



October 2020 ■ Sonia Ethier's opening address

## Let's keep working together

**"While it is customary to tell you that we have not stopped since the last general council, I must admit that it is hard to find the right words to describe the reality of the past few months. It has been extremely busy, and it will continue to be so in every aspect."**

This is how CSQ president Sonia Ethier opened the last General Council, which was held virtually on October 21 and 22, 2020. She took time to acknowledge the efforts of the health-care workers since the beginning of the health crisis. "Our colleagues have been resolutely keeping the healthcare system afloat despite a fragile network. To date, approximately 17 000 healthcare workers have contracted COVID-19. Is it surprising that 1700 members, likely more, have resigned since the start of the pandemic?" exclaimed the president.

She also took the opportunity to point out the work of the FSQ-CSQ that took the lead on the "*2<sup>e</sup> vague, on veut pas se noyer!*" campaign across Quebec to denounce the sudden departures, the government's lack of commitment to tackling job stability and the fact that employers have yet to introduce concrete readiness plans for the arrival of the second wave.

In her speech, Sonia Ethier also mentioned the work done by teachers, support staff and professionals in the education network, CEGEPs and universities, who continued to support student services and distance learning from the onset of the crisis: "The overload is very present for all personnel who are at the mercy of the numerous, ever-changing directives. Above all, we are short staffed."

Despite the context, the FIPEQ-CSQ mobilized itself in an exemplary manner. Home childcare educators initiated rotating strikes before launching an unlimited general strike. "This mobilization was necessary to influence the government and the Minister of Families. I salute the solidarity and commitment of these workers, said Sonia Ethier. They are inspiring. I am proud of these determined women who are willing to fight for better working conditions."



In addition, the president addressed many issues that will be advocated by the CSQ in the coming weeks: the calamity of the working conditions as a result of the pandemic, public sector negotiations with "an absolutely uncompromising government who seems to live on another planet" and the resumption of parliamentary proceedings with many important bills.

In conclusion, the CSQ president underlined everyone's commitment and work over the past few months. "Without your efforts and your presence, we wouldn't have made it. Take care of yourselves!"

To read the entire speech, click [here](#).

# Thoughts on the 43<sup>rd</sup> Congress of the CSQ

In recent months, the pandemic situation has impacted the CSQ proceedings. We did return to some sense of normalcy by holding virtual meetings and adapting our methods (abridged agendas, new facilitation and presentation approaches, etc.).

However, in this exceptional context, holding our 43<sup>rd</sup> Congress with nearly 1000 delegates poses additional challenges, not to mention the contractual obligations associated to this event. Let's recall that the ministerial order of the Minister of Health and Social Services, dated April 26, 2020, enjoins organizations to take all necessary measures to protect the health of the population during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Therefore, General Council assessed different scenarios taking into consideration logistical, financial, political and democratic aspects. We are working to find the best solutions to ensure our union democracy.

A special General Council meeting will be held on November 23, 2020, during which we will provide an update on the situation.

## ■ New group insurance plan

## Choose now!

In May 2020, the CSQ adopted its new group insurance plan: Alter ego—The CSQ Advantage plan. With its innovative and flexible structure, this new plan will come into effect on January 1, 2021.

CSQ members are invited to take part in the enrolment campaign that will run from **November 9 to December 4, inclusively**. This campaign offers eligible members the opportunity to choose their collective insurance benefits.

- ✓ To properly choose their group insurance coverage, members can visit [alterego.lacsq.org/en](https://alterego.lacsq.org/en)
- ✓ The website is full of useful information. It allows you to consult all the documentation detailing the new plan's structure, benefits and costs.

### TO FIND OUT MORE

**Website:** [alterego.lacsq.org](https://alterego.lacsq.org)  
(live chat available)

**Email:** [alterego@lacsq.org](mailto:alterego@lacsq.org)

**Telephone:** Contact SSQ Insurance at 1-888-CSQ-0006

### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- ✓ Members who do not participate in the new plan's enrolment campaign will be granted coverage equivalent to their current plan.
- ✓ Members exempt from the plan are invited to take part in the campaign to select their dental and life insurance coverages, and to identify their life insurance beneficiaries.

# alter ego

THE CSQ AVANTAGE

**ENROLLMENT CAMPAIGN FOR  
YOUR GROUP INSURANCE PLAN  
FROM NOVEMBER 9 TO DECEMBER 4,  
MAKE YOUR CHOICES!**

For more information about the enrollment campaign, visit the [alterego.lacsq.org](https://alterego.lacsq.org) website or contact your local union.

# Challenges and perspectives

**General Council delegates attended a presentation on the challenges and perspectives of teleworking, a very relevant topic in the current health crisis context.**

Telework—previously viewed by employers as a privilege granted to a select few employees—has become a reality for many workers since the beginning of the pandemic. Although a majority are happy working remotely, telework brings its fair share of drawbacks for a significant proportion of the population.

## ADVANTAGES AND INCONVENIENCES

- ✓ On a personal level, telework offers many advantages (saving in travel time, time savings, improved concentration, etc.) and inconveniences (difficulty accessing information, work intensification, isolation from colleagues, risk of double burden for women, etc.)
- ✓ On a societal level, telework offers many advantages, for example, reducing the spread of the virus, and decreasing road congestion, cost of infrastructure maintenance and pollution. It also increases the options for people with disabilities to integrate into work life.

## CHALLENGES

Working from home offers quite a few challenges for employees and unions. For example:

- ✓ Hyperconnectivity and its effects on mental health;



- ✓ The transfer of certain costs to employees (supplies and equipment, Internet packages, etc.);
- ✓ Possible increase in recourse to litigation in labour relations;
- ✓ Respect of privacy;
- ✓ Occupational health and safety, and more.
- ✓ Agreements must be made to regulate telework in various settings.
- ✓ Considering the number of employees currently working remotely, and the important challenges surrounding this type of work, agreements should be reached before the existing collective agreements expire.

## PERSPECTIVES

- ✓ 50% of Quebecers wish to continue this type of work arrangement.
- ✓ Only 40% of jobs in Canada can be performed remotely.
- ✓ Current observation: teleworking seems destined to remain after the pandemic.

## TIME FOR ACTION

This presentation to General Council was the first discussion on this topic. During the upcoming weeks, the CSQ will continue to analyze the effects of telework, with particular focus on the working conditions of its members and health and safety challenges.

# Living and working in Cree and Inuit communities

The CSQ has launched two professional integration guides for people wishing to work in Cree and Inuit communities.

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- ✓ For 50 years, the CSQ has represented educational personnel working in Cree and Inuit communities.
- ✓ Over the years, the CSQ has documented the challenges facing non-Native workers who choose to exercise their profession or trade in these communities, particularly with regard to their retention in the North.
- ✓ The CSQ is also aware of the challenges facing members from Cree or Inuit communities with regard to the prejudice of non-Native people.

## TIME FOR ACTION

- ✓ The CSQ has prepared two guides to address the questions of people considering work in a Cree or Inuit community.
- ✓ These guides are meant to shed light on the realities of the North and raise awareness of those interested in this adventure, particularly in regard to the lifestyle and culture differences between the inhabitants of northern and southern Quebec.
- ✓ The purpose of these guides is to ensure that the integration of workers into their new living and work environment is more exciting than it is destabilizing.



## TO FIND OUT MORE

Consult the **two guides** available on the CSQ website.

## A proposal to support indigenous people

The tragic death of Joyce Echaquan in a Joliette hospital—reminding us of the existence of systemic racism in our society—and the death of two young children in the Wendake community were brought up during the last General Council.

“These human tragedies remind us that we have a duty to vulnerable people. Their survival depends on our ability to stand in solidarity with one another. I sincerely hope that the calls for help and cries of distress will finally serve as a wake-up call to all of us, ending discrimination against indigenous people and recognizing

their rights,” stressed CSQ president Sonia Ethier during her opening speech.

## TIME FOR ACTION

To support indigenous communities, General Council delegates adopted a proposal so that:

- ✓ The CSQ calls on the federal and provincial governments to implement the recommendations, calls to action and calls for justice issued by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern

Affairs, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and the Public Inquiry Commission on relations between Indigenous Peoples and certain public services;

- ✓ The CSQ demands that the federal and provincial governments periodically publish the status of the implementation of these recommendations, calls to action and calls for justice;
- ✓ The CSQ demands of the federal government an overhaul of the Indian Act (R.S.C., 1985, c. I-5) based on a consultation with First Nations.



# FIPEQ-CSQ and negotiations: Status

FIPEQ-CSQ president Valérie Grenon took the opportunity of General Council to thank delegates for their support during the negotiations to renew the collective agreement of home childcare educators (HCE).

"It took 18 months of negotiations, a host of pressure tactics, a Québec-wide rotating strike, a one-week indefinite general strike and the involvement of a mediator to reach an agreement in principle with the Minister of Families," she said.

"This decision was not made lightheartedly, given its far-reaching consequences," she added, referring to the unlimited general strike. However, it was following this strike that HCEs who are members of the FIPEQ-CSQ approved the agreement in principle at 82.4%.

Although considerable gains have been made on the collective agreement's normative aspect, the fight for better salaries will continue through a compensation committee.



The FIPEQ-CSQ is now launching the national and grouped early childcare centre (CPE) negotiations. The workers have several demands to improve their employment conditions, which have deteriorated dramatically with the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Positions filled in the various committees

The CSQ would like to thank those who applied for positions on the various committees and congratulate those who were appointed:

### FINANCE COMMITTEE

- ✓ Claudia Zimmermann, from the Syndicat des professionnelles et professionnels de recherche de l'Université Laval (SPPRUL-CSQ)
- ✓ Pascal Côté, from the Syndicat de l'enseignement de la Côte-du-Sud (SECS-CSQ)

### STANDING CONCILIATION COMMITTEE

- ✓ Substitute: Carl Tremblay, from the Syndicat de l'enseignement du Haut-Richelieu (SEHR-CSQ)

### YOUTH COMMITTEE

- ✓ Mélanie Déziel-Proulx, from the Syndicat du soutien scolaire de l'Outaouais (SSSO-CSQ)

# Solidarity with Haiti

**In Haiti, anti-union repression is intensifying. In March 2020, the situation became increasingly worrisome as the country went through a period of anarchy and generalized violence that seriously impacted the education network.**

The arbitrary transfers of trade union leaders and activists—demanded by Haiti's Education Minister—would prevent these people from exercising their union responsibilities and deprive them of sites to organize union meetings.

According to the unions involved, these changes come following the continued mobilization of union representatives pushing for free and quality public education, and a reassessment of the teaching profession.

As soon as this announcement was made, the Haitian education unions decided to carry out protest and strike actions.

## TIME FOR ACTION

In order to support the trade union leaders and activists involved, the General Council delegation voted a resolution recommending that:

- ✓ Unions affiliated with the CSQ express their solidarity with unions affiliated to the Education International in Haiti by writing a letter to the Ministry of National Education and Professional Training of Haiti denouncing the arbitrary transfers;
- ✓ The CSQ contribute financially to the leasing of a site to allow unions affiliated to the IE to work and meet.

## TO FIND OUT MORE

Unions wishing to express their support can use the **template letter** and email it to the Haitian Ministry of Education—make sure to copy (cc) CSQ's management (**[direction.generale@lacsq.org](mailto:direction.generale@lacsq.org)**) when sending.

