

FCCQ: a unique organization

The FCCQ is Québec's **PROVINCIAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**, with some **1,100 corporate members** from every economic sector.

It is also a **FÉDÉRATION DE CHAMBRES DE COMMERCE** representing more than **140 chambers** across the entire province.

With its twofold mandate, the **FCCQ is QUÉBEC'S PREMIER BUSINESS NETWORK** representing more than **60,000 businesses** and **150,000 businesspeople**.



FRANÇOIS CAMIRAND
Chair of the Board of Directors,
2013-2014



FRANÇOISE BERTRAND, oc, cq,
President and Chief Executive

In 2014-2015, the FCCQ and its network played an even stronger role in the economic development of Québec. With a record number of briefs issued and presentations to government, we were more active than ever.

Throughout the year, the FCCQ petitioned the government to take action to encourage economic development. Many of the measures in the reports of review boards looking at fiscal issues and evaluating programs drew on recommendations presented in one of our briefs, and several of these made their way into the last provincial budget.

Keenly aware of the importance of increasing productivity, the FCCQ publicly supported the adoption of innovative measures and approaches by the manufacturing and other sectors. We were also actively involved on a number of committees studying workplace issues and in government consultations

on the workforce and immigration. Moreover, the organization continued to campaign for new investments by defending the orderly development of natural resources and supporting government strategies designed to attract projects with strong potential.

The FCCQ believes that regional economic development profits Québec as a whole, and that chambers of commerce are essential to local development. For this reason, the theme of Journées réseau 2015 was "creating regional economic development." The dedication and hard work of participants laid the groundwork for an action plan that will be submitted to the membership at the next general meeting and provide a strong impetus for the final year of our 2012-2016 strategic plan.

Other important activities in 2015 included a major tour of Québec's chambers of commerce, numerous business and political events, and private meetings. The FCCQ also launched the COREX program to support businesses preparing to export for the first time. Finally, the Mercuriades Awards—our prestigious business competition—celebrated its 35th anniversary in 2015 as it continues to recognize successful Québec companies.

Thanks to everyone, but especially to our member chambers and businesses for your constant support and trust. We are all working together for a strong Québec economy.

Key issues

By positioning itself as a real partner for change within Québec society through its actions and stances, the FCCQ supports a competitive economy that profits Québec as a whole, as well as the various regions, by focusing on four priority areas set out in the 2012–2020 Economic Vision.

Encourage the government to promote development

ECONOMY AND PUBLIC FINANCE

Through public positions and representations, as well as by participating in pre-budget consultations, the FCCQ lobbied the provincial and federal governments to exercise fiscal discipline. Within Québec, we argued for renewing the tax system and streamlining development assistance structures. We petitioned the federal government specifically to adopt measures pertaining to workforce training and reducing the burden on employment insurance, while making infrastructure investment a priority through the New Building Canada Fund.

And more:

- Canada Transportation Act: Expressed the concerns of the business community around issues of security and competitiveness in the rail, maritime, air and public transit sectors;
- Ministry of Transport (MTQ) plan: Participated in consultations in preparation for the MTQ's 2015–2020 strategic plan;
- Maritime strategy: Actively lobbied to ensure that its implementation will serve to develop our resources and energize regional economies by consolidating maritime and port functions in specific regions and intermodal poles;
- Took public stances in favour of revitalizing the consulting engineering sector;
- Health: Argued in favour of complementing the public sector with private services and turning to competitive subcontracting for certain complementary functions and services;
- Revenu Québec: Denounced certain measures and attitudes at Revenu Québec in its relations with business clients; filed a brief and attended meetings of various committees; lobbied for the abolition of double taxation;
- E-commerce and online sales: Increased lobbying to the provincial and federal governments in favour of collecting tax on these transactions; proposed a possible solution; took steps to convince the Canadian Chamber of Commerce (CCC) to get involved.
- Agrifood: Filed a brief encouraging better promotion of foods produced or processed in Québec; addressing the public procurement policy, the Temporary Foreign Worker Program and problems with a selective deposit and collection system; and defending supply management in current negotiations towards a Trans-Pacific Partnership;
- Sustainable development and the green economy: Monitored implementation of the carbon exchange; pursued efforts in support of the emerging green and sustainable building industry; took a number of steps to further the social acceptability of projects;
- Domestic trade within Canada: Petitioned for greater consistency of interprovincial trade with recent international trade agreements and the lifting of barriers impeding the movement of people and goods between provinces;
- Expressed positions on amending the Tobacco Act.

Attract investment

Québec needs to make its many strengths and resources attractive to investors while recognizing the importance of sustainable development and seeking the widest possible consensus among the population.

- Made presentations in favour of developing a diverse energy portfolio and demonstrating the positive economic benefits of natural resource exploration and development;
- Attended ministerial meetings and public consultations on energy efficiency, renewable energy, decarbonizing transportation, hydrocarbons, social acceptability, sustainable development and natural resources;



- Provided public support for specific projects: Stolt LNGaz, the Chamouchouane–Bout-de-L'Île transmission line, the Arnaud and Dumont mines, the Lac à Paul apatite mine, development of a uranium industry, the new Plan Nord and the forestry sector.

Foster entrepreneurship

Starting and building new businesses underpins the creation of wealth. It is therefore important to encourage entrepreneurship as an incentive to new businesspeople, maintain Québec's entrepreneurial heritage and support the development of world-class businesses.

Increase productivity

If Québec is to remain competitive on international markets, it needs to promote research and innovation, encourage businesses to invest in technology, provide employers with the training services and workforce they need, and offer employees optimal working conditions.

- Participated in parliamentary consultations on the merging of work organizations;
- Prepared briefs on legislation pertaining to collective agreement decrees, defined benefit plans for the private sector and the merger of the Régie des rentes du Québec with the Commission administrative des régimes de retraite et d'assurances; Served on the Board of Directors of the Commission de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CSST) and on most of its working committees; saw a record reduction

And more:

- Manufacturing sector: Supported measures to reinvigorate the sector, specifically by reducing the tax rate from 8% to 4%; lobbied for a manufacturing strategy and continued efforts to encourage recognition of the need for automation and better technology, as well as the need for access to a qualified workforce and public markets;

- Opposed tax barriers in the Income Tax Act that discourage the transfer of a business from one family member to another;
- Served on the committee to reduce the regulatory burden;
- Supported the PerforME and Prêt à Entreprendre programs.

- in employer contributions for 2016; held a seat on the Comité consultative sur le travail et la main-d'œuvre (CCTM) and participated in its various subcommittees;
- Represented employers as a member of the Commission des partenaires du marché du travail (CPMT);
- Encouraged businesses to develop internships;
- Supported the elimination of school elections and modifying school board governance to include employer representation;
- Recommended bringing together professional and technical training as well as technical cegep programs under the same authority;
- Government of Canada Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP): Publicly protested the negative effects in Québec of changes to the TFWP.
- Life sciences: Formulated expectations so that the working group announced in the Québec budget can producing a coordinated action plan that reaffirms the importance of the sector and allows Québec to remain competitive;
- Innovation: Supported new models and technologies and proposed reduced regulation of existing stakeholders.

Strengthen the network

JOINT POSITIONS

In an effort to better support chambers of commerce in defending regional and national economic interests, the FCCQ produced a range of companion documents such as adaptable press releases and economic background papers. As the leading ally of chambers of commerce, the FCCQ collaborates with them on a variety of key issues: regional development organizations, the Plan Nord, the PerforME strategy and much more.

Support for regional activities included:

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION

Organized under the theme "creating regional economic development," Journées réseau 2015 served to develop a joint action plan with the main points to be approved at the annual general meeting on October 6, 2015. Participants debated four main topics: access to a qualified workforce, threats to the retail industry, government strategies as levers of local economic development, and determining how chambers of commerce can become key players in regional economic decision-making and play a role in attracting major projects.

- Regional airports: An open letter supported by nine regional chambers of commerce and the Regroupement des jeunes chambres de commerce du Québec;
- Accommodation tax: Chambers were invited to send a letter to their member of parliament in support of an open letter published by the FCCQ;
- The Arnaud mine on the North Shore and the Gaspé railway: Joint media statements were issued and a resolution passed by the FCCQ Board of Directors.

Other services:

- A range of online training services at FCCQFormation;
- A study into salary scales across the network of chambers of commerce;



Events for an active network

2015 MERCURIADES AWARDS: 35 YEARS OF SUCCESS STORIES!



Over the years, the Mercuriades Awards have received some 10,000 applications and crowned 550 winners, 95% of whom are still active today. More than 900 guests—including Philippe Couillard, Premier of Québec—attended the presentation of the 2015 winners.

And even more:

- Seventeen business and political Rendez-vous events with key economic figures, business executives from various sectors, and provincial and federal political leaders;
- Two major private dinners, two Journées parlementaires and two Hors Série meetings;
- Participation in some fifteen panels, conferences and round tables in Québec and the rest of Canada;
- Seven major “Partenaire de changement” conferences during the tour of the chambers of commerce.

Export initiatives

TRADE CORRIDORS

- Launch of the COREX program to support Québec business leaders and entrepreneurs in developing export markets and creating a network of business partnerships in the Northeastern United States, including an information portal featuring COREX Opportunities, a powerful B2B platform;
- Partnership with eCertify and the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal to develop and offer the first bilingual electronic platform issuing certificates of origin, essential documents in international trade certifying the source of goods.



Some
50
meetings with provincial
and federal government
representatives

Some
17
partnerships offering trade
benefits to members

Nearly
4 500
subscribers who received
22 FCCQeXpress
newsletters

Some
380
representatives of
businesses and chambers
sitting on 19
sector committees

17
private Rendez-vous
events

22
conferences and
round tables

250
COGECO economic
success stories

More than
50
chambers of commerce
visited during a provincial
tour

More than
900
attendees at the 35th
Mercuriades Awards

165
new members

123

press releases
(including adapted releases
for chambers and special
events)

20

participations in public
consultations

2

parliament days, one in
Ottawa and the other in
Québec City and two FCCQ
resolutions passed by
the Canadian Chamber of
Commerce (CCC)

26

briefs submitted

43

open letters published

The full 2014–2015 activity report (in French) is available in the Publications section at fccq.ca.



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