

MOST ANXIOUS THAT SUCH A CRISIS SHOULD BE AVOIDED, FOR IF THERE IS ONE GOVERNMENT THAT REALLY WANTS TO SEE THE FRANCOPHONE COMMUNITY ORGANIZED, IT IS THAT OF QUEBEC. PERHAPS THE BEST WAY OF AVOIDING IT WOULD BE FOR CANADA TO ACCEPT SOME CHANGES IN A CHARTER WHICH IS, AFTER ALL, STILL IN A DRAFT STAGE. I THINK I HAVE DEMONSTRATED TO YOU THAT THERE IS NOTHING SINISTER IN THE REASONS THAT HAVE PROMPTED US TO SUGGEST CHANGES IN THE DRAFT STATUTES. I ALSO FIND IT HARD TO ACCEPT THAT YOU SHOULD ACCUSE US, IN A WAY, OF ENDANGERING LA FRANCOPHONIE EVEN BEFORE THE CONFERENCE BEGINS.

THERE EXISTS FOR QUEBEC, MR. PRIME MINISTER, WHAT I WOULD CALL A THRESHOLD OF DIGNITY WHICH WE CANNOT CROSS. AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND I WILL TAKE THE LIBERTY ONCE MORE OF SUMMING UP THE POINTS WHICH QUEBEC CANNOT ABANDON: FIRST, QUEBEC'S PRESENCE AND ACTIVITY MUST BE ADEQUATELY IDENTIFIED. SECOND, QUEBEC MUST BE ABLE TO SPEAK IN ITS OWN NAME, AND ENTER INTO COMMITMENTS OF ITS OWN IN MATTERS WITHIN ITS COMPETENCE. THIRD, THE VOTING PROCEDURE MUST REFLECT THIS DUALITY BY PROVIDING FOR MANDATORY ABSTENTION IN THE EVENT OF DISAGREEMENT ON MATTERS WITHIN QUEBEC'S COMPETENCE. FOURTH, THE STATUTES OF THE AGENCY MUST BE BASED ON THE SAME PRINCIPLES AND ALLOW FOR DIRECT PARTICIPATION BY QUEBEC IN THE ACTIVITIES OF THE AGENCY.

IN THAT THE DATE OF THE CONFERENCE IS APPROACHING VERY RAPIDLY, I WOULD ASK YOU TO INFORM ME OF YOUR ACCEPTANCE OF THE PRINCIPLES SET OUT ABOVE BY TOMORROW EVENING, SO THAT OUR DELEGATES MAY BE ABLE TO COMPLETE THEIR TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS IN TIME.

YOURS SINCERELY,

THE PRIME MINISTER OF QUEBEC
JEAN-JACQUES BERTRAND