

PRESS RELEASE

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The Committee of Anglophones for Sovereignty-Association (CASA) has been formed because we are convinced that all Quebeckers, and ultimately all Canadians, stand to benefit from a new constitutional arrangement which recognizes the sovereignty of Quebec and makes possible a genuine and mutually advantageous association between two equal partners.

Quebec's aspirations for self-determination are not only legitimate, but their realization is necessary if we are to break out of our present constitutional impasse. Only by discarding an outworn federal system that denies the national identity of Quebec can we move toward greater social justice in Quebec as well as in Canada.

Thus, when the formal debate leading to the referendum on Sovereignty-Association begins, we will participate with those groups and associations who seek a "yes" vote on the referendum.

Although Casa will act in coalition with other organizations in the campaign to gain Sovereignty-Association, the Committee is entirely independent of all other groups.

Our priority will be to inform English-speaking Quebeckers both before and during the formal debate. It is vital that both sides of the debate be presented fully and fairly to both

Anglophone and Francophone Quebecers. Sovereignty-Association, especially as it is presently understood by many Anglophones, is far broader than a choice between two constitutional options. It will also serve to clarify a whole series of government policies and the social realities of the various groups comprising Quebec.

Sovereignty-Association is an issue which confronts all Quebecers. In voting in the upcoming referendum, we must all consider this option on its own merits and not simply in terms of our own linguistic or cultural origins and affiliations. Consequently, in the same way that some Francophones can accept federalism, Anglophones must also feel free to accept Sovereignty-Association as an option worthy of consideration.

As Anglophones living in Quebec, the present members of CASA are in a unique position to explain this option to others who share the same linguistic background; in fact, we feel a responsibility to do so. What must be emphasized in every possible way in the important period ahead is not what divides Quebecers but what unites us all.

We also feel it is important that Francophones be aware that the Anglophone population of Quebec is not culturally, economically or politically monolithic. For this reason, the Committee will seek to sensitize the Government of Quebec, the Parti Québécois and Francophone groups involved in the referendum debate to the realities of the Anglophone population.

We will try to clarify the situation presently facing Quebec through educational meetings, the translation and summarizing of documents, and public statements on relevant issues. We already have an elected executive committee and several sub-committees working to carry out these tasks, and in the next few months, through specific research projects now being planned, we will be seeking to identify the needs and concerns of Anglophone Quebecers and to draw the links between the latter and the important question now facing all Quebecers.

We shall be looking at the various sources of information, especially the mass media, available to Anglophones in Quebec and shall study their role and impact. Where needed, we shall point out the deficiencies in the reporting on Quebec and shall try to propose suitable changes.

The Committee is now preparing a brochure in English containing information on Sovereignty-Association and related questions. We are also organizing a series of workshops which will begin next month and which will deal with these topics.

We already have among our members English-speaking Quebecers from many different milieux and we intend to widen our range of contacts. We hope by the time the formal referendum campaign has begun to have CASA groups set up and operating in each neighbourhood and region in Quebec where Anglophones reside.