

Citizen
round table

REPORT
ON THE
2019
2021
MANDATE

Summary of the work
and recommendations
of the members



MEMBERS OF THE CITIZEN ROUND TABLE FOR 2019-2021



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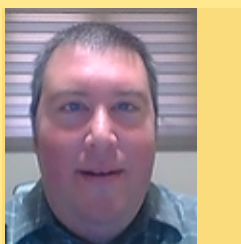
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Citizen round table

The Citizen round table is an advisory committee established by Élections Québec in 2017. It is made up of 12 Québec electors from different backgrounds. The members provide us with their opinions on different aspects of the Québec electoral system with the public interest in mind and in an impartial and non-partisan manner. The members of the Table act as intermediaries between Québec electors and Élections Québec, allowing us to learn more about their expectations and needs.

The Citizen round table is a deliberative body. Before each meeting, members receive documents providing neutral information on the topics to be considered at the meeting. During the meeting, members discuss, deliberate and make recommendations to Élections Québec.



2019-2021 report

The following pages summarize the work accomplished during the 2019-2021 term of the Citizen round table. The information presented includes a list of topics discussed and proposals made by members over the course of five meetings. Meeting minutes are posted on our website. Both short and long versions are available.

Like so many other activities in 2020-2021, the work of the Citizen round table was disrupted by the pandemic. The first meeting of the term, which was supposed to be held in March 2020, ended up being postponed until the fall. All meetings of the term were held virtually, between October 2020 and November 2021.

Over the course of the term, the Citizen round table tackled several new topics, including political financing, in consultation with experts from Élections Québec. In addition, an invited speaker addressed the meeting held on March 12, 2021.

MEETING 1 | Octobre 30, 2020

[Read the minutes of the meeting](#)

Measures for adapting elections and communication methods to the realities of a pandemic

Members express support for:

- Decreasing staffing levels at polling stations during the pandemic.
- Measures designed to increase the number of polling places and voting days.

Members recommend that the next Élections Québec communications campaign adopts a positive tone. Such a campaign should focus on two objectives:

- Reminding people of the importance and benefits of voting.
- Reassuring electors by informing them of the measures implemented to ensure safe voting.

MEETING 2 | Novembre 13, 2020

[Read the minutes of the meeting](#)

Priorities for the 2021 municipal general elections communication campaign

Members feel that the communication campaign should inform electors about the voting process (it's simple) as well as the impact of municipal issues on daily life (it's important).

They believe that Élections Québec should use a range of communication methods to reach all socio-demographic groups.

Members recommend that the communication campaign conveys positive messages.

Online application to register on the list of electors

Members are in favour of offering a secure method to apply online to register on the permanent list of electors.

At the same meeting, members offered some concrete suggestions to improve the new directives for election officers.

MEETING 3 | March 12 and 19, 2021

[Read the minutes of the meeting](#)

Political financing in Québec: Popular funding, public funding and contribution limits

Members propose various ideas for consideration or implementation:

- A majority recommends adjusting the share of public and popular funding so that both would be between 40% and 60%, thereby achieving a better balance between the two. A minority of members recommends maintaining the current proportions (75% public funding and 25% popular funding).
- Public funding mechanisms should be reassessed with an eye to better allowing for the emergence of new political parties. Several members suggested that allowances and matching sums be calculated on a sliding scale.
- Contribution limits should be reassessed with an eye to promoting fairness, accessibility and diversity. The authorized amount should dispel any idea that contributors can expect something in return for their contribution. Although most members think the limit should be set at between \$100 and \$250, some propose a figure as high as \$500.

MEETINGS 4 | May 28 and Jun 4, 2021

[Read the minutes of the meeting](#)

Open discussion on political financing and on information provided by Élections Québec on the subject

Members suggest that measures be taken to raise awareness of the following aspects of political financing (the number of members endorsing each suggestion is specified in parentheses):

- The unique and cutting-edge aspects of Québec's approach to political financing (5).
- Limits on election expenses, using comparisons (5).
- The fact that only electors are allowed to make political contributions (4).
- The various opportunities for electors to have an influence, with an eye to promoting engagement (3).

Regarding political financing regulations, some members suggest that:

- Élections Québec considers incentives to increase the number of women and members of minority groups running as candidates (5).
- The share of the vote required for reimbursement of election expenses (currently 15%) be lowered to between 5% and 10% (4).
- The Citizen round table studies ways of encouraging citizens to get involved with political parties (4).

Democratic citizenship competency profile for Québec students

Several members of the Citizen round table agree on the key importance of the following areas of awareness or knowledge:

- Understanding the impact of voting.
- Learning about the components of a democratic society, understanding their roles and interconnections.
- Knowing how to stay well informed (where to find information, how to use critical thinking and distinguish between truth and falsehood).
- Learning to develop informed opinions (sharing a point of view using logical arguments, questioning your own ideas, listening to other people's ideas).
- Demonstrating curiosity and open-mindedness.

At the same meeting, Élections Québec presented the preliminary version of its communication campaign for the 2021 municipal general elections.

Members also offered their opinions on different layouts for notices of entry.

MEETING 5 | Novembre 19, 2021

[Read the minutes of the meeting](#)

Citizen round table summary of work and evaluation

Members recommend:

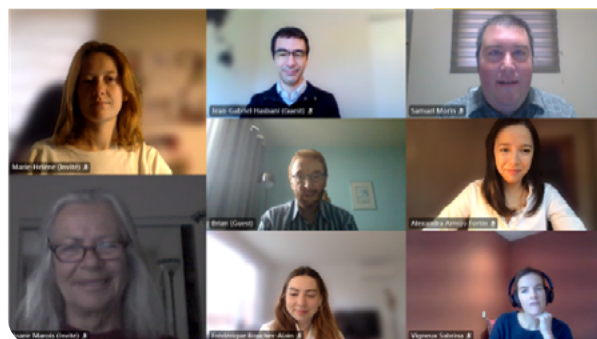
- Maintaining the term of office for members at two years. Half of members recommend extending it to three years.
- Increasing the number of meetings per year from two to three.
- Focusing on in-person meetings after the pandemic.
- Continuing to vary the types of topics covered and workshop formats.
- Keeping the format used in the preparation guides, which are considered highly useful.
- Continuing to consult with internal and external experts.
- Half of members feel that Élections Québec could do more to raise the profile of the Citizen round table.

Perspectives on Élections Québec

Strengths: Élections Québec's strong ability to maintain neutrality helps reinforce public trust in the electoral process. Members also recognized the agency's many efforts to improve access to voting for different categories of electors.

Weaknesses: Élections Québec suffers from a lack of positive exposure between elections. Members also cite the agency's limited ability to introduce changes that would modernize the election process.

Considerations for the future: Members recommend that Élections Québec continues its educational efforts and takes a lead role in developing the content for a future course on democracy education in the school system. Members also suggest that Élections Québec makes an effort to demystify certain aspects of elections and lead public discussions on electoral issues.



Priority projects for improving elections

At the final meeting of the term, members put themselves in the shoes of the Chief Electoral Officer and set about identifying priority projects for improving elections in Québec.

Although none of the ideas put forward was met with unanimous approval, a substantial majority of members supported the following three initiatives.

Élections Québec 2.0

Create a space to experiment with innovative approaches to election management. For instance, such a space could be used to test Internet voting as the final step in assessing its potential.

Abolishing polling subdivisions and computerizing the voting process

Better ensure the secrecy of the vote by abolishing polling subdivisions. Fully computerize the election process so electors would be free to vote at any polling station, thereby reducing the time required to vote and improving the voter experience.

Democracy needs you! Plan for encouraging political and electoral engagement

- Conduct studies to determine who does and does not vote in Québec, and find ways of encouraging non-voters to vote.
- Increase political and electoral engagement among people aged 16 to 25.
- Create a citizenship course, open to anyone interested. Whether offered virtually or in person, such a course should be short in length and accessible to people from all backgrounds.
- Explore ways of making electors feel more connected to their political representatives and more engaged with politics.