

# THE COMMON VALUES OF QUÉBEC SOCIETY

Québec is a French-speaking democratic and pluralistic society based on the rule of law. The Québec state and its institutions are secular.

Québec welcomes immigrants coming from the four corners of the earth with their know-how, skills, language, culture and religion. Québec provides services to help them integrate and participate fully and completely in Québec society.

Integration in Québec society means being prepared to know and respect its common values.

## **IN QUÉBEC: SPEAKING FRENCH IS A NECESSITY**

Québec society is governed by the Charter of the French Language which makes French the official language of Québec. French is the language of public institutions and the normal and usual language of work, instruction, communications, trade and business. Québec cares about preserving and promoting its official language. French is not only an essential communications instrument, but also a common symbol of belonging to Québec society.

To integrate in their new living environment, immigrants who are not fluent in French must make an effort to learn it. To help them do so, the Québec government provides French courses. The children of immigrants who settle permanently in Québec normally attend French school. Candidates wishing to practice a profession regulated by a professional order must demonstrate sufficient knowledge of the French language to obtain a regular permit.

## **QUÉBEC: A FREE AND DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY**

The political system of Québec is based on freedom of speech and the right to equality of individuals, as well as the participation of citizens in associations, political parties and administrative

bodies such as boards of directors. Citizens can run as candidates in elections and have the right to vote in elections. They elect their representatives at all levels of government. When the government intends to pass legislation, citizens are generally invited to take part in consultations to express their viewpoints on matters of public interest. Hateful behavior, whether political, religious or ethnic, is not tolerated. Québec society favors the resolution of conflicts by negotiation.

## **QUÉBEC: A SECULAR STATE**

The Québec state and its institutions are secular. Their decisions and actions are independent of religious powers.

Québec has deconfessionalized its school system. Religious confessional instruction is not part of the public school curriculum.

## **QUÉBEC: A PLURALISTIC SOCIETY**

Québec is becoming more diverse. The francophone majority, anglophones and aboriginals live together with people of diverse cultures and origins from all over the world.

Québec encourages exchanges between cultures and closer relations between communities and recognizes what an enrichment diversity is. Moreover, everyone can freely choose their lifestyle, opinions and religion, while respecting the rights of others. Relationships between people are established with respect and tolerance in a climate of harmony.

## **QUÉBEC: A SOCIETY BASED ON THE RULE OF LAW**

Québec is a democratic society based on the rule of law. All persons are equal in value and in dignity and have the right to the equal protection of the law. They must obey all laws regardless of their beliefs.

It is prohibited to discriminate against individuals on the basis of reasons set forth in the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, specifically:

- Race
- Colour
- Sex
- Pregnancy
- Sexual orientation
- Civil status
- Age except as provided by law
- Religion
- Political beliefs
- Language
- Ethnic or national origin
- Social condition
- Disability or use of a means to mitigate this disability

For example, a person cannot be refused housing due to ethnic origin, social condition or disability. Discrimination is prohibited in the workplace, specifically in job offers, the hiring process and working conditions. The law also prohibits harassment in all its forms. In this same spirit, homosexuals are recognized as having the same rights and responsibilities as all other citizens of Québec.

### ***IN QUÉBEC: MEN AND WOMEN HAVE THE SAME RIGHTS***

Women and men are equal. They have the same rights and the same obligations. Women can practice the trade or profession of their choice. They are present in decision-making positions such as members of a legislature, mayors, councilors, directors and managers of large companies. They can practice trades and professions traditionally reserved for men. Female workers must receive the same salary as male workers when their jobs, although different, have the same or equivalent value in the company.

This value of equality also permeates the types of unions recognized in Québec. Whether they are de facto spouses, married or joined in a civil union, spouses – be they of the same or opposite sex – are equal before the law. Parental responsibilities towards their children are the same. In the event of divorce from a marriage or dissolution of a civil union, assets acquired during the union and constituting the family patrimony are shared equally between the spouses.

The law requires parents or guardians to give children the security and attention necessary for their development.

### ***IN QUÉBEC, THE EXERCISE OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS MUST RESPECT THE RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS OF OTHERS AND THE GENERAL WELL-BEING***

Fundamental rights and freedoms are exercised while respecting the rights and freedoms of others, public order, the general well-being of citizens and the democratic values of Québec. The use of violence is prohibited.

In summary, Quebecers attach a great deal of importance to maintaining a climate that fosters freedom of speech, the right to equality between individuals and respect for differences. These values and the laws of Québec society enjoy a consensus and ensure to everyone the right, among others, to free speech and the free choice of lifestyle, opinions and religion.

For more information:

[www.valeurscommunesduquebec.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.valeurscommunesduquebec.gouv.qc.ca)