the Canadian francophonie. This would be a highly concrete measure to support research on the Canadian francophonie. Another program would fund independent projects on topics related to the francophonie. A third program would be used to create international teams. As you know, in our report, we state that French is a strategic resource for the Canadian government to promote its international visibility. The idea is to allocate $10 million to form teams consisting of a Quebec university, one or more universities from the Canadian francophonie and a university from the international francophone community. The overall goal is to strengthen the position of French within the international ecosystem.

This is part of another recommendation, which calls on the government to lead by example. We would like the Canadian government to adopt a science diplomacy policy to strengthen its presence within the international francophonie. This research program could support work on topics that matter to the francophonie on an international level.

● (1620)

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: In the report, you also suggest establishing a secretariat for the coordination of research in French.

As you know, we're currently seeking to improve government efficiency. How would this secretariat supplement current efforts without duplicating them? I would like you to briefly explain the added value of the secretariat so that we can fully understand it.

Linda Cardinal: This is part of the Canadian government's efforts to establish an umbrella organization designed to promote the coordination of research in Canada. We were greatly concerned about whether the official languages would be respected within this umbrella organization. We want the person in charge of this umbrella organization to be required to speak both official languages and to be able to work in both English and French.

Since we want the Canadian government to adopt a francophone lens in the field of research, we believed that the secretariat would be the best position to develop this lens, together with the Treasury Board.

This secretariat would also manage and coordinate, in conjunction with the Department of Canadian Heritage, the Canada-wide coordination table on the development of French-language education in Canada. It would also manage various programs, such as the francophone missions, together with granting agencies.

In our view, this secretariat would clearly provide added value.

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: You have been talking about the government setting an example. You have brought this up a few times. Can you elaborate on what you mean by this?

Linda Cardinal: The government's good example—particularly in light of the new Official Languages Act—serves to ensure that the Canadian government upholds and implements substantive equality.

To that end, we need an enabling framework from the Treasury Board Secretariat for intramural research in French at the federal government level, meaning within the government's institutions. We spoke earlier about the coordination table led by the office of the chief science adviser for Canada and a special investigation by the Commissioner of Official Languages.

We also need bilingual abstracts. Did you know that, when Canadian government researchers publish articles, there aren't any French abstracts of their work? A recent report—not just ours—showed that researchers within the federal government publish almost exclusively in English.

So these are small steps, but they would help make research more accessible to the French-speaking Canadian public. These are some examples.

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: I see that my time is up. Thank you for sharing your testimony today.

Linda Cardinal: Thank you.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

We will now proceed to MP Blanchette-Joncas for two and a half minutes, please.

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Thank you, Madam Chair.

My first question is for Ms. Cardinal.

I would like to extend my greetings, thank you for your dedication and congratulate you on your work. I know that you served as co-chair of the advisory panel that drafted this report.

The report acknowledges that higher education falls under the jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces. However, you're proposing a Canada-wide mechanism for French-language post-secondary education, coordinated by Canadian Heritage.

I would like to understand how the federal government can take action within the limits of its jurisdiction, which doesn't include education. Could you explain your recommendations in more detail?

Linda Cardinal: Yes. Thank you for the question. It gives me a chance to talk about federal-provincial relations, a topic that I appreciate.

The recommendation doesn't seek to take the provinces' place. It fully recognizes that education is a provincial jurisdiction. However, as you well know, in the field of research, we can now speak of a shared jurisdiction. During our discussions, on multiple occasions, we sought to find a way to bring together Quebec and the Canadian francophonie to develop French-language programs.

As you know, Bill 96 even includes a section stating that the Government of Quebec wants to promote student mobility and programs. The goal isn't to interfere with jurisdictions. However, we would like the provinces to get involved with the federal government, rather than the federal government working alone without the provinces. We would like them to work on this together.

You might say that this is a pipe dream. I believe that, when it comes to the Canadian francophonie and the francophonie in general, we can look beyond our special interests to see the greater good at stake. That greater good is research in French and the education of the next generation in French. Our discussions have actually shown us that the provinces might be willing to work with us on this project.

● (1625)

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: I'll continue.

In another part of the report, you refer a number of times to the initiatives of the Fonds de recherche du Québec. You even cite it as an example for Ottawa to follow.

What could the federal government accomplish in Quebec that Quebec's institutions are unable to accomplish on their own with the same resources?

Linda Cardinal: To put it simply, Quebec researchers who submit applications to SSHRC, NSERC or CIHR don't receive funding from the Fonds de recherche du Québec.

We recognize all the leadership work carried out by the Fonds de recherche du Québec and all the work done by Quebec's chief scientist. For us, this is a source of pride and it has been a source of inspiration. However, Quebec researchers also submit applications to the federal government. These applications fall outside the purview of the Fonds de recherche du Québec. There's room for improvement in this area in order to increase the number of applications submitted in French.

Also, in the Canadian francophonie, we're a bit like the poor cousins. These poor cousins—

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you. I'm sorry for interrupting. The time is up. We have to keep track of the time.

With the time left, we will have two minutes with MP Ho and then end the panel with two minutes for MP Eyolfson.

Please go ahead, MP Ho.

Vincent Ho (Richmond Hill South, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair. My first set of questions is for Professor Cardinal, who co-chaired the panel that produced this report.

Your report says, on page 79, that there is an “absence of readily accessible data combining language of study, underrepresented groups and socio-economic status”. It then says, “This lack of information precludes any rigorous assessment of [the] needs or participation” of racialized French-speaking students.

However, your panel immediately recommends, on page 12, that we need to establish, number one, “dedicated [race-based] scholarships” specifically for “racialized students studying in French” and, number two, “dedicated [race-based] funding and hiring targets for racialized” professors.

How did the panel go from saying that there's not enough available information for a rigorous assessment to all of a sudden recommending race-based scholarships for students and race-based hiring targets for professors and researchers?

[*Translation*]

Linda Cardinal: Thank you for your question, Mr. Ho.

Indeed, there's a lack of data. If you look closely at the report, you'll see that we started with the data already available. We also consulted with students. Based on this combination of existing data, we identified a blind spot and a significant lack of support for racialized students from francophone communities. There are initiatives—

[*English*]

Vincent Ho: There's no empirical data that you relied on, and this means you established that it was race itself. Rather than factors such as income, geography, institutional size, language ability or socio-economic circumstances, which was the barrier...you recommended a race-based, race-specific remedy. Shouldn't the remedy instead be focused on those barriers that you've identified rather than race? It seems as though you're jumping to conclusions.

[*Translation*]

Linda Cardinal: You're putting words in my mouth. If you reread the report carefully, you'll see that we aren't saying this. In the report, you can see that data is presented and that we held consultations—

[*English*]

Vincent Ho: How is someone's skin colour correlated to their linguistic ability? I want to know that.

The Chair: I will let the witness complete the answer.

[*Translation*]

Linda Cardinal: These are ideological debates.

[*English*]

The Chair: Time is also up. We have to end this panel.

Vincent Ho: I would like, in writing, an answer to that question.

The Chair: Is it possible, Professor, for you to provide the answer in writing?

[*Translation*]

Linda Cardinal: Yes.

I don't want to get into an ideological debate on the significance of people's characteristics—

[*English*]

Vincent Ho: There seems to be a lot of ideology in your report, so I want you to answer the question in writing after this committee meeting: How does someone's skin colour correlate to their linguistic ability?

[*Translation*]

Linda Cardinal: You keep interrupting me, so I can't answer the question.

[*English*]

The Chair: Let's have one person at a time, please.

This time has ended.

We will now end this panel with two minutes for MP Eyolfson. Please go ahead for two minutes.

Doug Eyolfson (Winnipeg West, Lib.): Thank you, Chair.

Thank you to our guests. This has been a very interesting study.

Madame Cardinal, you had mentioned the role of universities. Monsieur Blanchette-Joncas correctly stated that universities are under provincial jurisdiction. Quebec, of course, is the largest French-speaking province: You're going to have a lot of people receiving their education and doing their research in French. Outside of Quebec or outside of provinces and regions that have large francophone communities.... How can we work with these regions of the country that do not have large francophone populations, and with their universities, to increase the level of education and research so that people are able to perform their research and write their grants in French, thereby increasing the role of French in research in Canada?

● (1630)

[*Translation*]

Linda Cardinal: Thank you for your constructive question, Mr. Eyolfson.

In Quebec, of course, it's possible to carry out research in French. However, even during our consultations, young researchers in particular and students told us that this posed some major dilemmas. Once they reach the doctoral level, they must decide whether to write their theses in English or French. We can see this clearly now in Quebec. It's in our report. A significant percentage of students write their theses in English. This is the case even in Quebec, so imagine the situation outside Quebec. The SARF has helped researchers and is now helping students applying for scholarships to prepare their applications in French.

In our report, we recommend providing long-term support for the Côte à côte program designed for students at universities in the Canadian francophonie. It's with the Université de Montréal. Students can come spend a certain number of weeks in Quebec to gain experience in an academic setting—an enriching educational experience—and also to work in community settings. That's one example.

There's also Acfas's research mobility program. This program is available in only three provinces. We would like—

[*English*]

The Chair: I'm sorry for interrupting. Time is up.

[*Translation*]

Linda Cardinal: —to see it implemented across the country.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

Thanks a lot to both of the witnesses for appearing before the committee.

We will suspend the meeting for a few minutes so that we can allow the witnesses to leave and allow witnesses for the next panel to take their seats.

The meeting is suspended.

● (1630)

_____(Pause)_____

● (1635)

The Chair: I call this meeting to order.

I would like to make a few comments for the benefit of our new witnesses for this panel.

Please wait until I recognize you by name before speaking. For those participating by video conference, click on the microphone icon to activate your mic, and please mute yourself when you are not speaking.

For those on Zoom, at the bottom of your screen you can select the appropriate channel for interpretation: floor, English or French. For those in the room, you can use the earpiece and select the desired channel.

I would like to remind witnesses that committee members may ask questions in either French or English. If you need interpretation, please take a moment now to prepare your earpiece and select the appropriate channel.

As a reminder, all comments should be addressed through the chair.

With that, I would like to welcome our witnesses for this panel.

We are joined by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, represented here by Chantal Marin-Comeau, vice-president, corporate services and transformation, and Paula Kirton, director general, investigator-initiated research.

Our second organization is the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, represented here by Anne-Marie Thompson, vice-president, research grants and scholarships directorate, and Marcel Turcot, vice-president, strategic, corporate and public affairs.

Our third organization is the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, represented here by Dr. Sylvie Lamoureux, chief operating officer and vice-president, research, and Dr. Tim Wilson, associate vice-president, research programs.

A big welcome to all of you for joining us today at this committee. Everyone will have five minutes for their opening remarks, and then we will go into our rounds of questioning.

We will start with the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.

Dr. Lamoureux, please go ahead. You will have five minutes.

● (1640)

[*Translation*]

Sylvie Lamoureux (Chief Operating Officer and Vice-President, Research, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council): Thank you, Madam Chair, for inviting me to speak on behalf of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, or SSHRC. I'm joined by my colleague, Tim Wilson, the associate vice-president of the social sciences and humanities programs, along with our counterparts from the two other federal research funding agencies.

SSHRC's primary mandate is to fund research and research training in the social sciences and humanities, ensuring that Canada has the ideas and skills necessary to address both the problems of today and the challenges of tomorrow—

[*English*]

The Chair: I'm sorry for interrupting.

Can we check the interpretation, please?

Okay. Please start again.

Sylvie Lamoureux: From the top?

The Chair: Yes.

[*Translation*]

Sylvie Lamoureux: Thank you, Madam Chair, for inviting me to speak on behalf of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, or SSHRC. I'm joined by my colleague, Tim Wilson, the associate vice-president of the social sciences and humanities programs, along with our counterparts from the two other federal research funding agencies.

SSHRC's primary mandate is to fund research and research training in the social sciences and humanities, ensuring that Canada has the ideas and skills necessary to address both the problems of today and the challenges of tomorrow. We also administer, on behalf of the three agencies, a number of prominent research programs. These programs include the New Frontiers in Research fund and the Eddie Goldenberg research chairs of Canada, which support all disciplines and drive innovative and impactful research.

SSHRC is currently going through a leadership transition. We're fortunate to have Normand Labrie, the president of the Université de l'Ontario français and normally our council chair, as our interim president. As a francophone who is deeply committed to enriching the French research enterprise, Mr. Labrie is a strong ally. The same can be said about Éric Montpetit, our interim council chair who is also the vice-dean of research in the faculty of arts and science at the Université de Montréal.

Mr. Labrie, Mr. Montpetit and I, in my capacity as chief operating officer and vice-president of research at SSHRC, are all deeply committed—both personally and professionally—to the vitality of French-language research in Canada and of our francophone communities, as well as to the post-secondary institutions that serve them.

[*English*]

I would very much like to thank this committee for its continued support of research in French. I would also like to thank members of the external advisory panel, who worked tirelessly on the recently released report on that topic. I applaud the quality of their work, and I appreciate the time they took to engage with SSHRC and consider our feedback while drafting it.

We have taken note of the report's recommendations, and we are coordinating with members of the Canada research coordinating committee and other relevant interlocutors to discuss next steps while taking mandates, resources and the needs of the research community into consideration.

We recognize that some decisions will occur outside of the federal research funding agencies, particularly decisions with respect to new measures. We are fully committed to collaborating on new measures as best we can.

The vitality of the francophone research community is an asset to the Canadian research ecosystem and to Canada as a whole. SSHRC takes to heart its obligations in relation to the Official Languages Act, whether it be providing access to services in both of Canada's official languages, nurturing and supporting official language minority communities, or promoting and protecting the French language.

[*Translation*]

SSHRC works hard to ensure a robust merit review process for all funding applications received, regardless of the official language. Overall, applications submitted in French have success rates comparable to—or even higher than—the applications submitted in English.

From 2021 to 2025, SSHRC invested approximately $37.3 million in research on official languages and related topics. This funding supported 444 projects, 831 researchers, 197 graduate students and five Canada research chairs on the topic.

We also provide institutional support measures; make investments in official languages research and research relevant to francophone communities; and undertake initiatives to ensure the dissemination, discoverability and mobilization of research in French, including through our support for French-language journals and platforms such as Érudit. We also support various awards that recognize outstanding French research as well as knowledge mobilization efforts.

SSHRC has been active internationally. We're exploring ways to help connect francophone researchers in Canada with colleagues in other countries of the global francophonie.

[*English*]

In short, SSHRC is deeply committed to supporting and enhancing a vibrant French-language research enterprise in and across Canada. Dr. Wilson and I are happy to answer, in the official language of your choice, any questions you may have.

Thank you.

● (1645)

The Chair: With that, we will proceed to the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council.

Ms. Thompson, please go ahead. You have five minutes for your opening remarks.

[*Translation*]

Anne-Marie Thompson (Vice-President, Research Grants and Scholarships Directorate, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council): Good afternoon, Madam Chair and members of the committee.

On behalf of the president of the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, Alejandro Adem, I am pleased to be here today to provide remarks to support your important study.

I'm joined here today by Marcel Turcot, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada's vice-president for strategic, corporate and public affairs.

The Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, or NSERC, joins its federal partners in recognizing the excellent work of the external advisory panel on the creation and dissemination of scientific information in French.

NSERC and the other federal research funding agencies collaborated with Canadian Heritage and Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada to support the work of the advisory panel by participating in meetings and responding to requests for data and information.

We have taken note of the recommendations set out in the report submitted to the Minister responsible for Official Languages. NSERC will remain attentive to the government's response to the report and will continue to work with its federal partners to support priorities arising from it, in accordance with its mandate. This mandate is grounded in supporting research excellence, talent and innovation in natural sciences and engineering in both official languages across Canada.

[*English*]

NSERC invests more than $1.5 billion annually in natural sciences and engineering research, supporting over 185 post-secondary institutions across the country, including more than 65 francophone or bilingual institutions.

Our investments support internationally recognized, discovery-driven research across a broad range of fields, contributing to Canada’s global scientific standing, including within the international Francophonie.

We also support the next generation of researchers and the highly qualified workforce who contribute to Canada's prosperity, and we foster partnerships with public, private and not-for-profit sector organizations to transform discoveries into tangible benefits for communities, the economy and Canada's strategic sectors. For example, NSERC's long-standing investments in artificial intelligence and quantum science have helped support pioneering research that has shaped these fields on the world stage.

Among the researchers supported by these investments are francophone researchers Yoshua Bengio and Gilles Brassard of the Université de Montréal, whose globally recognized contributions earned them each the prestigious Turing Award, in 2018 and 2025, respectively.

● (1650)

[*Translation*]

The contribution of francophone researchers and francophone and bilingual institutions to the excellence and visibility of Canadian research is undeniable.

NSERC supports equitable access to its programs, ensures bilingual merit review, and promotes the recognition of French language research, including in minority-language contexts.

NSERC also implements its obligations under part VII of the Official Languages Act by considering the impacts of its programs and policies on official language minority communities and by taking positive measures to enhance their vitality and to protect and promote the French language.

We are proud to have recently signed a memorandum of understanding with Acfas's French-language research assistance service, which provides guidance to researchers in minority francophone contexts to facilitate the preparation of funding applications in French and support their full participation in funding opportunities.

We also support science promotion activities in French and integrate francophone perspectives into the development of our policies and programs.

NSERC and the other federal granting agencies continue to modernize Canada's research funding ecosystem through initiatives such as the implementation of the Tri-agency grants management solution, the integration of the San Francisco declaration on research assessment, or DORA, principles into research assessment practices, the adoption of a new narrative CV, and the revision of the open access policy on publications.

In alignment with the concerns raised by the external advisory panel, these initiatives aim to improve access to funding opportunities, promote a more inclusive approach to the assessment of research excellence, and enhance the accessibility, dissemination and discoverability of research results.

These initiatives, together with reflections stemming from the recommendations of the external advisory panel and the work of this committee, will contribute to discussions about how to better support French-language research and the vitality of francophone research communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.

Mr. Turcot and I are available to answer your questions and provide any clarifications you require.

[*English*]

The Chair: With that, we will proceed to the Canadian Institutes of Health Research.

Ms. Marin-Comeau, vice-president of corporate services and transformation, please go ahead. You have five minutes for your opening remarks.

[*Translation*]

Chantal Marin-Comeau (Vice-President, Corporate Services and Transformation, Canadian Institutes of Health Research): Madam Chair and committee members, thank you for inviting me to be here today.

I'm joined by Paula Kirton, director general for investigator initiated research and official languages champion for CIHR.

As Canada's federal health research funding agency, CIHR is pleased to contribute to your study of the findings of the external advisory panel on the creation and dissemination of scientific information in French.

The advisory panel's report addresses an issue that is fundamental to the vitality, inclusiveness and excellence of Canada's research ecosystem. CIHR welcomes its findings and is grateful it had the opportunity to support the panel in carrying out its mandate.

Researchers who work in French make indispensable contributions to Canada's scientific enterprise and to our society. From coast to coast to coast, they push the frontiers of knowledge, drive innovation and train new generations of researchers and health professionals.

In health care settings, language can be a key determinant of access, quality, safety and equity. Research conducted in French helps strengthen health services by addressing the needs of francophone patients, including those who are members of official language minority communities.

This means achieving better health for all Canadians.

At CIHR, we recognize that supporting Canada's French-language research community requires meaningful action.

That is why we actively encourage researchers to apply for funding in the official language of their choice and ensure that applications submitted in French are assigned to qualified peer reviewers with the ability to assess them. We provide program materials, webinars and services in both official languages. We have also implemented various measures to support applicants and strengthen French-language peer review.

One of CIHR's most significant measures has been the rebalancing of funding outcomes for applications submitted in French under the project grant program. Since 2021, this measure has ensured that the proportion of French-language applications funded is at least equal to the proportion of applications submitted in French.

In 2024, CIHR also earmarked funding to continue building capacity for both francophone and official language minority community researchers and to support a new generation of researchers from the master's to the post-doctoral level.

CIHR is championing a modernized concept of research excellence that values quality and impact over traditional journal-based metrics.

This results in a more inclusive and responsible approach to research assessment.

Although progress is being made, we recognize that challenges remain. For instance, we know that researchers in English-language institutions may experience administrative barriers when applying for funding in French. We also know that limited opportunities exist to publish research in French.

CIHR is committed to promoting the vitality and substantive equality of Canada's official languages and to supporting scientific research in French.

Consistent with our obligations under the Official Languages Act, CIHR strives to foster a research environment in which both official language communities can fully participate.

We also know that Canada's research ecosystem is highly collaborative. Together with our partners in government and the research community, we will continue to strengthen the conditions that allow excellent research in French to thrive for the benefit of all Canadians.

Thank you very much.

I would be pleased to answer your questions.

● (1655)

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you to all the witnesses for their opening remarks.

We will start our first round of questioning with MP Ho for six minutes.

MP Ho, please go ahead.

Vincent Ho: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Let's start with NSERC, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council.

Today we're talking about a report on the dissemination of scientific information in the French language. The report recommends to the committee dedicating race-based scholarships specifically for racialized students studying in French, as well as dedicating race-based funding in hiring targets for racialized professors. It's written on page 12.

Does your organization agree with these recommendations?

Anne-Marie Thompson: Thank you for the question.

We are considering the outcomes and the recommendations that have been outlined in the report, along with our colleagues and other granting agencies, as well as through our core department. These are things that we will certainly be reflecting on as core recommendations from the report, as with all the other recommendations.

Vincent Ho: Do you agree with this specific recommendation?

Anne-Marie Thompson: I'm not here to share my personal opinion as a public servant. I'll leave it at that.

Vincent Ho: You're here representing NSERC. Does your organization agree with the recommendation, yes or no?

Anne-Marie Thompson: We're still analyzing the recommendations as a whole.

Vincent Ho: You're on this committee, but you're still analyzing. Will you provide a response later on that addresses this specific recommendation on page 12?

Anne-Marie Thompson: Yes. I believe a response report will be submitted within the different organizations.

Vincent Ho: This report outlines a number of barriers that it alleges about the francophone community and the research community. Not once has it mentioned that race is a barrier, yet it makes recommendations about race-based scholarships and hiring professors on the basis of race.

What are your thoughts on that? Can you provide some of your analysis? I know you can't make a determination, but I want to hear some of your analysis on this.

● (1700)

Anne-Marie Thompson: We will be analyzing it. As this committee well knows, we have information, of course, on the research base. We understand that different parameters are taken into consideration in different geographies, different parts of the country and across all of our researchers.

As for your point, we certainly understand that we need diversity of researchers across the country. This is something we're aware of. We will be considering it with all the other recommendations in terms of a formal response.

Vincent Ho: Do you think the race of an applicant, a professor or a researcher has any connection with their linguistic ability?

Anne-Marie Thompson: We don't assess that. We evaluate with the principles of research excellence, which, as all of my colleagues have mentioned here today—

Vincent Ho: You don't assess that.

Anne-Marie Thompson: I'm sorry...?

Vincent Ho: You don't assess that. In all your granting applications, you ask for race, gender and the like. Things that would be inappropriate to ask in a job interview, you ask in a grant application. Are you saying that your organization's policies are inappropriate?

Anne-Marie Thompson: These are self-identification questions that researchers are at liberty to answer.

Vincent Ho: Okay. Why ask it if it's not something that's assessed?

Anne-Marie Thompson: It's not assessed, but it's monitored.

Vincent Ho: Imagine an interviewer asking that question in a job interview. See what kind of legal outcome they'll have.

Let me put this in practical terms. Let's say we have two students both wanting to conduct their research in French. One is a low-income francophone student from a small rural community; she was raised by a single mother but doesn't qualify as “racialized”. The other comes from an affluent family in a wealthy neighbourhood from a major city. They went to private school. They're very affluent, and they qualify as being “racialized”. What is the policy justification for giving the second student, who is from an affluent background, access to a scholarship specifically on the basis of race, while denying the first student that same race-targeted scholarship?

An hon. member: [*Inaudible—Editor*]

The Chair: No crosstalk, please. This is the time for witnesses to answer questions.

Anne-Marie Thompson: If I understood that—there was a bit of chatting in the room—I would say that we assess all the applications based on research excellence. There's an opportunity for researchers to put forward the context in which they are performing the research. We look at a wide consideration of different types of impacts of the research.

Again, we've all moved toward the research excellence San Francisco declaration, or DORA, to consider a larger pool of outcomes of research. We wouldn't base it on someone's economic circumstance, that's for sure.

Vincent Ho: I agree with the research excellence part. That's how we should be considering grant applications. However, this report specifically made race-based scholarships and race-based hiring for professors as a recommendation, without any empirical evidence to suggest that race would be a barrier to linguistic ability. It even admits that it is not a barrier and they don't have information to justify that. We just had a witness who wrote the report say that. They made that recommendation anyway.

Are you suggesting that your organization would reject this recommendation of race-based scholarships? You mentioned that we should be reviewing everything on the basis of excellence.

The Chair: Thank you.

The time is up for MP Ho. Maybe we can come back to it—

Vincent Ho: I would like that answer tabled in writing, if possible. Thank you.

You are a bureaucrat, so...whenever it's available—

The Chair: If you can provide the answer in writing, that would be good.

We will now proceed to MP Deschênes-Thériault for six minutes.

Please go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I want the witnesses to know that I'll try to focus on issues that are closely related to the French-language research ecosystem, unlike my colleague, who always asks the same types of questions regardless of the topic of the day.

I'd like you to share your views on what's in the report. We don't have much time, so take about a minute each.

The report contains a number of recommendations, some of which apply specifically to the granting agencies, particularly in terms of visibility, the introduction of a new francophone lens and the evaluation of research grant applications in French.

You've talked about what's already being done, but now I'd like to hear some specifics about additional actions that could be taken in light of the report. In concrete terms, how would your organization implement the recommendations in the report?

Let's start with SSHRC.

● (1705)

Sylvie Lamoureux: Thank you very much for the question.

The report raises a lot of very important points and issues. We had the opportunity to appear before the committee during its study, and we read the report, which led to further reflection.

One of the concrete measures we're currently working on at SSHRC, bearing in mind that all of the agencies have a role to play, is creating a network of granting agencies within the francophonie to help foster relationships. Everyone knows that, internationally, people immediately think of English as a lingua franca. Nevertheless, how can we create real opportunities among granting agencies in countries that belong to the francophonie? This measure is already having an impact. We'd been giving it some thought, but the report gave us additional momentum to accelerate the work. The announcement of the Sommet de la Francophonie in 2028 supports these efforts, so I'll be going to Cambodia to continue the work we started in May.

I'll leave it there.

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: Thank you.

Let's hear from NSERC about how it sees the report being implemented.

Anne-Marie Thompson: Thank you.

We already have measures in place. Ms. Cardinal mentioned in her report that all provincial governments and the federal government are helping to advance this work.

We have measures in place, but we also have recommendations around equitable access to funding, the quality of French-language assessment, data and transparency, as well as support for training, dissemination and knowledge mobilization. For us, as for the other agencies, it's really important to consider the entire ecosystem, not just our own progress. We are, of course, working on our open access policy. The goal is to improve the accessibility and discoverability of articles in French.

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: Thank you.

Lastly, we'll go to CIHR.

Chantal Marin-Comeau: Thank you very much for the question.

I'm not going to repeat what my colleagues and counterparts have said. I'm going to focus more on working with communities.

We think the starting point is working with communities to identify real priorities. We want to put a bit more emphasis on collaborating with communities, including official language minority communities, and with researchers to ensure that our approach is appropriate. That's where a peer review committee comes in. Wherever there are gaps, we really want to strengthen the capacity of researchers through this collaboration. We also want to reach out to early-career researchers because the challenges facing the French-language research community have a bigger impact on them.

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: Thank you.

Ms. Lamoureux, the recommendation in measure 9 is to “require bilingual…abstracts for articles published in SSHRC-funded journals.” How has this recommendation been received by your organization?

Sylvie Lamoureux: I would say that my organization's initial response is positive. We'll have to see how to operationalize everything and engage with communities. I think those are the next steps.

SSHRC has a long-running program to support scholarly journals. The other agencies don't have that, and it's something we can build on. I'm proud to say that, before the report came out, we had nearly doubled the funding for this program. A total of 176 journals will receive funding over the next three years, including 66 French-language journals and 51 bilingual ones. The remainder are English-language journals.

This is something to be discussed with the community. These discussions began several years ago, but the report will help us focus those discussions and identify specific solutions.

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: Thank you.

Another measure involves implementing a francophone lens that will serve as a tool to measure your impact and support your work.

I'll start with NSERC.

How do you envision implementing a francophone lens within your organization to advance the work you do to support research in French?

● (1710)

Anne-Marie Thompson: As I believe you heard on Tuesday, and as my colleagues have said today, this is really about partnership for us. We know there are still challenges.

For example, what we would focus on is working with the Service d'aide à la recherche en français. We've had a lot of discussions already. We signed the memorandum of understanding in June, and it's already bearing fruit. We ensure that the members of our evaluation committees are aware of these issues so they truly understand what it means to promote French-language research and so the committees have a better understanding of what the potential benefits are. That's one example.

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: Thank you.

If I have more time later, I'll ask your other two colleagues questions.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you for that.

We will now proceed to MP Blanchette-Joncas for six minutes.

Please go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'd like to welcome the witnesses who are with us today.

My first question is for Ms. Thompson.

The report does a good job of explaining the vicious cycle phenomenon. There are fewer applications in French because there are fewer reviewers who are able to understand the language in the first place and assess those applications.

In your view, should capacity to assess applications in French depend on the current number of applications, or should it be guaranteed at all times?

Anne-Marie Thompson: In our case, 27% of our committee members are francophone and 47% are bilingual. The goal is certainly to ensure that applications can be assessed in both official languages. Also, as you pointed out, organizations need the capacity to do that. We want to ensure equivalent assessment regardless of language.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: How can we achieve substantive equality if the people assessing the applications don't even speak one of the two official languages?

Anne-Marie Thompson: Well, as I said, 27% of committee members are francophone.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: In your view, equality isn't 50-50; it's only 27%. Is that what you're saying?

Anne-Marie Thompson: At present, according to our policies and guidelines, the figure is 20%, but it is possible that, in light of the recommendations, we may review this request. That said, that's the situation for now.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: All right.

Anne-Marie Thompson: There are also policies we could look at regarding conflicts of interest and matters of that sort to create a broader committee.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: I understand.

I would now like to address our friends at the CIHR.

How do you explain that even today, in 2026, you are still unable to find people to assess applications in French?

Chantal Marin-Comeau: Thank you for your question.

I'd like to correct what you've just said.

Firstly, we have a large pool of peer reviewers capable of assessing applications in French. We have made considerable efforts in recent years. At present, 26% of reviewers are able to assess applications in French.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: So, around one in four people can assess applications in French.

Do you consider this to be true equality?

Chantal Marin-Comeau: Ms. Kirton, would you like to provide the statistics for—

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: The question, Ms. Marin-Comeau, is this: When only one in four people in your organization who receive a request in French are able to assess it, do you consider this to be true equality?

Paula Kirton (Director General, Investigator Initiated Research, Canadian Institutes of Health Research): If we take into account the fact that 2% of the applications we receive are in French, this gives us a 26% capacity to carry out the evaluation process.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: So, since you don't receive many requests in French, that allows you to justify the fact that you are unable to have fluently bilingual assessors.

Paula Kirton: This enables us to meet needs and organize assessments to a very high standard. As for the evaluations we receive, we carry out translations within the committees to support evaluators who do not speak French so that they can take part in the discussions. Furthermore, the 26% of quality evaluators across Canada give us the opportunity to carry out these evaluations, which account for 2%.

We really need to take the request level into account. The demand for French, in our organization, accounts for 2%.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Don't you think that, if 100% of the people on the assessment committees were fluent in French, there might be more applications submitted in French?

Paula Kirton: It would be absolutely brilliant if we received more applications, if more French speakers were available to us, and if we could recruit them to our committees. We are currently at 26%, which is a good figure relative to the number of applications we receive.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: All right.

Ms. Lamoureux, what are your thoughts on this? I know that the SSHRC is making an effort and that there are slightly more people on the assessment committee who are proficient in French. That said, why is it that you are unable to ensure that, 100% of the time, you have people who are capable of assessing applications in French?

Sylvie Lamoureux: Thank you for the question.

There are numerous factors at play, which go far beyond the reality of the organizations themselves. In the first part of the meeting, just before this one, it was pointed out that education is a provincial responsibility. We must first ensure that members of the teaching staff, whether at colleges or universities, have the necessary language skills and that these are assessed. As far as assessment is concerned, I am less concerned about whether they can speak French than about their reading ability. That is my opinion, as a human being called Sylvie Lamoureux.

Through the network we aim to establish with funding bodies, we will be able to recruit further people and expand this network so that our colleagues can also benefit from it. It was very interesting, last May, to have discussions with our colleagues from France. They mentioned that they receive a huge number of written requests in English in France, where the official language is French. They face the same challenges when it comes to finding assessors in all specific fields who are proficient in French. One of the reasons is that they are in extremely high demand. In Canada, we need these assessors for the Fonds de recherche du Québec. We need them for the federal granting councils. Consequently, this is a group of people who are in extremely high demand.

Furthermore, we are still living with the legacy of decisions dating back to the beginning of the last century concerning the possibility of being educated in one's own language—French—at post-secondary level, right through to the end of one's studies.

So, all these factors combine to explain the challenge of finding assessors to evaluate applications in French. We are doing everything we can to address this and increase that number.

● (1715)

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

We will now start our second round of questioning with MP Baldinelli for five minutes, please.

Tony Baldinelli: Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you to the witnesses for being with us today.

I want to follow up with Ms. Thompson, if I may.

In your exchange with my colleague, you were talking about the race-based data, which is part of the applications. You mentioned that it is voluntary—it's not required—and you mentioned that it is not assessed, but you did say that it's "monitored". I'd like to ask the question: Who exactly is monitoring this data if it's being supplied in the applications?

Anne-Marie Thompson: Thank you for the question.

We do, and we post a number of different types of dashboards and statistics on our website. When I say that we monitor, it means that we're looking at the trends. We look at this data to understand the changes that might be happening in the research ecosystem in terms of who's participating.

Tony Baldinelli: It's all maintained by NSERC and not shared with any other government department, then.

Marcel Turcot (Vice-President, Strategic, Corporate and Public Affairs, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council): No. The data is protected by the Privacy Act. In order to handle the data, you have to have specific training, and it is not shared. It is protected.

Tony Baldinelli: During the 44th Parliament, this committee also did a report entitled "Revitalizing Research and Scientific Publication in French in Canada". The report contained 17 recommendations.

Specifically, six touched on the tri-agencies. I want to get feedback on the responses from the tri-agencies to those recommendations to see if the recommendations put forward by this committee have been implemented in any way. I noticed that the CIHR talked about some of the quotas with regard to funding.

"Recommendation 9", for example, says that "a quota of the funding awarded by each of the granting agencies...be determined and used as a minimum level of funding for research conducted or published in French." Has this been accepted by all the tri-agencies? It seems to have been with the CIHR.

We'll start with you, Ms. Thompson.

Anne-Marie Thompson: Thank you.

The exact same methodology has not been applied at NSERC. It is something we look at, and we do look at the rates. We monitor this kind of data on application rates and award rates comparatively. This is how we see through observation—we haven't instituted this ourselves—that this outcome is happening. We have an approximately equal application rate and award rate for francophone applications.

Tony Baldinelli: What would the percentage be, then?

Anne-Marie Thompson: I'll speak to the discovery grants program. It's our largest program. It is only 3.1% of applications, on average, that we receive in French.

● (1720)

Tony Baldinelli: Recommendation 10, for example, suggests that "the granting agencies...take concrete steps to encourage researchers to submit funding applications in French and that they publicly report on their progress". Has any of that been done, and have steps been taken to encourage more French research and additional applications to come in? Have any concrete steps been taken by any of the agencies with regard to that?

We'll start with you, Ms. Lamoureux.

Sylvie Lamoureux: Thank you for the question.

Some concrete steps have been taken. One very specific one that I can announce today, which we shared with our program committee this morning, so you're finding out before the ecosystem, is that we've created a new Impact Award for research in French. The Impact Awards are the highest recognition that SSHRC has. Based on our preparations for our presentation at the session you mentioned and the work that we were doing preparing for the committee, we realized that to walk the talk, it was important to have the recognition of an Impact Award dedicated to the Francophonie. The details will be shared when we launch this, but that's a very big step.

Another concrete way that we do this is to make sure that it doesn't matter where I am in Canada: Whether I'm speaking at an English college or university or speaking in French in Quebec or B.C., as with my elocution today, I am doing it in both official languages. It sends an important message recognizing that there are anglophone speakers and francophone speakers across this whole country and makes sure they understand that the funding agencies value bilingualism, which means valuing French and valuing English.

Tony Baldinelli: My last question is for all of you.

Could you prepare a written submission on the responses to the recommendations from the previous report and how the tri-agencies have responded individually to each of those six recommendations that are mentioned?

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

With that, we will now proceed to MP Rana for five minutes.

Please go ahead, MP Rana.

Aslam Rana (Hamilton Centre, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you to all of the witnesses.

I have been an engineer and a science student throughout my life, so my question is for Ms. Thompson and the engineering research council.

NSERC appeared before this committee in 2022 saying that "only 10% of the applications [were] submitted in French".

Are the stats still the same, or have they changed?

Anne-Marie Thompson: Thank you for the question.

It depends on which programs we're looking at. When I talked about 3.1%, that was very specifically for our discovery grants program. There are 10,000 to 11,000 researchers who are supported through that program, so it's a very broad base, depending on some of the files. For instance, in the college portfolio, there is a very high rate of participation by francophone institutions. It varies a bit program by program. On the whole, the 10% across the organization makes sense. It's smaller, unfortunately, in the discovery grants program.

Aslam Rana: The report cites NSERC data showing that discovery grants program applications submitted in English are funded at a higher rate than those submitted in French, with a wider gap outside Quebec. What explains that, and what is NSERC doing in response?

Anne-Marie Thompson: Thank you for the question.

Yes, it does really matter when you start to break it down by region and by category of researcher. I can say that for established researchers from large institutions, whether they're anglophone or francophone submissions, the success rate is approximately the same. That's the case for medium-sized universities as well. We see more of a difference in smaller organizations or smaller institutions, and that's a multifactor item to look at. It's not simply the language; there are other factors there.

We also see in early-career researchers that there's a bigger difference, but for established researchers, the success rates in large and medium universities are similar.

● (1725)

Aslam Rana: Dr. Lamoureux, SSHRC results by language are stronger than those of the other two agencies. What does SSHRC do differently, and what could the other agencies learn?

Sylvie Lamoureux: Thank you for the question.

We have to consider the specific fields and populations that each agency serves. Studies on the Francophonie, studies on minority language communities anywhere in the world.... There's a higher percentage of SSH researchers who work on these questions, so there's a higher pool.

In an answer I gave before, when I was talking about the historical legacies, I mentioned that 40 years ago it was difficult to have more than a few courses if you were doing a Bachelor of Science degree outside Quebec, even at the University of Ottawa or Laurentian University. In other provinces, the access wasn't there. There's also catching up to where things are. It's about recognizing the differences in our populations, and I think that's more associated with us. However, I have very little control over the choices made by individuals.

I think there was a moment in time—well, I don't need to think, I lived it as a researcher—when there were, perhaps, questions about how things were done. However, there's been a lot of work done, particularly over the past 14 years. I saw it in my own funding applications: I was often not funded, but the feedback I got became better and better. It's about slowly building up trust for people to attempt writing in a language that they, perhaps, haven't used enough professionally. There are very complex issues at play.

Within our constituency, there are more researchers, like Madame Cardinal and others, for whom this is where they work and this is where they live. This could explain a variation of that, but I haven't done a study.

Aslam Rana: Thank you very much.

You just mentioned “outside Quebec”. French applications from outside Quebec succeed at a lower rate than the average. What's driving that?

Sylvie Lamoureux: In her testimony earlier, Madame Cardinal mentioned the importance of the Fonds de recherche du Québec. Something I've been looking at, since I arrived at SSHRC almost four years ago, is the whole ecosystem of funding programs and how they can help scaffold researchers from when they are students to further on, and where the gaps are. Having been a committee member for the Fonds de recherche du Québec, I know that there are programs in the province that help develop capacities. When I meet funding organizations from other provinces, and they ask, “How can we help our researchers do better, regardless of the language?”, I tell them to—

The Chair: I'm sorry for interrupting, Ms. Lamoureux. The time is up for MP Rana.

With that, we will now go to MP Blanchette-Joncas for two and a half minutes.

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: My question is addressed to the three granting councils.

The advisory panel recommends that the granting councils publish, on an annual basis, the success rates of applications broken down by language, program family, size of institution, region and the linguistic profile of the evaluators.

Are you prepared to make all this data public?

What about you, Ms. Thompson?

Anne-Marie Thompson: We certainly publish a great deal of this data on a dashboard. We have statistics available online that are verifiable, as in the case of the discovery grants program, which I have just mentioned. All the information is there. We also have dashboards for grant recipients. For many programs, this data is freely accessible.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: If they are public, why are we being asked to make them public? I'm wondering about that.

I am asking the three organizations if they can provide us with this data for the last 20 years. We will then be able to evaluate it and carry out our own analysis.

Beyond the aggregated data that is publicly available, as you say, will you establish a permanent, controlled-access channel to the microdata that will enable researchers—particularly independent ones—to study your funding mechanisms in a secure environment?

● (1730)

Marcel Turcot: Thank you for the question.

The committee has already requested data in the past. We have provided a great deal of data to the committee as well as to the public. We have taken the Privacy Act into account. We now publish millions of data records each year. We are reviewing our systems to see how we can continue to improve data coordination, together.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: I'll be waiting for your reply.

I have a general question for you.

The advisory panel repeatedly cites the Fonds de recherche du Québec as an example to follow and also says that it demonstrates a great deal of leadership.

This is a truly broad question for you. I am trying to understand what funding bodies can achieve that the Fonds de recherche du Québec and Quebec institutions are not capable of achieving. If you could provide me with a written response on this, I'd sleep a little better.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

We will go to MP Godin for three minutes and then end the panel with MP Deschênes-Thériault for three minutes.

Go ahead, MP Godin.

[*Translation*]

Joël Godin: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you for taking part in this exercise.

I am not a full member of the committee, although I do sit on the Standing Committee on Official Languages. In June 2023, the Official Languages Act was modernized. I would like to ask about one thing. A report was produced a few years ago, and another report is being tabled today.

This question is addressed to the three organizations.

Have you received specific instructions from the Treasury Board Secretariat or the Minister of Canadian Heritage to adapt and improve the francophone lens in your processes for allocating funding to francophone research since June 2023?

The question is addressed to Ms. Marin-Comeau, Ms. Lamoureux or Ms. Thompson.

Chantal Marin-Comeau: Thank you for the question.

I do not know whether we received any instructions from them, but it is something we did because it was the right thing to do.

Joël Godin: I'm listening, Ms. Lamoureux.

Sylvie Lamoureux: I can say that this happened shortly after I joined the SSHRC, but I was absent for six weeks on medical grounds when certain events took place. However, we were awaiting certain guidelines regarding part VII in particular. You want to know whether we received a highly specific guideline, but I would say they were more like interpretations of what it meant.

Joël Godin: So, you interpreted it.

Sylvie Lamoureux: We had a lot of discussions to work out what it might mean. We waited for further clarification. However, we did not receive any specific instructions telling us what we were supposed to do.

Joël Godin: So, these were tailored initiatives for each of the groups. That is my understanding. There was no official directive.

Sylvie Lamoureux: The directive is that it must be implemented.

Joël Godin: You're talking about implementing the act.

Sylvie Lamoureux: The act and the provisions of….

I apologize, it's been a very long day.

Joël Godin: No, no worries. It's been a long day for us too.

In fact, part VII, unfortunately, does not need to be applied, because the regulations have not yet been defined, once again. There is still time. It has already been three years.

Thank you, Ms. Lamoureux.

I'll be brief, as my time is very limited.

Ms. Thompson, I'd like to hear your views on this.

Anne-Marie Thompson: If I may say so, I would say that, for us too, it is rather similar to what my colleagues have mentioned. We have taken several steps. We have increased the space allocated in applications by 20%—

Joël Godin: That is not my question, Ms. Thompson. So you have not been given any specific instructions.

Anne-Marie Thompson: No.

Joël Godin: Well, I find this rather peculiar. A law is put in place; the government has the will and the intentions, but Treasury Board, which has the responsibility and the power to intervene in all departments, has not issued specific instructions to the departments under your remit. So, that is rather peculiar.

I would like to hear your comments, Ms. Lamoureux.

Sylvie Lamoureux: I don't know if Treasury Board sent any comments to Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, but—

● (1735)

Joël Godin: In fact, it should.

Sylvie Lamoureux: That's a good question.

Joël Godin: So what you did was at the initiative—

[*English*]

The Chair: Your time is up, MP Godin.

Joël Godin: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: MP Deschênes-Thériault, you have the final three minutes. Please go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: Thank you very much.

Earlier, I asked a question about applying a francophone lens. I asked how you see that in your respective organizations. I had reached the CIHR.

So, how do you see the implementation of a francophone lens in your area?

Chantal Marin-Comeau: Thank you for the question.

The francophone lens has to be organized around four components. First, research in French must be strengthened. Second is access to funding and evaluation. Third, we need engagement with—

[*English*]

An hon. member: [*Inaudible—Editor*]

[*Translation*]

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: Madam Chair, could you ask—

[*English*]

The Chair: It's MP Deschênes-Thériault's time.

We need another three minutes.

MP Deschênes-Thériault, go ahead, please.

[*Translation*]

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: Go ahead, Ms. Marin-Comeau.

Chantal Marin-Comeau: I'll go back to my answer to the question.

It really revolves around four major axes. The first major thrust is to strengthen research in French. The second axis is access to funding and peer review. The third area is knowledge mobilization. Finally, the fourth axis is the promotion of research, its dissemination and publication.

I'm telling you that, at CIHR, we have taken concrete action on all these axes. We'd be very happy to share those concrete steps. I have several pages here. However, there are always opportunities, and we are exploring every opportunity to strengthen research in French around these four major thrusts.

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: Thank you. Unfortunately, we don't have time to look at all of these measures, but feel free to send them to the committee. That would be interesting.

Measure 7 talks about visibility. More specifically, it proposes to "Increase granting-agency support for, and raise the visibility of, partnership-based research in French". This measure addresses the impact of research in French and is aimed directly at your three organizations.

I would like to hear what you have to say, in 30 seconds for each organization, on the issue of visibility.

Let's start with NSERC.

Anne-Marie Thompson: Thank you very much.

For us, visibility is very important. We mainly have the memorandum of understanding with Acfas and we participate in its Science Exposed contest. That's one of the ways we participate in outreach, for example.

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: What about you, Ms. Lamoureux?

Sylvie Lamoureux: SSHRC sponsors two Acfas awards. One is for professors. The other, which is new and is being awarded for the first time, is dedicated to students. It is presented at the Acfas conference and promotes or recognizes the participation of a student who made a presentation at the Acfas conference on the theme of the francophone minority community.

There's also the Impact Awards.

It's also present in the way we do things and talk to people. We make sure that French is valued in everything we do.

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: I think that's my time.

Thank you for your testimony.

We look forward to seeing the implementation of the recommendations in all three of your organizations.

[*English*]

The Chair: With that, this panel comes to an end.

I'll say a really big thank you to all the witnesses for appearing before the committee today.

There are two quick things before we adjourn the meeting.

One is about the briefing session with the chief statistician of Canada. We talked about it at our last meeting, on Tuesday, and MPs were going to discuss it with their fellow members.

If I can have some answers from the MPs on how to proceed....

Tony Baldinelli: Vincent would still like to go forward with that meeting.

The Chair: Okay, what about—

Tony Baldinelli: I'd prefer to wait for the new person because I'm not sure what answers we're going to get from the interim person.

The Chair: We have scheduled that for October 27, so if members want, we can go ahead.

MP Blanchette-Joncas.

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Madam Chair, I'm ready to welcome the chief statistician.

[*English*]

The Chair: No, as I indicated, we have scheduled the session for October 27, but there is no chief statistician now, so some representative can come. This appointment is not going to happen before October 27.

Are we okay to have a representative from there, or should we wait until the appointment is done?

Go ahead, MP Ho.

Vincent Ho: Thanks, Madam Chair.

Why not do both? Can we have the interim come and then have the new representative come at a later date?

● (1740)

The Chair: The motion we have is for one meeting, so maybe I will ask MPs to discuss this amongst themselves and let me know in the next week how to proceed on that.

MP Noormohamed, go ahead.

Taleeb Noormohamed (Vancouver Granville, Lib.): The motion says "the Chief Statistician", not "or representative". Is that correct? The motion is clear. I think we should adhere to the motion. On this basis, we should wait until the new person is there. Otherwise, it seems as though we're not following the motion that we all put forward.

The Chair: Okay, the second thing is that the committee set a deadline to submit written instructions to the analysts regarding the draft report on the study of Canada's dual-use and defence research needs.

Go ahead, MP McKelvie.

Jennifer McKelvie: Madam Chair, have we received the summary of research?

The Chair: Do you mean the summary of evidence?

Jennifer McKelvie: Yes, I mean the summary of evidence. What is your timeline for the summary of evidence?

The Chair: I'll consult with the analysts.

That will be provided by next week. Maybe after that we can decide on the deadline.

Jennifer McKelvie: I would say a week after we receive the summary of evidence.

Taleeb Noormohamed: Potentially next Friday, a week from—

Jennifer McKelvie: I'm worried about receiving the summary of evidence.

The Chair: Once it is circulated, then we can decide on the deadline.

Jennifer McKelvie: Just to clarify, it will summarize both the oral and the written submissions. There were quite a few written submissions.

The Chair: Hold on one second. The analyst will add to this.

Grégoire Gayard (Committee Researcher): What we usually provide is a list of themes discussed during the meetings and in the briefs, but we can do something more substantial if this is what you want.

Jennifer McKelvie: No. I think that's okay. I just want to make sure the themes you're going to send back will include the input from the written submissions. You've evaluated that as well.

Grégoire Gayard: Yes.

Jennifer McKelvie: Okay. That's my question.

The Chair: With that, do I have the will of the committee to adjourn the meeting?

Hold on one second.

Yes, MP Ho, go ahead.

Vincent Ho: I think we can wait. I'm looking at the motion again. We should wait for the appointment of the new chief statistician. We can get some fulsome answers after he or she has had some time to be acquainted with the office. However, we definitely don't want to concede this motion. We definitely want to welcome the new appointee.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you to everyone once again. Have a nice week in the riding.

The meeting is adjourned.

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