

CONFEDERAL LGBT+ COMMITTEE

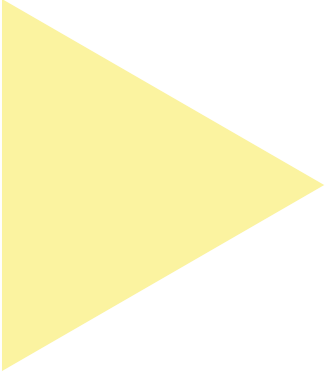
REPORT 2017-2020

The first struggles in the fight against homophobia at the CSN began over thirty years ago, as a result of the courage and tenacity of LGBT+ activists. Gradually, Québec became more open to gender and sexual diversity in public spaces and workplaces. Since then, many things have changed, but despite appearances, unions still have a lot of work to do.



NOTE REGARDING COVID-19

The confederal committee reports were produced in March 2020 for the convention that was to be held in May 2020. These reports include committee actions that were planned for the period between March and May 2020. Please note that said reports have not been modified and that the period from May 2020 to January 2021 will be covered in the next committee reports, which will be presented at the 67th CSN Convention.



Eliminating all discrimination to ensure equality is a long, hard battle being fought in our workplaces. The Confederal LGBT+ Committee was established following the 54th CSN Convention in 1988 to help the CSN “propose the appropriate corrective measures to the various forms of discrimination in the workplace experienced by lesbian and gay individuals” [our translation].

At the time, the Committee set the following objectives:

Collecting testimonials through a study on the reality of members.

Ensuring union activists were visible within the LGBT+ movement.

Creating an activist network in all regions of Québec.

Preparing demands in order to improve the situation.

A lot of work has been done since then, but there's still more to do. In this report, the Committee will present the outcomes of its 2017–2020 work plan.



Over this mandate, the Committee intensified its work to better support **union action** related to the fight against discrimination in **the workplace and within the labour movement**.

We did work on four key areas: labour education, the role of our unions, government policies, and raising public awareness.

Labour education

We have continued to work to inform the CSN movement on issues faced by LGBT+ persons and to combat homophobia and transphobia.

New informational and educational tools

- **Widely disseminated** a fully updated edition of print and online versions of the guide on gender and sexual diversity, No more, no less: Just like everyone else! The guide includes new issues and possible actions related to this matter.
- **Prepared a PowerPoint** presentation on the guide, providing an overview of the content for national, federation, central council, and union bodies.
- **Created** a new poster and new stickers.

Presentations and discussions

- **Made multiple presentations** during central council and some federation conventions, which were followed by interesting discussions.
- **Did tabling** (more than ever before) at these conventions and spoke with hundreds of members across Québec.

Collaborations with other organizations

- **Increased collaboration** between the Confederal LGBT+ Committee and the LGBT+ committees of federations and central councils such as: the Fédération de la santé et des services sociaux (FSSS-CSN), the Fédération nationale des enseignantes et enseignants du Québec (FNEEQ-CSN), the Conseil central du Montréal métropolitain (CCMM-CSN) and the Conseil central des syndicats nationaux de l'Estrie (CCSNE-CSN). We held our first activity with the FSSS-CSN in early 2020.
- **Discussed parental rights** with the Vice-President and Coordinator responsible for the Comité de coordination des secteurs public et parapublic (CCSPP) during public sector bargaining.

Support networks

- **Established new partnerships** to raise awareness among members of support networks about the realities of LGBT+ persons in the workplace to help improve listening skills, get an understanding of possible actions, and help prevent harassment, intimidation, and discrimination related to these realities.
- **Prepared a presentation** and facilitated a workshop for unions that are members of the CCMM-CSN support network.

Growing our union network by:

- **Creating a directory** of those responsible for this matter on federations and central councils and regularly sharing tools and information by email.
- **Asking network members to mobilize** CSN-affiliated organizations in their regions to ensure movement visibility and participation in regional pride parades.
- **Inviting members of the network to mark** the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia, which is commemorated yearly on May 17. The CSN raises the rainbow flag in front of its offices in Montréal every year to mark the occasion.

The role of unions

The committee began new work to improve services for LGBT+ persons within our ranks.

Union skills

- **We organized several training activities** on gender and sexual diversity for several bodies, including the CCSNE-CSN, the CSN, twice for the Fédération des employées et employés de services publics-CSN, and twice for the FNEEQ-CSN.
- **The Committee encouraged the use of more inclusive language** in collective agreements via a document providing examples for reformulating existing clauses, particularly when it comes to parental rights, group insurance, etc. This applies to both the public and private sectors.

The representation of LGBT+ issues and people through:

- **Promoting better** representation and addressing LGBT+ issues within labour bodies, including support networks.
- **Supporting an action research initiative** on LGBT+ persons and union life as part of a 2018-2019 research project with UQAM carried out with support from CSN federations and the Service de la recherche et de condition féminine (Research and status of women department).
- **Presenting research findings to the Confederal Council.** Research has shown that elected representatives on union executive committees believe, in general, that a number of LGBT+ people are members of their unions, and that such people experience little to no difficulties at work. The research also found, however, that there are practically no LGBT+ people among the elected representatives of union executive committees.

- **Raising a number of questions**, such as: How can members of executive committees conclude that there are no issues if they are not in contact with LGBT+ persons within their union structures? Why are LGBT+ persons not being elected to the executive committees of their unions? Do they feel welcome? Are they being asked to run? Are they being made to feel that their union is open to gender and sexual diversity among its members?

Government policies

The Committee set an objective to continue influencing government policy on the rights of LGBT+ persons in the workplace and in society.

The government action plan

- **Given the change in government halfway through this mandate**, it was difficult to closely monitor and report on what the government has accomplished.
- **The various tools and programs** that are available, however, are clearly once again meant for employers and not unions.

CSN positions

- **We were able to contribute** the CSN's positions and analysis to the government through a number of projects, including work with Le Collectif (for a National Suicide Prevention Strategy).
- **There were no bills tabled or consultations held** on issues of gender and sexual diversity over our mandate, meaning the Committee was not required to prepare any briefs.

Raising public awareness

In order to broaden its social impact beyond the CSN movement, the Committee also ensures public awareness of CSN struggles and positions and contributes to public education.

Collaborations with partner organizations

- **Contributed to the preparation of two guides** via the Table nationale de lutte contre l'homophobie et la transphobie des réseaux de l'éducation (National issues table against homophobia and transphobia in our school networks). One of the guides focuses on support and inclusion measures for students, while the other, *Mesures de soutien et d'inclusion des personnes trans et des personnes non binaires en milieu de travail* (support and inclusion measures for trans and non-binary persons in the workplace), relates to employees and is intended for employers and unions.
- **The CSN participated in creating Fierté syndicale ("union pride")**, a publication about the history of LGBT+ struggles in the Canadian labour movement highlighting the struggles carried out in Québec by the CSN.
- **Collaborated with union activists** from around the world to organize a world conference for trade unions (ILGA).
- **Contributed to knowledge development** on the realities of the inclusion and exclusion of LGBT+ people through the UNIE-LGBT+ project with the UQAM Chaire de recherche sur l'homophobie (research chair on homophobia). Facilitated CSN member participation in research as well as seminars and conferences.
- **Provided ongoing support** to the Québec LGBT+ movement by maintaining relationships with the Conseil québécois LGBT (Québec LGBT council), Fondation Émergence, Montréal Pride, RÉZO, and other groups.

Outlook

The Committee plans to continue work on the same four key areas during its next mandate..

Labour education

- **Continue to support** organizations that want to hold trainings and unions looking to raise awareness.
- **Raise awareness within the movement** and continue our actions in workplaces dominated by men.
- **Fight against the rise of the right** and denounce the lack of a ban on so-called conversion therapy.
- **Promote the participation** and representation of gender and sexually diverse people on the executive committees of unions and other organizations.

The role of unions

- **Continue to consolidate** the union network through central councils in all regions.
- **Organize a CSN-wide event** on occupational health and safety and the role of unions when it comes to the discrimination and harassment experienced by LGBT+ people at work.
- **Assist support networks** that want to improve their listening and action capacity.
- **Support federations and unions** looking to use inclusive language in their collective agreements.
- **Support federations and unions** looking to improve prevention and union defence on health issues affecting LGBT+ persons through their collective agreements.

Government policy

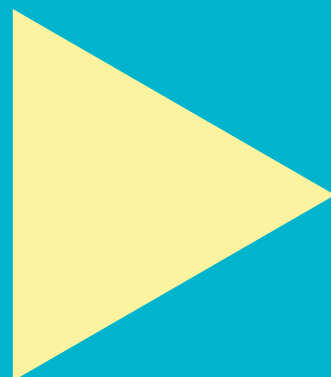
- **Convey the CSN's positions** to the Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ) government.
- **Provide reactions to any bills** or public consultations that may arise.

Raising public awareness

- **Maintain our relationship with the Table nationale** contre l'homophobie et la transphobie (National issues table against homophobia and transphobia), the Conseil québécois LGBT, Fondation Émergence, and others.

Conclusion

Unions play an essential role in defending the rights of all workers, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity. The union movement has shown that it can make major contributions in advancing towards a free, inclusive, and prejudice-free society in which there is true social equality for all.



Members of the committee



GISÈLE CHARETTE

Syndicat des travailleuses et travailleurs
des services paratechniques, auxiliaires et de métiers de la santé
et des services sociaux de la Côte-Nord-CSN

SAMUEL DESBIENS

Syndicat du personnel paratechnique,
des services auxiliaires et de métier du CIUSSS
de la Mauricie et du Centre-du-Québec-CSN

DOMINIQUE DUBUC

Syndicat du personnel enseignant du Cégep de Sherbrooke-CSN

ÉRIC KIROUAC

Syndicat des professeur-es du collège François-Xavier-Garneau-CSN

DONALD PICOTTE

Syndicat des travailleuses et travailleurs
de l'Hôpital Maisonneuve-Rosemont-Pavillon Judith-Jasmin-CSN

VÉRONIQUE DE SÈVE

Vice-President, CSN

MIREILLE BÉNARD

Assistant, CSN Executive Committee

MARIE-HÉLÈNE BONIN

Union Adviser,
Service de recherche et de condition féminine de la CSN

Other members during the mandate:

DANIEL FORTIN

Syndicat des travailleuses et travailleurs de Urgel Bourgie-CSN

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