
1. Introduction

English and French are the official languages of Canada. This was recognized by the *Official Languages Acts of 1969 and 1988*, and entrenched by the *Constitution Act of 1982*.

The three fundamental principles governing official languages policies are:

- a) members of the public have the right to communicate with and obtain services from the Department in the official language of choice. Offices of the Department, located where there is significant demand in Canada and at all diplomatic and consular offices abroad, must provide services to the public in both official languages;
- b) Canadians of the two official language groups should have equal opportunities for employment and a career within the Department and should be able to work in the official language of their choice; and
- c) both official language groups should, within the merit principle, be equitably represented within the Department, i.e. representation of anglophones and francophones should correspond to their proportion in the general population or in the labour force.