

Section canadienne de
l'Assemblée parlementaire
de la Francophonie



Canadian Branch of the
Assemblée parlementaire
de la Francophonie

Report of the Canadian Branch of the Assemblée Parlementaire de la Francophonie

Meetings of the APF Presidency

Paris, France, and Luxembourg, Luxembourg

From April 22–26, 2024

Report

From April 22 to 26, 2024, a delegation of the Canadian Branch of the Assemblée Parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF) were in Paris, France, and Luxembourg, Luxembourg, for a working visit. **Francis Drouin**, MP, Chair of the Branch and President of the APF, headed the delegation. Julie Pelletier, Executive Secretary of the Canadian Branch, accompanied the delegation.

Aside from the President of the APF, Damien Cesselin, Secretary General, and Jessica Malamba, Advisor, Communications and Protocol, also attended.

BACKGROUND

Francis Drouin was elected President of the APF on July 8, 2022, at the 47th Annual Session in Kigali, Rwanda. As president, he is tasked with positioning the organization as a key player with other francophone bodies and international partners, such as the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF), the Summits of La Francophonie, APF member parliaments and other major actors in the French-speaking world.

BILATERAL MEETINGS—PARIS, FRANCE

Gérard Larcher, President of the Senate of the Republic of France, accompanied by Loïc Hervé, Vice-President of the Senate responsible for interparliamentary cooperation and interparliamentary friendship groups, received Mr. **Drouin** at the Luxembourg Palace. The President of the APF spoke at length with Mr. Larcher about the political situation in francophone countries and the role of parliamentary diplomacy in mediation and conflict resolution. He also sincerely thanked President Larcher for the invaluable support members of the French Senate provided to the APF's political leadership and operations and more specifically for its help in organizing the 50th APF plenary session, to be held in Paris in July 2025.

President **Drouin** then visited the headquarters of the OIF, where he met with Secretary General Louise Mushikiwabo. The two leaders praised the complementary dynamic between the APF and the OIF, and discussed the francophone youth parliament, the upcoming major Francophonie youth event, to take place in Montreal in July 2024, and the Summit of La Francophonie, scheduled for October 2024 in Paris. Mr. **Drouin** also spoke with OIF administrator Caroline St-Hilaire about the steps APF members have taken to gain observer status at the United Nations, modernize its governance and democratic oversight mechanisms, improve its budgetary transparency and develop better targeted cooperation measures.

Mr. **Drouin** spoke at length with Jean-Louis Bourlanges, Chair of the French National Assembly's Foreign Affairs Committee. The President of the APF said that he was looking forward to hearing the findings of the fact-finding mission on the future of the Francophonie, led by MPs Amélia Lakrafi and Aurélien Taché, undertaken as part of the Committee's work.

He spoke with former French president François Hollande about young people, his civic engagement in Europe and in francophone countries and his relationship with the French language.

Lastly, Mr. **Drouin** met with the Honourable Stéphane Dion, P.C., Canada's Ambassador to France, to discuss concrete measures to promote the Francophonie through education and with other key APF actors: Bruno Fuchs, Member (France), Delegate General, Jean-Charles Luperto, Member (Belgium) and Europe Regional Delegate, and Xavier Baeselen, Secretary General, Parliament of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation. He also filmed appearances on two television programs: TV5's *64 minutes/Grand Angle*, on parliamentary diplomacy as an emerging player in the Francophonie, which was hosted by Mohame Kaci, and a special edition of *Global Africa Telesud*, on the role of the Francophonie in the world, hosted by Marie-France Réveillard.

BILATERAL MEETINGS—LUXEMBOURG, LUXEMBOURG

In addition to attending the meetings of the Political Committee and the Working Group on Reforming the APF Constitution in Luxembourg, Luxembourg, Mr. **Drouin** was received by His Royal Highness Grand Duke Henri. He also met Xavier Bettel, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs, European Affairs and Foreign Trade and Minister for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Affairs. The two meetings served to underscore the added value of parliamentary diplomacy in resolving the major current crises in the francophone world, including its ability to maintain inter-state dialogue, which is sometimes fragile or broken.

Lastly, Mr. **Drouin** was received in the Chamber of Deputies by Claude Wiseler, President of the Chamber of Deputies of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, Gusty Grass, Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Gilles Baum, Chair of the Luxembourg Branch of the APF, and Mars Di Bartolomeo, Member and Treasurer of the APF. Luxembourg parliamentarians Diane Adehm, André Bauler, Sven Clement, Yvex Cruchten, Fernand Etgen, Fernand Kartheiser, Fred Keup, Laurent Mosar and Alexandra Schoos were also in attendance. During the discussions, the participants stressed the need to support and promote the French language at the cultural, administrative and especially legislative levels in Luxembourg and in international organizations. The parliamentarians agreed on the need to support democratic initiatives by parliaments in transition in the francophone world, particularly those facing conflicts and crises, including in Africa. The Luxembourg parliamentarians were also interested in the APF's themed legislative corpora.

ORDRE DE LA PLÉIADE

On April 22, 2024, **Francis Drouin** presided over a ceremony to award Ordre de la Pléiade insignias at the Hôtel de la Questure of the French National Assembly. The Ordre de la Pléiade, the order honouring achievement in the Francophonie and dialogue among cultures, is an APF initiative to recognize individuals who distinguish themselves in pursuing the ideals of the Francophonie.

His Excellency Vijayen Valaydon, Ambassador of Mauritius to France and President of the Group of francophone ambassadors to France, received the rank of Commandeur. Philippe Pejo, former APF advisor, received an Officier insignia. Léonie Guerlay, Coordinator, Political Affairs and Governance at the OIF, Jany Grassiot, genealogist, and François Duluc, civil servant, all received the rank of Chevalier.

By attending these meetings, the Canadian Branch achieved its goals of fulfilling their international and inter-parliamentary obligations, maintaining international relationships with various parliaments and partners in the Francophonie and defending Canada's values and interests.

Travel Expenses

Travel expenses associated with this activity can be found in the delegation's financial report. This report is available in the [Financial Disclosure](#) section of the Parliamentary Diplomacy website.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie-France Lalonde, MP

Chair, Canadian Branch of the Assemblée Parlementaire de la Francophonie