



# SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC ACTIVITIES IN 2017-18

Québec Government Office  
in Brussels

Ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie

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# INTRODUCTION BY THE DELEGATE GENERAL



A number of ministerial missions to Benelux and numerous visits by high-level Québec government representatives in 2017-2018 reconfirms—if more proof was needed—the interest that the highest levels of the Government of Québec attach to this territory, which is a strategic partner in a host of areas. Conversely, Québec is a source of inspiration for Belgium and especially for its federated entities. The special relationship that binds us reached historic heights with the state visit by the King and Queen of Belgium last March. More than 40 years after the state visit by King Baudouin and Queen Fabiola in 1977, Québec hosted King Philippe and Queen Mathilde in Montréal on March 15 and 16. They were accompanied by a large delegation of over 250 people from the political, business and academic communities. Of the 51 agreements signed during this state visit, 41 were with Québec partners, testifying to the central role that Québec plays in Belgium-Canada relations.

This past year (2017-2018) also saw the provisional application of the Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), which is so dear to Québec and whose importance has been confirmed by international political events in recent months. All the personnel of the Québec Government Office in Brussels (DGQB) have been mobilized since September 21, 2017, to promote Québec as an ideal partner on the other side of the Atlantic for, among others, the political class, business people and opinion leaders. Meanwhile, our teams are hard at work supporting Québec companies seeking to be more active in Benelux.

The provisional entry into force of CETA has also contributed to bringing Québec closer to the European Union, a key international actor, as well as to its institutions. European government policies are a source of inspiration for Québec, and the opposite is increasingly true. This shared interest is most manifest in the area of research and innovation. The DGQB has, in fact, helped organize several activities and missions in this area during the course of the past year.

In this respect, I would like to mention that our team has been strengthened by the addition of a research and innovation attaché whose mandate is to promote research collaboration between Québec and the European Union. In the same vein, a new economic attaché has been assigned to the Netherlands, testifying to our desire to strengthen our ties with this country, which boasts multiple assets and which is one of Québec's main export markets in Europe.

This summary of strategic activities is aimed at providing an overview of the DGQB's main activities from April 1, 2017, to March 31, 2018. Please do not hesitate to contact us for more information on our activities in Benelux and our interactions with European institutions.

Happy reading!

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Michel Audet". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Michel Audet

Delegate General

# GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

## COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC AND TRADE AGREEMENT

The provisional entry into force of the Canada-European Union (EU) Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement on September 21, 2017, was a great victory for Québec, the instigator of the project. The full application of the agreement will, however, require its ratification by all EU member states. DGQB has thus endeavoured in 2017-2018 to promote the agreement with policy makers, the media, non-governmental organizations and other associations, as well as with business people and decision makers in order for them to benefit from it.

### Mission by Québec's chief negotiator for CETA to Belgium and the Netherlands

In the wake of the provisional application of CETA, Pierre Marc Johnson, Québec's chief negotiator for this agreement, met with European business, political and civil society representatives in Belgium and the Netherlands. As special advisor to the government on trade agreements, Mr. Johnson spoke during the seminar entitled *How can small and medium-sized businesses benefit from CETA?* organized by the Fédération des entreprises belges. The chief negotiator also addressed the issue of political and economic relations between Québec and Wallonia with the new Minister-President of Wallonia, Willy Borsus. In addition, he met with Jolana Mungengová, who is with the office of the Trade Commissioner of the European Commission, Cecilia Malmström.



Québec's chief negotiator for CETA, Pierre Marc Johnson (on the right), meeting the new Minister-President of Wallonia, Willy Borsus (in the middle) in Namur, accompanied by the Delegate General of Québec in Brussels, Michel Audet (on the left) – September 26, 2017

In the Netherlands, Mr. Johnson was received by the Standing Committee on Foreign Trade of the Dutch Parliament and was able to exchange views with members of various political parties. He also met with representatives of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs to review the political situation in the country.

Mr. Johnson also made himself available for meetings with several civil society associations. This allowed him to promote the benefits of CETA with representatives of the largest union in the Netherlands, the Dutch Federation of Trade Unions as well as the Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations (SOMO), FoodWatch and Milieudefensie.

Lastly, he made a presentation to a large audience of business people at a reception jointly organized by the Netherlands-Canada Chamber of Commerce and the Embassy of Canada to the Netherlands in The Hague.



Québec's chief negotiator for CETA, Pierre Marc Johnson, addressing the members of the Standing Committee on Foreign Trade of the Dutch Parliament in The Hague – September 28, 2017

## Promotion of CETA with Québec companies

On August 29, 2017, the Delegate General of Québec in Brussels, Michel Audet, was in Drummondville, in the Centre-du-Québec region, for a conference entitled *Le marché européen s'ouvre à vous, soyez prêts!* [The European market is opening up to you, be ready!]. Organized by the Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation du Québec, this important meeting for Québec agri-food industry stakeholders brought together an array of experts. Minister Laurent Lessard was in attendance.

Mr. Audet made a presentation on business opportunities in Europe for companies in the agri-food sector on the eve of the provisional entry into force of CETA. The economic attachés from the Québec government offices in Brussels, London, Munich, Paris and Rome covering this sector also attended the meeting.



Michel Audet, Delegate General of Québec in Brussels, during the *Doing business in Europe – Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement* conference at Technoparc Montréal. Also in the photo: Line Beauchamp, Delegate General of Québec in Paris, the Honourable Stéphane Dion, Canada's Ambassador to Germany and Special Envoy to the European Union and Europe, and Isabelle Hudon, Canada's Ambassador to France – March 13, 2018

The Delegate General of Québec in Brussels also participated in two conferences in March 2018 organized by Export Québec and the Canadian Trade Commissioner Service entitled *Doing business in Europe – Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement*. One took place at Technoparc Montréal and the other in Québec City under the auspices of the Chambre de commerce et d'industrie de Québec. The events aimed to spur companies to expand into the lucrative European market and generated many stimulating discussions.

## Presentation of the *Hommage du 50<sup>e</sup> anniversaire* Medal of the Ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie du Québec to Artis Pabriks, member of the European Parliament



Member of the European Parliament and European Parliament Rapporteur on CETA, Artis Pabriks, receives the *Hommage du 50<sup>e</sup> anniversaire* Medal of Québec's Ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie in Brussels from the Minister responsible for Government Administration and Ongoing Program Review and Chair of the Conseil du trésor, Pierre Arcand – January 24, 2018

On January 24, 2018, at the New Year reception of the Québec Government Office in Brussels, Artis Pabriks, a member of the European Parliament, received the *Hommage du 50<sup>e</sup> anniversaire* Medal of the Québec Ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie. The Government of Québec awards this medal to prominent figures who have made a positive contribution to the promotion of Québec interests over the years. In Brussels, the Québec Minister responsible for Government Administration and Ongoing Program Review and Chair of the Conseil du trésor, Pierre Arcand, presented the medal to Mr. Pabriks in recognition of his hard work in the process leading to the conclusion of the Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement.

### **Jean Lemire attends the Arctic Futures Symposium**

The first mission by Jean Lemire to Brussels provided an opportunity for Québec's Envoy for Climate Change and Northern and Arctic Affairs to make his entry into the European Arctic scene. Mr. Lemire was invited to deliver a speech during the prestigious opening session of the Arctic Futures Symposium, where he captivated the audience with his firsthand experience of northern issues and the rapidly evolving Arctic.

The Arctic Futures Symposium attracted some 180 participants, including representatives of local communities, political and diplomatic circles and field specialists through the intermediary of the International Polar Foundation. The Arctic ambassadors of the EU, Denmark, Sweden, Iceland and Norway, to name just a few, all participated in the symposium. This major European gathering also enabled Jean Lemire to expand his network of contacts through bilateral meetings with key actors, including the Director-General of DG MARE of the European Commission (responsible for maritime affairs and fisheries) and the Arctic Ambassadors of Sweden and Denmark. Québec gained excellent visibility at this symposium.

A second Québec panelist, René Therrien, Vice Dean for Research at the Faculty of Sciences and Engineering of Université Laval, spoke about the importance of the Plan Nord for Québec. Mr. Therrien is the Chair of the Implementation Committee of the Institut nordique du Québec, which was created in partnership with the Government of Québec (Société du Plan Nord) in order to support the sustainable development of northern Québec.

The second part of Mr. Lemire's mission was mainly devoted to bilateral meetings with Belgian partners. He had some very interesting discussions with representatives of the Walloon Air and Climate Agency, for instance. Mr. Lemire also held discussions with Arctic and Northern region specialists from the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) and the Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB). His program wrapped up with a meeting with the Arctic Ambassador of the EU, Marie-Anne Coninx, of the European External Action Service.



Meeting in Brussels between Québec's Envoy for Climate Change and Northern and Arctic Affairs, Jean Lemire, and the Arctic Ambassador of the European Union, Marie-Anne Coninx – November 22, 2017

## Environmental cooperation agreement between Québec and the Brussels-Capital Region

The Delegate General of Québec in Brussels, Michel Audet, and the Minister of the Government of the Brussels-Capital Region (BCR), responsible for Housing, Quality of Life, Environment and Energy, Céline Fremault, renewed a cooperation agreement on contaminated land management.

The rehabilitation and redevelopment of land and soil contaminated by earlier economic activities are important environmental, social and economic issues for both Québec and BCR. Québec adopted legislation in March 2003 to promote the rehabilitation of contaminated land, while BCR recently adopted an ordinance with similar objectives.



Signing of the cooperation program on contaminated land management by the Delegate General of Québec in Brussels, Michel Audet, and the Minister of the Government of the Brussels-Capital Region (BCR), responsible for the Environment, Céline Fremault – December 20, 2017

The governments of Québec and BCR signed a first cooperation agreement on the rehabilitation of contaminated soils in 2008. This agreement forms part of a broader agreement signed in 2002 between the two governments, which covers all the areas of jurisdiction of BCR, with a focus on the prevention of urban insecurity and antisocial behaviour, as well as scientific research, the economy, employment, urban revitalization and foreign trade.

The new cooperation program on contaminated land management is slated to run for two years. The aim of the program is to promote the exchange of experience, good practices and information in order to develop sustainable solutions for the management of contaminated soils.

The following areas of interest, among others, will be addressed: the rehabilitation and traceability of contaminated land, the inventory and mapping of potentially contaminated sites, measures to prevent the contamination of soils, cleanup techniques, green technologies and funding mechanisms for cleanups.

## MARITIME STRATEGY

### European Utility Week

The DGQB, Export Québec and the Embassy of Canada in The Hague joined forces to organize the participation of Québec and Canada in European Utility Week last October in Amsterdam. This is the biggest meeting of European electricity and smart grid stakeholders. The themes covered this year included the energy revolution, smart grids, data management, energy and sustainable and smart cities. Four Québec companies attended the event to present their technologies—Hydro-Québec, OPAL-RT, Ossiaco and CGI.

### European Maritime Day

On May 18, 2017, the Minister for Maritime Affairs, Jean D'Amour, travelled to Poole in the United Kingdom to participate in a maritime affairs flagship event in Europe—the European Maritime Day conference. This annual meeting allows stakeholders from political circles, the business community and universities as well as regional actors to take part in discussions on maritime issues and to target steps to be taken in the coming years. The conference, which attracted some 800 participants, was the ideal event to take the pulse of the EU maritime community and to present the Québec Maritime Strategy, which Minister Jean D'Amour was able to do when he addressed the audience at the opening session.

Mr. D'Amour also held bilateral meetings with key European actors in the maritime sector, including the European Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Karmenu Vella; the Director of the European Regions Research and Innovation Network (ERRIN), Richard Tuffs; and Vasco Cordeiro, the President of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPRM), which represents some 160 European regions. These meetings served as a platform to explore potential avenues of cooperation with CPRM, ERRIN and DG MARE of the European Commission.

### Relations between the Ports of Antwerp and Montréal

In October 2017, Antwerp organized a multisectoral mission to Montréal with the participation of senior officials from the Port of Antwerp, including the President and Chief Executive Officer, Jacques Vandermeiren. For the occasion, the Port of Montréal organized a hospitality event for all the members of the Antwerp mission at its headquarters, with the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Port of Montréal, Sylvie Vachon, in attendance.

## Development of links between the Québec Port Authority and Belgium and the Netherlands

On the occasion of a state visit, the Québec Port Authority (QPA) signed a collaboration agreement with the ports of Brussels and Zeebrugge as well as the Netherlands-Belgium North Sea Port.

The Port of Brussels and QPA signed a partnership agreement that will allow them to address common issues. The agreement was signed by the Chair of the Port of Brussels, Mohammed Jabour, and the President and Chief Executive Officer of QPA, Mario Girard, in the presence of the Minister-President of the Brussels-Capital Region, Rudi Vervoort. This agreement will not only allow the two ports to hold discussions on efforts and initiatives in matters of sustainable development and environmental protection but will also promote the sharing of good practices for improving the integration of the infrastructures of the two ports into the urban environment.

The President and Chief Executive Officer of QPA, Mario Girard, and the Chair of the Port of Zeebrugge, Joachim Coens, also signed a partnership agreement aimed at exploring the potential of developing trade ties between the two ports.

This new partnership will promote the development of synergies between the two ports in several key commercial areas, including containers and automobile terminals. This partnership will also provide opportunities to share know-how and good practices in the areas of sustainable port management, city-port relationships and commercial data of interest to both ports.

The President and Chief Executive Officer of QPA, Mario Girard, and the President and Chief Executive Officer of the North Sea Port, Daan Schalck, also signed a partnership agreement that will enable the two ports to address a number of shared issues and to encourage trade ties. This new collaboration will promote, among other things, the forging of trade partnerships, especially in the areas of cereals, ore and the forest industry. The agreement is also aimed at providing opportunities to discuss and share know-how and best practices in the areas of sustainable port management and city-port relationships.



In Montréal, Québec's Minister for Maritime Affairs, Jean D'Amour (on the left), holds talks with the Minister-President of Flanders, Geert Bourgeois (in the middle), on cooperation in the maritime sector between Flanders and Québec – March 15, 2018

## PROMOTION OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IN QUÉBEC

### Meeting between the Minister for Maritime Affairs, Jean D'Amour, and the Minister-President of Flanders, Geert Bourgeois

An official meeting between the Québec Minister for Maritime Affairs, Jean D'Amour, and the Minister-President of Flanders, Geert Bourgeois, was also held during the state visit, where the two discussed a host of issues, including the future of ports, intelligent logistics, the blue economy, the potential of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement and closer cooperation between Flanders and Québec.

The DGQB was especially active this year promoting educational opportunities in Québec. It wrapped up the student fair season by taking part, from March 15 to 17, 2018, in the Liège edition of student fairs organized annually by the Information Service on Studies and Professions (SIEP). Québec's booth attracted many visitors. Over 18,000 people visited the Liège fair, which was devoted to secondary and higher education, training and employment. Prior to that, the DGQB participated in fairs organized by SIEP in Brussels in November, then in Namur in February. It also participated in the Brussels edition of Studyrama in January, a fair devoted exclusively to international studies.

Québec is the most sought-after destination for Belgian students outside Europe, as witnessed by the popularity of Québec's booth at each of the fairs. Québec's institutions of higher education were invited to participate in these promotional fairs, and several responded to the call, including Université de Montréal, Université Laval, Université de Sherbrooke, Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières and Québec Métiers d'avenir. Our colleagues at the Québec Immigration Office in Paris also took part, given the many questions on immigration asked during these fairs.



Québec was well represented at the student fair organized by the Namur Information Service on Studies and Professions. On the photo, from left to right: Catherine Mussely (DGQB), Grégoire Diamant (DGQB), Stéphanie Scailquin (City of Namur), Firmin Havugimana (Université de Montréal), Michèle Kervarec (Québec Métiers d'avenir) and Alexandra Melançon (Université Laval) – February 23, 2018

The DGQB has also stepped up its efforts to promote Québec's educational opportunities in Luxembourg, which has great potential despite its small size. French-speaking university students in Luxembourg must complete part of their studies abroad to obtain their diploma. Moreover, over half of the student population in Luxembourg comes from outside the country (most are from France) and can thus take advantage of the agreement between Québec and France on tuition fees. Many French-speaking Belgians who study in France will also be able to take advantage of preferential tuition fees beginning in fall 2018.

# MAJOR POLITICAL MISSIONS

## MISSION BY THE MINISTER OF FINANCE, CARLOS LEITÃO

Québec's Minister of Finance, Carlos Leitão, was in Brussels on June 21 and 22, 2017, to provide international financial stakeholders with an overview of Québec's economic situation and public finances following the tabling of the Québec Economic Plan in March 2017. He met with the Minister of Finance of Belgium, Johan Van Overtveldt, and the Chair of the Belgian Financial Sector Federation, Johan Thijs. Mr. Leitão also travelled to the Netherlands where he met with Dutch financial analysts. The Minister was, moreover, guest of honour at the reception for the *Fête nationale du Québec*, during which the DGQB inaugurated its new premises in the Châtelain district.



During the *Fête nationale du Québec* reception in Brussels, the Minister of Finance, Carlos Leitão, presented the *Hommage du 50<sup>e</sup> anniversaire* Medal of the Québec Ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie to Serge Jaumain, Professor at the Free University of Brussels (ULB). From left to right: Michel Audet, Serge Jaumain, Carlos Leitão and Yvon Englert (Rector of ULB). – June 23, 2017

## MISSION BY THE MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION, HÉLÈNE DAVID

The Minister responsible for Higher Education, Hélène David, headed a mission to Belgium on September 27 and 28, 2017, during which she met with European and Belgian actors in the education sector. She notably had the opportunity to hold discussions with the Minister for Higher Education, Research and Media of the French Community of Belgium, Jean-Claude Marcourt. One of the goals of Ms. David's mission was to draw on the experience of the French Community of Belgium in matters of interuniversity governance. The internationalization of studies for French-language institutions as well as student mobility and the promotion of educational opportunities in Québec were also on the agenda. In addition, Ms. David met with the Deputy Director-General for Education and Culture at the European Commission, Jens Nymand-Christensen, with whom she discussed, among other topics, the Erasmus+ Program that enables Europeans to study in Québec and for Quebecers wishing to study in Europe.

Another high point of the Minister's mission was her attendance at the finals of *Ma thèse en 180 secondes*, during which 20 PhD students had to present their research to a public of neophytes in 3 minutes flat. The first edition in French of this contest was organized in 2012 by the *Association francophone pour le savoir*. The Minister was interviewed live during the jury deliberations and played along by summarizing the results of her own thesis.

Two Québec PhD students participated in the finals, Catherine Girard from Université de Montréal and Damien Mathis from Université Laval. Congratulations are owed to Damien, who came in second!



The Minister responsible for Higher Education, Hélène David, with Catherine Girard and Damien Mathis, the two Québec participants in the *Ma thèse en 180 secondes* contest in Liège – September 28, 2017

## Consolidation of the network of Québec graduates living in Belgium

The DGQB organized on September 27, 2017, an activity that brought together the alumni of Québec universities living in Belgium. This activity provided a unique opportunity for over 80 participants—Belgians, Quebecers, French, French-speakers, Dutch-speakers, young and not so young—to network and reminisce about their student years.



Networking evening attended by alumni of Québec universities living in Belgium in the presence of the Minister responsible for Higher Education, Hélène David, and the chief negotiator for CETA and former Premier of Québec, Pierre Marc Johnson.

The presence of the Minister responsible for Higher Education, Hélène David, was much appreciated by the participants. The chief negotiator for the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement and former Premier of Québec, Pierre Marc Johnson, himself a graduate of Université de Montréal and Université de Sherbrooke, was on a mission to Belgium and the Netherlands at the time and was also present. It was agreed by all that more gatherings of this kind should be held in the future.

## MISSION OF THE MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND ONGOING PROGRAM REVIEW AND CHAIR OF THE CONSEIL DU TRÉSOR, PIERRE ARCAND

The Minister responsible for Government Administration and Ongoing Program Review and Chair of the Conseil du trésor, Pierre Arcand, was in Brussels on January 24, 2018, while on a mission to Europe, which also took him to Paris and London. His focus was on learning about best practices in the areas of public building management, shared services, budgetary controls and administrative simplification.

During his trip to Brussels, Mr. Arcand met with the Minister of Budget of the Government of the French Community of Belgium, André Flahaut; the Minister of Finance, Budget and External Relations in the Government of the Brussels-Capital Region, Guy Vanhengel; the Minister of Budget, Finance, Energy, Climate and Airports of the Government of Wallonia, Jean-Luc Crucke; and the Minister of Budget, Finance and Energy of the Flemish Government, Bart Tommelein.

The Minister took advantage of his trip to Europe to promote Québec's economic and budgetary policies and its social and economic strengths in the context, among others, of the provisional application of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement. His meetings with several European counterparts allowed the Minister to enhance the Government of Québec's ongoing efforts to control government spending.



Meeting between the Minister of Budget, Finance, Energy, Climate and Airports of the Government of Wallonia, Jean-Luc Crucke, and Québec's Minister responsible for Government Administration and Ongoing Program Review and Chair of the Conseil, Pierre Arcand – January 24, 2018

## MISSION BY THE MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR CONSUMER PROTECTION AND FOR HOUSING, LISE THÉRIAULT

The Québec Minister responsible for Consumer Protection and for Housing, Lise Thériault, headed a mission to Europe from February 26 to March 2, 2018, aimed at promoting the exchange of experiences and best practices in the area of consumer law. After a stay in London, she made a stopover in Brussels on February 27 and 28, where she met the Deputy Prime Minister of Belgium and Minister of Employment, Economy and Consumer Affairs of the federal government, Kris Peeters. She also had an opportunity to hold discussions with consumer protection experts, including the Chair of the Special Commission on Consumer Protection, Reinhard Steennot; the Secretary General of the consumer protection platform AB-Reoc, Leen De Cort; and the spokesperson for Test-Achats, Julie Frère.

Minister Thériault also held discussions with EU consumer protection actors. She first met with the Deputy Director-General for Justice and Consumers of the European Commission, Francisco Fonseca Morillo, who was accompanied by several heads of unit. During this first meeting, the Minister and the Deputy Director-General discussed consumer protection practices on both sides of the Atlantic and the major reforms now underway in Europe. At her meeting with the Director-General of the European Bureau of Consumers' Unions (BEUC), Monique Goyens, she discussed a range of topics including the implications of artificial intelligence on consumers. It is worth recalling that BEUC represents 43 independent national consumer associations in 31 European countries. Lastly, Minister Thériault travelled to the European Consumer Centre of Belgium (CEDC) to meet with its Director, Karen Ghysels. Their discussions revealed that the CEC and the Office de la protection du consommateur du Québec have similar approaches for protecting consumers.



Meeting between Québec's Minister responsible for Consumer Protection and for Housing, Lise Thériault, and the Deputy Prime Minister of Belgium and Minister of Employment, Economy and Consumer Affairs, in charge of Foreign Trade, Kris Peeters – February 27, 2018

## Belgian state visit to Canada

This past year was marked by a historic event in Québec-Belgian relations. More than 40 years after the state visit by King Baudouin and Queen Fabiola in 1977, Québec hosted King Philippe and Queen Mathilde in Montreal on March 15 and 16. They were accompanied by a large delegation of over 250 people from the political, business and academic communities. The Belgian royal couple met with the Premier of Québec, Philippe Couillard, and other influential Cabinet members, a sign of the importance that the Government of Québec attaches to Belgium.

Artificial intelligence was at the heart of one of the numerous activities organized for this state visit. Premier Philippe Couillard

reiterated his commitment to setting up an international AI organization in Montréal. Scientific cooperation, digital technologies for teaching, life sciences, maritime transport logistics and youth entrepreneurship were all also on the agenda at forums and seminars. Of the 51 agreements signed during this state visit, 41 were with Québec partners, which testifies to the central role that Québec plays in Belgium-Canada relations.

The Premier of Québec, Philippe Couillard, and the Minister-President of the French Community of Belgium, Rudy Demotte, signed a declaration aimed at increasing the mobility of French-speaking students between the two jurisdictions. This declaration opened the way for the official signing on April 11, 2018, in Québec City of the university student mobility agreement between the governments of Québec and the French Community of Belgium.

The DGQB is proud to have contributed to the success of this major mission conducted with brio by Belgium and its various entities!



The Premier of Québec, Philippe Couillard, greets Their Majesties King Philippe and Queen Mathilde – March 15, 2018

# ECONOMIC AND TRADE AFFAIRS

## SUPPORT FOR COMPANIES

The DGQB Economic Service team helped 123 companies and organized over a hundred business meetings in the course of 2017-2018 for Québec businesses wishing to set up shop or do business in Benelux. The support activities were primarily in the agri-food, information and communication technologies, life sciences, construction, the industrial sector and transportation sectors.

Agri-food is a priority sector for Benelux and even more so since the signing of the Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement. The number of requests for assistance in this sector has increased significantly in the past year. In addition, the transportation sector is an especially important area of relations between Québec and Belgium and the Netherlands due to the presence of Bombardier in these two countries and partnership agreements between ports. Benelux is an internationally recognized logistics hub and a valuable platform for companies seeking to expand to all European countries. A number of Québec companies have secured distribution or representation agreements and technological partnerships. Several companies have even set up shop in Benelux, including Elasto Proxy, GenePOC, Technostrobe and Caprion.

## MAJOR TRADE MISSIONS AND EVENTS

The Economic Service has contributed to more than 32 trade missions in the territory and elsewhere in Europe. Here are some examples.

### **Seafood Expo Global 2017**

Québec participates each year in April in Seafood Expo Global, the largest seafood product fair in the world. Once again this year, 10 Québec companies and organizations participated in the fair, where they were able to meet with the “who’s who” of this burgeoning industry thanks to the invaluable support of Québec’s Ministère de l’Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l’Alimentation and the Agri-Food Export Group, notably GÎMEXPORT. The latter plays a major role in the export and commercialization of products from Gaspésie and Îles-de-la-Madeleine. Certain seafood products exported to Europe were subject to custom duties of up to 20% prior to the signing of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), which is why the entry into force of CETA between Canada and the European Union was excellent news for Québec companies and European purchasers of Québec seafood products.

## Tavola

Last March, for the first time, 12 Québec companies introduced their gourmet products at the Québec pavilion at the Tavola fair, which showcases speciality foods and premium quality beverages. Known for the excellence of its organization and the variety of food on display, Tavola is a must-attend event in Benelux. The DGQB, in collaboration with the Government of Canada, organized a CETA promotional activity at Tavola this year.



Québec was well represented at the Tavola Fair in Courtrai – March 15 to 17, 2018

## Luxembourg Internet Days

Last November, in partnership with the Embassy of Canada in Brussels and the support of Export Québec, Québec companies had an opportunity to exhibit at Luxembourg Internet Days. The fair highlighted the themes of cyber security and the digital transformations performed by telecommunication, Internet and cloud computing professionals at SMEs.

## Green building mission

The DGQB had the honour of hosting the Bas-Saint-Laurent green building niche of excellence in Belgium in March 2018 on the occasion of a mission headed by this organization. The Bas-Saint-Laurent group had previously signed a cooperation agreement with the Wallonia Green Building Cluster. A delegation of 16 active members of the softwood lumber industry participated in this mission during the week of the Bois & Habitat fair in Namur. This mission was aimed at further strengthening ties with Belgium.



Québec delegation from the green building niche of excellence at the Bois & Habitat fair in Namur – March 23, 2018

## Benelux buyers mission to Québec

The Economic Service organizes a number of missions to Québec for potential buyers, influencers and major contractors. It designs tailor-made programs to present the technologies and know-how of Québec companies. In 2017-2018, seven buyers from Benelux participated in such a program, which was organized in collaboration with Québec's Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation and Export Québec. Buyers were invited to events such as SIAL Canada (the International Food Fair) and C2 Montréal. The Economic Service also invited the Chief Strategy Officer of the City of Gand to Montréal on the occasion of the ITS World Congress on intelligent transportation systems. Several Dutch delegations participated in the 2017 edition of this congress in Montréal and subsequently undertook a number of projects in partnership with Québec companies.

In addition, in February, Belgian hospital purchasing, strategy and innovation managers visited Québec as part of a personalized program that included 42 meetings with 26 Québec companies. Prior to this mission, a webinar had been organized for Québec companies during which the Belgian purchasing managers presented the needs and challenges of their respective hospitals. The mission participants also had the opportunity to visit several state-of-the-art Québec medical facilities such as the Montréal University Hospital Centre, the Montréal Heart Institute and the McGill University Health Centre.



The DGQB provided support for a mission to Québec by Belgian hospital purchasing managers – February 2018

# SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION



The European Commission manages the largest research program in the world, i.e., Horizon 2020—the EU Framework Program for Research and Innovation, which will invest nearly 80 billion euros between 2014 and 2020, or more than CAN \$120 billion. The program has a long-established objective of facilitating the participation of researchers from third-world countries in the program. In order to help Québec researchers take advantage of this opportunity, Québec provides structured funding that allows its researchers to participate in research consortiums operating within the Horizon 2020 Framework Program. Since 2007, 28 projects have received \$17 million in grants from Québec, the only Canadian province to set up such a fund.

The DGQB works tirelessly to strengthen collaboration between Québec and the European Commission in the field of research and innovation and has supported the organization of several activities and missions in this area over the past year. These efforts have helped bolster ties between Québec and the European Commission notably with the signing of a cooperation agreement between the European Commission and Mitacs, a Canadian organization that provides research support services. This agreement provides funding from the European Commission for European PhD students and postdoctoral fellows for research internships in Canada. In return, Mitacs provides funding for Canadian PhD students and postdoctoral fellows to enable them to participate in research projects in member countries of the EU.

Québec's Minister of Economy, Science and Innovation has also stepped up cooperation with the European Commission through the creation in Québec of a contact point for Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA). MSCA grants provide funding for persons active in the field of research and innovation in Europe and elsewhere. They also encourage knowledge transfer and cooperation between the university and non-university communities.

## 9<sup>th</sup> EUROPEAN INNOVATION SUMMIT

The European Innovation Summit, an annual flagship event in Brussels, was held from November 27 to 30, 2017. Québec attended as an official partner. A delegation headed by the Assistant Deputy Minister of Economy, Science and Innovation, Marie-Josée Blais, proudly represented Québec. In addition to welcoming the representatives from Québec, including Gilles Savard of IVADO, Dr. Guy Rouleau of Neuro McGill and Daniel Coderre of Génome Québec, the Summit brought together leaders from the public and private sectors. Information and communication technologies, artificial intelligence and open science as well as transatlantic cooperation and the preparation of the next EU Framework Program for Research and Innovation underpinned the discussions. As an official partner, Québec was invited to give a speech (presented by Ms. Blais) at the opening plenary session of the Summit before an audience of nearly 150 experts and actors in the field. Other speeches by members of the delegation during strategic panels also provided great visibility for Québec's research and innovation policies and expertise.



Marie-Josée Blais, Assistant Deputy Minister at Québec's Ministère de l'Économie, de la Science et de l'Innovation du Québec, represented Québec at the 9th European Innovation Summit. On the photo: meeting with the European Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science, Carlos Moedas – November 29, 2017

## MEETING WITH THE EUROPEAN COMMISSIONER FOR RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND SCIENCE

The Deputy Premier and Minister of Economy, Science and Innovation, Dominique Anglade, met the European Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science, Carlos Moedas, on January 25, 2018, at the World Economic Forum in Davos. Mr. Moedas, one of 28 commissioners of the European Commission, is the most influential European actor in the field of research and innovation. The meeting provided the Minister and the Commissioner with an opportunity for meaningful discussions on potential collaborations between Québec and the EU in this sector.

## COLLABORATION WITH THE EUROPEAN REGIONS RESEARCH AND INNOVATION NETWORK

The European Regions Research and Innovation Network (ERRIN) is a platform of over 100 European regions whose goal is to promote the exchange of knowledge and facilitate joint actions, partnerships and projects among its members in order to strengthen their research and innovation capacities. Three members of ERRIN—Richard Tuffs, Director of ERRIN; Heidi Kristina Jakobsen, Stavanger region of Norway; and Mikel Irujo Amezaga, Spanish region of Navarre—undertook a mission to Montréal from June 12 to 16, 2017, at the invitation of Québec’s Chief Scientist, Rémi Quirion.

This mission gave concrete form to the collaboration agreement signed in November 2014 by Fonds de recherche du Québec (FRQ) and ERRIN on three priority themes: (1) energy and the fight against climate change; (2) healthy aging; and (3) smart specialization. The ERRIN delegation took an active part in three workshops on these themes organized by FRQ in collaboration with the Ministère de l’Économie, de la Science et de l’Innovation. It also took part in the International Economic Forum of the Americas/Montréal Conference in addition to holding bilateral meetings. The mission served to raise the profile of ERRIN in Québec and to promote the many opportunities for collaboration between European regions and Québec on European research and innovation projects, notably in the context of Horizon 2020.

Moreover, at a seminar of the ERRIN working group on open science on September 12, 2017, in Brussels, the European Affairs Service of the DGQB had an opportunity to present Québec’s international cooperation strategy in research and innovation to some 40 representatives of European regions and organizations. This activity enabled the delegation to identify potential partnerships between Québec and European researchers as well as ways to strengthen research and innovation cooperation between the EU and Québec.

We are delighted with the success of these activities, which highlighted the enormous potential for research and innovation cooperation between Québec and European regions!



Québec’s Minister of International Relations and La Francophonie, Christine St-Pierre, met with members of the European Regions Research and Innovation Network during their mission to Montréal – June 2017

## QUÉBEC–FRENCH COMMUNITY OF BELGIUM BILATERAL PROGRAM FOR COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH

On July 6, 2017, the Fonds de la recherche scientifique–FNRS of Belgium (FRS–FNRS), in partnership with the Fonds de recherche du Québec (FRQ), announced the results of the first Québec–French Community of Belgium bilateral collaborative research program, which was launched in fall 2016. More than 140 letters of intent were received and 52 eligible projects were submitted, 4 of which were selected. Each of the Québec teams selected received a maximum of \$200,000 spread over two years. The projects will be conducted in collaboration with Belgian teams, which will receive funding from FRS–FNRS (150,000 euros over two years, or nearly CDN \$230,000).

In addition, FRQ and the Research Foundation–Flanders (Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek–Vlaanderen–FWO) announced last December the awarding of four grants following the 2017 competition of the Québec–Flanders Bilateral Collaborative Research Program. This was the second call for projects for this program, which was established under the collaboration agreement signed in March 2013.

## CULTURE AND IDENTITY

Québec’s cultural programming in Benelux is extraordinarily diverse and extensive year after year. The 2017-2018 period was marked by official missions to Québec by the Flanders Minister of Culture, Sven Gatz, and the Minister of Culture of the French Community of Belgium, Alda Greoli, in April and September 2017, respectively. They met with their Québec counterpart, Luc Fortin. A new impetus was given to cultural relations between Québec and Belgium. The Cultural Service supported 194 artists in Benelux as well as 5 trips by cultural presenters, programmers and journalists.

## CULTURAL EVENTS AND PUBLIC ACTIVITIES

### Fête nationale du Québec in Brussels

The celebration of the Fête nationale du Québec in Brussels attracts some one thousand enthusiastic participants each and every year. Whether at the official reception or on the occasion of the more festive reception downtown, the DGQB not only celebrated Québec but also put Québec music in the spotlight with a concert by *Les Frères Lemay* on June 24, 2017. The collaboration between three Québec microbreweries and Moeder Lambic, a well-known Brussels bar where the festivities took place, was a success. A big thank you to the many sponsors who made this activity possible.



*Les Frères Lemay* gave a rip-roaring performance during the *Fête nationale du Québec* in downtown Brussels – June 23, 2017

## Festival eat! Brussels

Québec participated for the sixth time in *Festival eat! Brussels*, which was held from September 7 to 10, 2017. Québec's culinary heritage was on the menu, including poutine, which was presented in a highly original way by chefs Vincent Bernier and Graham Gartside Bernier in collaboration with *La Petite Cabane à sucre de Québec*. Festival-goers were invited to sample Québec beers, liqueurs, syrups and other delicacies at the boutique set up next to Québec's booth in the International Pavilion. The DGQB also organized an evening of tasting that was attended by gastronomic professionals and trade journalists.

## Brussels Book Fair

Twenty authors and 30 publishers from Québec took part in the Brussels Book Fair from February 22 to 25, 2018, thanks notably to the support of Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec and the Offices jeunesse internationaux du Québec. More than 800 books were on display at the *Québec Édition* booth, which boasted record sales surpassing previous years (excluding 2015 and 2017, when Québec and Montréal were honoured). Thanks to the help from the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications and the talent of graphic artists from the Ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie, the Cultural Service was able to produce and cover the cost of 31,000 copies of a promotional brochure, which was inserted in the *Le Vif/L'Express* magazine. As in previous years, the DGQB organized and sponsored a reception at the Québec Édition booth the evening of the official opening, which was attended by more than 200 people. Fifty-six autograph sessions were organized at the Québec booth. A dozen talks featuring Québec authors were held by *Québec Édition* during the fair.



The Québec booth at the Brussels Book Fair was very popular once again – February 2018

## PROMOTION OF THE FRENCH LANGUAGE

### Conference by Gérard Bouchard in Luxembourg

In collaboration with the DGQB, the Jean Monnet Research Group for European Governance at the University of Luxembourg invited Québec professor and sociologist Gérard Bouchard to deliver a lecture on interculturalism. This model for managing ethnocultural diversity, which is unique to Québec, is of great interest to Luxembourg, a multinational country that, like Québec, is home to a large number of immigrants and international workers. Professor Bouchard also used the occasion to present his latest book entitled *L'Europe en quête d'Européens : pour un nouveau rapport entre Bruxelles et les nations*. On the sidelines of his lecture at the university, he also met with Luxembourg government and association representatives interested in these issues.

### Improphonies – Improvisation workshops and performance

While the promotion of the French language was a priority for the DGQB throughout the year, March provided an occasion to shine a spotlight on the issue. On the sidelines of the International Day of the Francophonie, the DGQB held the first edition of *Improphonies* on March 22. As its name suggests, the purpose of this activity was to celebrate the Francophonie from the perspective of improvisation. We should remember that Québec is a pioneer in this field, with the Ligue nationale d'improvisation founded in 1977. In collaboration with the Embassies of Canada, France, Morocco and Monaco, as well as Maison de la Francité, Wallonia-Brussels International and Maison des cultures de Molenbeek, among others, the DGQB organized improvisation workshops for young people from various Belgian linguistic communities. These workshops were facilitated by professional actors from all four corners of the Francophonie, including Quebecer Joëlle Paré-Beaulieu. The workshops were followed in the evening by an improvisation cabaret open to the public.



Improvisation workshop at Maison des cultures de Molenbeek during the Improphonies project – March 22, 2018

## Concert W: Hall – Festival international de la chanson de Granby

On March 23, 2018, in collaboration with the Embassy of Canada and the International Organization of the Francophonie, the cultural centre of Woluwe-Saint-Pierre (Brussels) hosted Samuele and Medhy Cayenne, two winners of the *Festival international de la chanson de Granby* during their promotional tour of Europe. These two extraordinarily charismatic artists proudly represent the new generation of Québec singer/songwriters.



Samuele and Medhy Cayenne in concert in Brussels for the *Journée de la Francophonie* – March 23, 2018

## Study Days – French teachers and migrants

Immigration issues are of the utmost importance for safe havens such as Québec and Belgium, which is why the DGQB became involved in Study Days on the role of French teachers in the integration of immigrants. Study Days, which was held on December 6 and 7, 2017, was organized by the International Federation of Teachers of French and Wallonia-Brussels International. It brought together experts from across the Francophonie. The input of colleagues from Québec's Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion, who have broad expertise in this field, was very much appreciated.

# COOPERATION

## 15<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE QUÉBEC– FLANDERS JOINT PERMANENT COMMISSION FOR COOPERATION

The 15<sup>th</sup> Session of the Québec-Flanders Joint Permanent Commission for Cooperation was held in Québec City on October 4, 2017, under the co-chairmanship of the Assistant Deputy Minister for Bilateral Affairs of Québec's Ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie du Québec, Michel Lafleur, and the Secretary General of the Flanders Department of Foreign Affairs, Koen Verlaeckt.

The co-chairs took stock of cooperation between Québec and Flanders over the past two years. They mentioned that exchanges had been productive, notably in the areas of the prevention of radicalization, maritime research and maritime affairs as well as the Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement. Like Québec, Flanders worked to promote CETA with its European partners.

The two parties took advantage of the meeting to reiterate their mutual interest in renewing their collaboration in various areas, principally in the research, maritime and culture sectors. In this respect, the co-chairs welcomed the revival of cultural cooperation, notably since the visit to Québec in April 2017 of Flanders's Minister for Culture, Media, Youth and Brussels, Sven Gatz.

For this edition, 13 cooperation project proposals in the environmental and maritime research, culture and employment sectors were submitted to the Commission. The meeting was an occasion to approve the selection of 12 projects. Ten of the projects received funding from the Ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie and two from the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications.



The 15<sup>th</sup> Session of the Québec-Flanders Joint Permanent Commission was held in Québec City under the co-chairmanship of the Assistant Deputy Minister for Bilateral Affairs of Québec's Ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie du Québec, Michel Lafleur, and the Secretary General of the Flanders Department of Foreign Affairs, Koen Verlaeckt – October 4, 2017

## 10<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE QUÉBEC– WALLONIA– BRUSSELS JOINT PERMANENT COMMISSION

The 10<sup>th</sup> Session of the Québec–Wallonia–Brussels Joint Permanent Commission was held in Québec City on May 31, 2017, under the co-chairmanship of Québec’s Deputy Minister of International Relations and La Francophonie, Jean-Stéphane Bernard, and the General Administrator of Wallonia-Brussels International and the Walloon Export and Foreign Investment Agency (AWEX), Pascale Delcomminette.

The co-chairs took stock of cooperation between Québec and Wallonia-Brussels over the past two years. They highlighted the remarkable vitality of bilateral relations as evidenced by the number of visits, missions and political, economic and cultural events.

For this edition, 92 cooperation project proposals in the research and innovation, higher education, cultural, health and social affairs, economic, public security and environmental sectors were submitted to the Joint Committee. The meeting was an occasion to approve the selection of the 60 projects that received funding from the Ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie, including 11 in partnership with the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications.

Lastly, the French Community of Belgium, Wallonia-Brussels International and the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec renewed, for a further four years, the agreement on the exchange of residences for writers, writers of children’s literature and creators of comic books. This agreement, which includes more generous bursaries for artists, will provide for two two-month creative residences in Québec and in the French Community of Belgium.



Québec’s Deputy Minister of International Relations and La Francophonie, Jean-Stéphane Bernard, and the General Administrator of Wallonia-Brussels International and the Walloon Export and Foreign Investment Agency, Pascale Delcomminette, signing the minutes of the 10<sup>th</sup> Session of the Joint Permanent Commission - May 31, 2017

## Grands rendez-vous Québec–Wallonia-Brussels

The 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the Grands rendez-vous Québec–Wallonia-Brussels was inaugurated on September 18, 2017, at the Phi Centre in Montréal in the presence of the Québec Minister responsible for Access to Information and the Reform of Democratic Institutions, Rita de Santis, and the Vice-President and Minister of Culture of the French Community of Belgium, Alda Greoli.



Ministers Alda Greoli of the French Community of Belgium and Rita de Santis from Québec with the Walloon and Québec participants at the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the Grands rendez-vous Québec–Wallonia-Brussels – September 2017

The Grands rendez-vous are organized by Wallonia-Brussels International in cooperation with the DGQB, the Wallonia-Brussels Delegation in Québec, the Ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie, the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications and the Ministère de l'Économie, de la Science et de l'Innovation. The goal is to create new synergies and establish partnerships between the Québec and Wallonia-Brussels digital ecosystems. The 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the Grands rendez-vous provided an opportunity for Walloons and Quebecers to hold discussions and share their experiences with respect to the themes of Industry 4.0, digital entrepreneurship, smart cities and digital culture.

### Highlights:

- The decision to create the Québec–Wallonia-Brussels Grands rendez-vous was made during the 9<sup>th</sup> Session of the Permanent Joint Commission between the Government of Québec and Wallonia-Brussels International in May 2015. The event alternates between Québec and Wallonia-Brussels.
- The first Grands rendez-vous, which focused on digital creativity, was held from November 2 to 5, 2016, in Namur, Wallonia.
- Companies and organizations selected to participate in the second edition of GRQcWB:
  - Wallonia-Brussels: LIEU network, Haute École Albert Jacquard–Infographie, Haute École de la Province de Liège, Haute École Libre de Mosanne (HELMo)–Institut Gramme, Smart City Institute, Dirty Monitor, Quai 10 and Natagora
  - Québec: Préhos/Arcbees, Capian, Cégep de Sept-Îles–ITMI/CERISE, Unité mixte de recherche en sciences urbaines (UMRsu), CEFRIO, Agence Artbox inc., Swipecity and Time Passeport

# HIGHLIGHTS

## IN NUMBERS

The activities of the DGQB have contributed to the promotion of the Government of Québec priorities, sharing of scientific and entrepreneurial know-how, the dissemination of culture and youth mobility.

**113**   
HIGH-LEVEL  
MEETINGS

**15**   
QUÉBEC GOVERNMENT  
MISSIONS TO BENELUX  
AND THE EUROPEAN  
UNION

**32**   
QUÉBEC TRADE  
MISSIONS TO BENELUX  
AND THE EUROPEAN  
UNION

**16**   
VISITS TO QUÉBEC  
BY POLITICAL  
REPRESENTATIVES  
OF BENELUX AND  
THE EUROPEAN UNION

**194**   
QUÉBEC  
ARTISTS  
SUPPORTED

**123**   
QUÉBEC COMPANIES  
SUPPORTED AND  
104 BUSINESS  
MEETINGS ORGANIZED

**69**   
COMMUNICATION,  
PROSPECTION AND  
PROMOTION ACTIVITIES  
BY QUÉBEC

**336**   
YOUNG QUEBECERS  
WHO TRAVELLED  
TO WALLONIA-  
BRUSSELS THANKS  
TO OFFICE JEUNESSE  
INTERNATIONAUX  
DU QUÉBEC

**246**   
YOUNG PEOPLE  
FROM WALLONIA  
AND BRUSSELS WHO  
TRAVELLED TO QUÉBEC  
THANKS TO BUREAU  
INTERNATIONAL  
JEUNESSE

**2 700**  
FACEBOOK  
FOLLOWERS



**3 100**  
TWITTER  
FOLLOWERS



**1 800**   
PARTICIPANTS IN  
THE FÊTE NATIONALE  
DU QUÉBEC IN BRUSSELS



Québec 