



The Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages at a Glance

The Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages works to **protect** language rights by overseeing the application of the *Official Languages Act* by the federal government. It also **promotes** Canada's official languages and respect for linguistic duality, which is a fundamental part of our national identity.

The Commissioner reports directly to Parliament and every year submits an annual report that includes recommendations. As an agent of Parliament, the Commissioner has the mandate to take all measures intended to ensure the achievement of the three main objectives of the *Official Languages Act*, namely:

- the equality of English and French in Parliament, the Government of Canada, the federal administration and institutions subject to the Act;
- the preservation and development of official language communities in Canada;
- the equality of English and French in Canadian society.

THE COMMISSIONER FULFILLS THIS MANDATE BY CARRYING OUT SEVERAL ACTIVITIES,
WHICH FALL UNDER TWO COMPLEMENTARY ROLES:

Protection	Promotion
<p>Proactively monitors federal institutions' compliance with the Act by carrying out audits and performance evaluations and helping them better implement the Act in their activities.</p> <p>Monitors the advancement of English and French in Canadian society.</p> <p>Receives complaints and conducts investigations; recommends corrective measures or changes.</p> <p>Intervenes in Federal Court and other tribunals in proceedings relating to the status or use of English or French.</p>	<p>Informs Canadians of their language rights.</p> <p>Conducts research to better understand the evolution of English and French in Canada.</p> <p>Works to increase public awareness of the benefits of linguistic duality.</p> <p>Ensures governments at the federal, provincial and territorial level give due attention to official languages and linguistic communities.</p> <p>Supports the development of official language minority communities.</p>

"Promotion and protection are closely entwined. Protection activities involve the promotion of the spirit as well as the letter of the Act, just as promotional activities, by promoting understanding of official languages policies, lead to compliance with the Act. It is a virtuous circle: each activity reinforces the others."

Graham Fraser
Commissioner of Official Languages

The *Official Languages Act*

- guarantees the right to use the official language of one's choice before federal courts;
- guarantees services in English and in French where required by the Act;
- guarantees federal employees the right to work in the official language of their choice in certain regions;
- aims at ensuring equitable opportunities for employment and advancement for English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians in federal institutions;
- enhances the vitality of English-speaking and French-speaking minority communities and advances the status of English and French in Canadian society.

The Commissioner is supported by staff at the headquarters in Ottawa and in five regional offices.

To find out more about the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, please visit www.ocol-clo.gc.ca.