

# ENSURING CANADIAN CULTURAL SOVEREIGNTY

## 2025 FEDERAL ELECTION

Priority Issues of the Coalition for the  
Diversity of Cultural Expressions



Coalition  
for the Diversity of  
Cultural Expressions

# About

For over 25 years, the **Coalition for the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (CDCE)** has brought together the leading francophone and anglophone professional organizations in Canada's cultural sector, advocating for effective cultural policies in a globalized world. The CDCE represents over 350,000 creators, artists, and more than 3,000 cultural enterprises across the country. Concerned both with the economic health of the cultural sector and the vitality of cultural creation, it focuses particularly on how culture is treated in trade agreements and the impact of the digital environment on the diversity of cultural expressions, ensuring that public policies actively protect and support our cultural ecosystem.

## International Legislative Framework

*The 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*

At the international level, the CDCE, along with the Quebec and Canadian governments, played a fundamental role in ensuring the recognition of the dual value – both economic and identity-based – of cultural goods and services. Their efforts contributed to the emergence of a movement that led to the adoption of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions at UNESCO in 2005, with Canada as its first signatory. This international agreement acknowledges that the free expression of culture enables different peoples to share knowledge, foster social understanding, and strengthen connections. The 2005 Convention aims to establish a framework of democracy, tolerance, social justice, and mutual respect among peoples and cultures. Countries that have ratified the 2005 Convention are required to incorporate its principles into their national legislation, notably by adopting measures and policies to protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions within their territories.

# Background

In a landscape marked by significant economic, technological, and geopolitical turbulence, it is more crucial than ever to adopt ambitious and well-adapted cultural policies to ensure the vitality, diversity, and sustainability of our cultural ecosystem.

The Canadian cultural sector stands at a crossroads, facing major challenges that demand strong and coordinated political action. The economic impact of the trade war with the United States, the protection of cultural industries in trade agreements, broadcasting, copyright, and artificial intelligence are key concerns for member organizations, which are calling for clear and concrete commitments.

# 1

## International Trade and Cultural Sovereignty

In 2026, the renegotiation of the Canada–United States–Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) could put the **cultural exemption** at risk – an essential provision that allows Canada to implement policies tailored to its national realities in order to support its cultural industries against dominant U.S. players. It is crucial that the government upholds this exemption and ensures that cultural goods and services are not subjected to international trade liberalization rules.

The dual recognition – both economic and cultural – of cultural goods and services under UNESCO’s 2005 Convention justifies that they cannot be reduced to mere commercial value. This recognition in international law legitimizes their exclusion from trade liberalization agreements, as well as the measures adopted by states to protect and promote their culture.

Without this cultural exemption, many essential measures supporting the creation, dissemination, and promotion of Canadian content would be at risk. Consider, for example, Canadian and francophone content quotas on commercial radio, or the requirement for broadcasting companies – such as cable distributors and digital giants – to contribute to the funding of Canadian television programs and music. Without these protective and promotional instruments for local content, Canadian culture would never have achieved the dynamism and excellence it is recognized for today, both nationally and internationally.

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### REQUEST

1

Exclude cultural activities, goods, and services from free trade agreements by incorporating a general cultural exemption clause in all trade agreements.

## 2 **Broadcasting Act and CBC/Radio-Canada**

With the implementation of the *Online Streaming Act* (S.C. 2023, c. 8) and the crucial role of the CRTC in its enforcement, it is essential to establish an effective regulatory framework that enhances the discoverability of Canadian cultural content and ensures a fair contribution from digital streaming platforms to the financing of our cultural production.

The *Online Streaming Act* amends the *Broadcasting Act* of 1991 to update Canada's broadcasting policy. These amendments aim to protect and support Canadian television programs, films, and music in all their diversity. Any company engaged in broadcasting activities in Canada must now comply with regulations requiring mandatory financial contributions to the development of Canadian content, as well as obligations related to the promotion of this content.

The CDCE recognizes the essential role of Canada's national public broadcaster, CBC/Radio-Canada – not only as a trusted news source and cornerstone of our democracy, but also as a key driver of Canadian content and local cultural events – and supports increased funding to sustain and strengthen its mission.

### REQUEST

2

Ensure the proper implementation of the *Online Streaming Act* by the CRTC, so that audiovisual and audio streaming services, as well as social media platforms, contribute – just like traditional media – to the creation, production, and promotion of Canadian and Indigenous music, programming, and film.

## 3 Copyright

As Canada's *Copyright Act* marks its 100th anniversary, reforms are necessary to uphold the rights of creators, particularly in the digital environment.

Since the 2010s, the growing accessibility of cultural content online has profoundly disrupted the economic models of cultural industries. This instability was further exacerbated by the 2012 revision of the *Copyright Act*, which introduced multiple exceptions that fail to align with Canada's international commitments.

On December 16, 2024, the Government of Canada announced in its Fall Economic Statement its intention to amend the *Copyright Act* to establish the artist's resale right, allowing visual artists to benefit from the future sales of their works. The CDCE welcomes this long-awaited progress, which has been advocated for decades by the visual arts sector and is strongly supported by its members, and calls for the swift implementation of this reform.

However, the music and publishing sectors, which were also expecting concrete measures, remain disappointed.

In the book sector, the CDCE urges fair remuneration for authors and publishers when their works are used for educational purposes. In 2022, the government committed to addressing this issue in the federal budget, yet no action has been taken to date.

In the music sector, the CDCE calls for the extension of the private copying regime to electronic devices, in line with the principle of technological neutrality, as is already the case in Europe. The industry also advocates for a clarification of the definition of sound recording to explicitly include audiovisual uses.

These reforms remain essential to ensuring a sustainable framework for all creators and cultural industries.

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## REQUEST

3

Amend the *Copyright Act* to establish the artist's resale right in Canada, ensuring that members of the Canadian visual arts community benefit from future sales of their works, in accordance with the Government's intent as stated in the Fall Economic Statement of 2024.

## REQUEST

4

Ensure fair remuneration for writers and publishers for the use of their works in the education sector.

## REQUEST

5

Guarantee technological neutrality for private copying to restore royalties for performers, composers, songwriter-composers, music publishers, and record labels.

## REQUEST

6

Amend the definition of sound recording to ensure that performers and record labels receive compensation for the audiovisual use of their works.

## 4 Artificial Intelligence and Culture

The rapid rise of artificial intelligence (AI) presents critical challenges for the cultural sector, particularly with recent developments in generative AI. Protecting the rights of creators and the businesses that support them must be at the heart of AI and cultural strategies. The CDCE advocates for the adoption of a legislative framework based on the following key principles:

- Authorization;
- Remuneration;
- Transparency.

At this pivotal moment in AI development, it is essential to establish an unequivocal regulatory approach to ensure AI evolves in service of human creativity. The structured development of an inclusive, open, safe, and secure digital space that respects, protects, and promotes human rights—including cultural rights—must be a national and international priority.

In Canada, the use of copyrighted works and productions without the rights holders' consent is prohibited. The CDCE therefore calls for the *Copyright Act* not to be amended to allow technology development companies to use protected works, productions, and performances to train generative AI systems without authorization or compensation (text and data mining). Drawing on the *European Union Artificial Intelligence Act* (EU AIA), the CDCE also advocates for the implementation of legally binding measures requiring the disclosure of training data used in AI systems.

Finally, the Coalition urges action to ensure that all AI-generated content is clearly identified so that the public is fully informed about the nature of the content they consume. Furthermore, products resulting from purely mechanical AI processes, without any original human expression, are not “works” protected by copyright or related rights and should not be recognized as such.

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## REQUEST

7

Ensure that the *Copyright Act* will not be amended to allow technology development companies to continue using protected works, productions, and performances to train generative AI systems without authorization or compensation (text and data mining).

## REQUEST

8

Implement legally binding measures requiring the disclosure of training data used in AI systems.

## REQUEST

9

Ensure that all AI-generated content is clearly identified, so that the public is fully informed about the nature of the content they consume.