

# CONTINUITY – FAIRNESS – SUPPORT

## Declaration for the sustainability and the vitality of national culture and media in the digital era

**A coalition of organizations, experts and citizens is launching an urgent appeal to the Québec and Canadian governments to establish conditions that will allow the cultural and media industry to recover its stability in a constantly transforming environment.**

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The culture and communications sectors have undergone disruptions over the past 20-plus years. Content digitization, the arrival of the Internet and of e-commerce, as well as changes in consumer habits have profoundly impacted the cultural and media ecosystem. The resulting imbalance has been exacerbated in recent years due to the uneven playing field permitted by policy makers' inaction to address the emergence of Internet giants.

These multinationals, including Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon, Netflix and Spotify, offer services that provide access to a multitude of content yet they are not required to comply with the same fiscal, tax and regulatory conditions as companies based in Quebec and the rest of Canada. What's more, Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and electronic hardware manufacturers have access to music, audiovisual productions and digital books without making any financial contributions to the creation of these products from which they profit.

The popularity of these devices and services has adversely affected the revenue share generated by Canadian cultural and information content. Creators, producers, publishers and distributors no longer reap the majority of the return on their investments. It instead goes to new digital intermediaries that have no obligation to finance content or to distribute it. Faced with this reality, and after years government inaction, we believe the time has come to act so cultural and media enterprises can recover the stability essential to their success.

Our organizations represent hundreds of thousands of artists and creators (actors, authors, technicians, journalists, booksellers, musicians, documentary professionals, directors, etc.), publishers, rights management organizations, producers and citizens concerned about the future of the cultural and communications industry in Quebec and in the rest of Canada. We are uniting to ask, with one voice, that our governments intervene immediately to consolidate the base of our cultural and media ecosystem, which generates – lest we forget – 4.4% of Quebec's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 3.3% of Canada's GDP.

At a time when the federal government is preparing to reform its cultural and communications laws and policies – such as the upcoming Copyright Act review – and the Quebec government is reviewing its cultural policy and digital strategy, we ask our leaders to assume their responsibilities and provide us with the necessary tools to support the vitality of our culture and media in the digital era. This is a pivotal time. The decisions made in the upcoming weeks and months are of critical importance. To truly support and ensure the sustainability of our cultural and media industry, governments must be bold but also prudent; we need to renovate the foundations of our house while preserving what has been built. To accomplish this, we believe our leaders must act according to the following three principles:

## CONTINUITY

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First, our governments must act in continuity. Adapting to the current digital environment must not be an excuse to set aside the philosophy of intervention that has allowed the development of our culture and media. The existing regulatory measures must be reviewed to encourage not only the creation, but also the distribution and the discoverability of content that represents us, the diversity of cultural expression and information as well as the vitality of the French language. Regulation must be extended to all businesses that offer cultural or information products in Canada via the Internet. We must avoid the temptation to deregulate: our national identity and cultural sovereignty depend on it.

## FAIRNESS

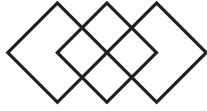
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Second, our governments must also update the current laws and policies to ensure Canadian and foreign companies are treated fairly in fiscal, taxation, and regulatory matters the moment they are dealing with consumers in Québec and the rest of Canada. Regardless of whether services are provided online or in traditional media (radio, television and newspapers), all businesses must pay their fair share of sales and income taxes in addition to submitting to regulation – in financing and in showcasing Canadian content. Similar requirements are crucial in the current explosion of new services and digital platforms.

## SUPPORT

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Finally, we ask governments to adapt the measures currently in place to allow a strong cultural and communications ecosystem to be maintained, one that is capable of developing our talents and our content in the face of global competition. It is unrealistic to think that the hundreds of thousands of jobs generated by Canada's cultural and media businesses can rely solely on exports and co-productions. We must use all the options available to us – legislative, regulatory, fiscal and financial – to ensure the vitality of our industry first on a national level, then on an international level.



# A RICH COLLECTIVE ASSET TO PRESERVE

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In conclusion, we want the cultural and media sectors of Québec and the rest of Canada to withstand the current transitional process so they can continue to enrich us collectively, artistically and economically in the long-term.

Content produced in this country entertains, moves, informs, or passionately engages us, and is greatly appreciated by the public. Regardless of the technology used to distribute it, this content contributes to our identity, and is an important factor in social integration and cohesion.

It is essential that our governments recognize that cultural and information production is a source of collective wealth. It is unlike any other commercial good. We must protect it, encourage its development and support its accessibility so it can thrive, in the new digital environment.

We call on Quebec and Ottawa governments to act without delay - in continuity, fairness and support - to help the industry overcome the current difficulties and ensure that future generations will always be able to watch, listen, and read content that reflects the diversity of our communities.

- Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists (ACTRA)
- Alliance québécoise des techniciens de l'image et du son (AQTIS)
- ARTISTI
- Association des professionnels de l'édition musicale (APEM)
- Association des propriétaires de cinémas du Québec (APCQ)
- Association des réalisateurs et réalisatrices du Québec (ARRQ)
- Association nationale des éditeurs de livres (ANEL)
- Association québécoise de la production médiatique (AQPM)
- Association québécoise de l'industrie du disque, du spectacle et de la vidéo (ADISQ)
- Association québécoise des cinémas d'art et d'essai (AQCAE)
- Canadian Media Producers Association (CMPA)
- Canadian union of public employees (CUPE) and its communications sector (CPSC)
- Conseil québécois des arts médiatiques (CQAM)
- Destiny Tchéhouali, directeur de l'Observatoire des réseaux et interconnexions de la société numérique (ORISON) - UQAM
- Directors Guild of Canada (DGC)
- DOC Canada and its Québec chapter
- Fédération culturelle canadienne-française (FCCF)
- Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec (FTQ)
- Friends of Canadian Broadcasting
- Front des réalisateurs indépendants du Canada (FRIC)
- Forum for Research and Policy in Communications (FRPC)
- Guilde des musiciens et musiciennes du Québec (GMMQ)
- L'Observatoire du documentaire
- Michèle Rioux, directrice du Centre d'études sur l'intégration et la mondialisation (CEIM)
- On Screen Manitoba
- Performers' Rights Society (PRS)
- Québec Cinéma
- Quebec English-language Production Council (QEPC)
- Regroupement des artisans de la musique (RAM)
- SOCAN
- Société de gestion collective des droits des producteurs de phonogrammes et de vidéogrammes du Québec (SOPROQ)
- Société des auteurs de radio, télévision et cinéma (SARTEC)
- Société du droit de reproduction des auteurs compositeurs et éditeurs au Canada (SODRAC)
- Internet Society Québec (ISOC - Québec)
- Société professionnelle des auteurs et compositeurs du Québec (SPACQ)
- Syndicat des employées et employés professionnels-les et de bureau (SEPB)
- Table de concertation de l'industrie du cinéma et de la télévision de la Capitale-Nationale
- Unifor-Québec
- Union des artistes (UDA)