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# Standing Committee on Official Languages

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Chair: Mr. René Arseneault





## Standing Committee on Official Languages

Friday, May 12, 2023

• (0855)

[*Translation*]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC)):** Good morning everyone.

I will be chairing the committee. Since I am the Deputy Chair, Mr. Arseneault has asked me to replace him.

As usual, here are the instructions I have to read to you.

Welcome to meeting number 61 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the motion adopted by the committee on April 21, 2023, the committee is meeting to continue its study on Francophone immigration to Canada.

I would like to inform the committee that the required connection tests were done for the witnesses before the meeting.

Welcome again to the officials from the Department of Canadian Heritage and from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.

From Citizenship and Immigration, we have Mr. Alain Desruisseaux, Director General, Francophone Immigration Policy and Official Languages Division, who is here in person, and Mr. Olivier Jacques, Area Director, Southern Europe and Maghreb, who is appearing via videoconference.

From the Department of Canadian Heritage, we have Ms. Julie Boyer, Assistant Deputy Minister, Official Languages, Heritage and Regions, and Ms. Sarah Boily, Director General, Official Languages.

Since the officials already presented their opening remarks at the previous meeting, we will go directly to questions.

Before we begin, I must inform you that we did sound tests and three committee members did not pass those tests. So they cannot be interpreted. If we are going to begin the meeting and allow them to speak, there must be unanimous consent for them to speak without interpretation.

So we need to make a decision on that.

Mr. Beaulieu, we are listening.

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** The policy of the Bloc québécois requires that interpretation be provided, so I don't agree.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** If I understand correctly, we do not have unanimous consent.

We can proceed. Those who did not pass the sound tests will not be allowed to speak. They will be allowed to vote, if there is a vote, but they will not be allowed to speak. I will name the three members of the Committee who, unfortunately, did not pass the sound tests. They are Ms. Gladu, Mr. Serré and Ms. Ashton.

The sound tests have been done and the interpreters feel that the sound is not acceptable.

Ms. Gladu, Ms. Ashton, and Mr. Généreux would like to speak.

Go ahead, Ms. Gladu.

[*English*]

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC):** Chair, is there an opportunity to work on this?

[*Translation*]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** I'm sorry, Ms. Gladu.

Unfortunately, I cannot give you the floor because there is no interpretation and we do not have unanimous consent for members to speak if they cannot be interpreted. The same is true for Ms. Ashton.

Mr. Généreux, you have the floor.

**Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC):** Mr. Chair, because of the circumstances, I would like to move that the meeting only last one hour and that it end at 10:00. Of course, our colleagues cannot speak, even if Ms. Ashton does not seem to agree with that.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** I will speak, since Ms. Ashton is not allowed to.

Go ahead, Mr. Généreux.

**Mr. Bernard Généreux:** I wanted to say that we also have to give speeches in the House this morning on Bill C-13. I think it is important that we be able to do so. So I would move, if we have unanimous consent, to end the meeting at 10:00 this morning.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Mr. Généreux, can you move a formal motion?

**Mr. Bernard Généreux:** I move that we have a one-hour meeting this morning, beginning at 9:00, which is now.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Would anyone like to speak to the motion of Mr. Généreux?

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu:** Can we take a few minutes to allow the members who do not have a right to speak to do so in camera? We could start after that. Would that be possible?

• (0900)

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Mr. Beaulieu, I understand what you're saying, but I can only get back to you after we have dealt with the motion of Mr. Généreux.

Every member has the right to vote. If a member cannot speak, Ms. Gladu, Ms. Ashton et Mr. Serré can nevertheless vote.

Is there unanimous consent to...

**Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellán, Lib.):** I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** I'm listening, Mr. Iacono.

**Mr. Angelo Iacono:** I just want to make a brief comment on the two comments from my colleagues.

Indeed, we need to vote on the motion first, but it's possible that people who don't have the right headset will want to say that they will go get one that's appropriate. So that could have an impact on the motion.

If we allow people to speak on how this morning's Committee meeting should unfold, we can then vote on the motion. I don't know what the three members want to say, but it might be important to listen to them so we can make a better decision.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Thank you, Mr. Iacono.

In fact all three members have the right equipment. It's the sound quality heard by the interpreters that they feel is not good and does not meet the standard.

I can't judge the level of quality or say whether it is acceptable or not. That's for the interpreters to judge, and they decided this morning that the sound quality was not acceptable for the three people I named. So I can't say any more than that.

Under parliamentary procedure, interpreters are not allowed to speak. That's what it is, unfortunately.

You have the floor, Mr. Drouin.

**Mr. Francis Drouin (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.):** I am speaking on the authorization of Ms. Ashton's assistant.

I understand that she cannot speak nor ask questions.

Since she is the sole representative of her party, she cannot stay in this meeting because she will not be able to ask a single question, unless we solve the interpretation problem.

Thank you.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Thank you, Mr. Drouin.

I have some important information for you. I understand that Ms. Ashton would like to put an end to the meeting. However, according to our rules, since we have quorum, we can continue to sit without Ms. Ashton.

I will therefore suspend the meeting. We will try to find common ground and I'll keep you informed.

Thank you.

• (0900)

(Pause)

• (0915)

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** We're back.

There have been discussions. I am now waiting for your proposals.

Mr. Beaulieu, you have the floor.

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu:** Given that the person who proposed the study will not be able to intervene, and given that three other people will not be able to speak, we will do the right thing and move that the meeting be postponed.

I say this with due respect to the witnesses who will have to come back again if we receive unanimous consent.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Do we have a consensus?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** Agreed.

Unfortunately, dear guests... Actually, it is not unfortunate since we will see you again. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

Before I close, I want to say that at the next meeting on Tuesday, May 16, we will continue the study on increasing Francophone immigration to Canada.

Does the Committee wish to adjourn the meeting?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Joël Godin):** The meeting is adjourned.







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