

UNWAVERING IN THE FACE OF TOMORROW'S CHALLENGES

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13TH CONVENTION OF THE FIQ
CENTRE DES CONGRÈS DE QUÉBEC
JUNE 2—6, 2025

DECISION

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D9

Ad hoc anti-racism
committee report



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Origins of the ad hoc anti-racism committee

The context of the years preceding the 2021 Convention pushed the Federation to actively commit to the fight against racism. Key events included the death of Joyce Echaquan, the Black Lives Matter and Idle No More movements, the rise of Islamophobia fuelled by populist rhetoric, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, among others. The Federation's aim is to combat racism as a system, by identifying the ways in which discrimination is reproduced within institutions and by raising awareness of these issues, including within the Federation.

The FIQ recognizes the concept of systemic discrimination and resolutely opposes it. It is essential to document discrimination, the exclusion experienced by certain people, institutional violence and racist behaviour in care settings. To define concrete actions, the ad-hoc anti-racism committee's mandate took into account the examination of representativeness within the delegation and the identification of racism in the context of care.

Laying the foundations for the anti-racism committee

The committee defined the common ground and established a roadmap up to the 2025 Convention in its first meetings. Their vision was clear: there was an urgent need to equip union teams and to make them aware of racial biases. This approach was to be based on dialogue, to make activists aware of the importance of intervening in situations of violence and discrimination. To achieve this, a number of crucial steps had to be taken.

The representativeness of union structures is also a central issue for the committee, as it touches on the very foundations of democracy. Before defining the areas for action and the recommendations to be made, it was essential to draw up an accurate picture of the situation. Hence, from the beginning, the committee members chose to take stock of the situation to better understand the extent of the issues, the challenges and the blind spots that needed to be addressed.

In addition, a common understanding of the different concepts had to be reached. The committee members also attended a training session called "Formation sur le racisme et l'antiracisme", given by Khaoula Zoghlami, assistant professor in the Département d'information et de communication at the Université Laval. In this training, they acquired knowledge of the historical and sociological perspective of power relationships, and the mechanisms by which racist thinking is reproduced in relation to individuals and groups. The training provided a better understanding of the causes and repercussions of racial discrimination in society, and in particular of the exclusion experienced by racialized people.

The subsequent exchanges at the committee's meetings, as well as the other training and conferences the members attended — including the Agence de la santé publique de Montréal (Montréal Public Health Agency) on the mental health issues linked to racism, in winter 2023 — have raised awareness and provided food for thought.

Representativeness of racialized members in the delegation

To be truly representative, union structures must reflect the diversity of the groups that make them up. Over the years, Québec society has become much more diverse, and the proportion of racialized workers in the health network has increased. It is therefore essential to become aware of the under-representation of racialized groups within union decision-making bodies in order to examine the barriers to participation faced by historically discriminated groups. The contribution of racialized

people within political and union decision-making bodies is fundamental to enriching the debate on ideas, highlighting a plurality of experiences and identifying blind spots. Above all, it allows everyone to be fully involved in participatory democracy.

As such, it was necessary to draw up a profile of the presence of racialized people within the Federation's union structures (affiliated unions, standing committees, etc.), to establish references with the health network and determine the representativeness. First, the information provided by each of the institutions represented by the FIQ was compiled. Then, the FIQ posted a self-identification questionnaire on FIQ Militantes in January 2025 to obtain this profile of the union reps in the delegation. This questionnaire also aimed to determine the social characteristics of the delegation according to the categories defined by the Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse, covering the five discriminated groups. With this data, it will now be possible to accurately document the representativeness of union structures, monitor progress and formulate courses of action.

It's essential to create and maintain conditions conducive to fair representation, ensuring that all voices, especially those marginalized, can be heard and taken into account in decision-making processes. This approach includes implementing inclusive practices, reducing barriers to participation and supporting member involvement so that the union truly reflects the diversity of healthcare professionals.

Raising awareness of racism and making racial issues a cross-cutting issue

The committee members believe it's essential to raise awareness in union reps about the notion of privilege in society by addressing conscious and unconscious biases. In March 2023, the committee presented the delegation with its vision for achieving this in the coming years. However, it was when work resumed after the provincial negotiations that the work plan took more precise shape.

The committee is proposing a training program based on both learning content and dialogue, built around a concrete change of culture in union practices. To better implement these practices, certain reflexes still need to be developed. Such an approach requires commitment and, above all, a collective will to recognize that these changes are necessary.

First, the committee intends to promote collective awareness of the racism issues that can arise in the workplace, by adopting a common language and definition of concepts, as part of a training session that will be available online in 2025. Secondly, a series of meetings with local teams will give union reps the necessary tools for recognizing racist situations in the workplace and assisting members facing such situations.

Outlook

Since 2021, the members of the ad hoc anti-racism committee have been committed to providing tools to union reps, so that they can take action on the issues of racism in the workplace and systemic racism and are better equipped to intervene with members. Unfortunately, it has been difficult to organize regular meetings, particularly during the provincial negotiations. The integration of new members into the committee has also required significant support.

The committee has an ambitious agenda and is determined to raise awareness among union reps of the realities faced by racialized members. Working together with the delegation will be a guarantee of success for the next mandate. The committee members want to make their work visible and are committed to taking advantage of meeting places, such as federal councils, to establish an ongoing dialogue with the delegation. Targeted prevention strategies need to be put in place to better protect members and create a respectful and inclusive working environment.

Recommendations

Considering the orientation that the fight against racism is a transversal line within the Federation, by integrating this fight into all its union policies and practices;

Considering the need to highlight racism against members as a labour relations and occupational health and safety issue, in order to implement concrete and effective solutions;

Considering that the committee's action plan includes engaging in dialogue with local teams and developing the tools needed to support more inclusive union work;

The Executive Committee recommends:

That the next mandate of the standing Anti-Racism Committee is to:

- Continue the discussion with the Policy Implementation on the Fair Representation of Women Committee, in particular that of racialized women, in the places of power at the Federation;
- Continue to deploy the training course on anti-racist union practices, in order to strengthen the commitment of union reps and their ability to take effective action against racism;
- Document the contexts in which cases of racism are reported so that appropriate solutions can be put in place in the workplace;
- Prevent manifestations of racism in the workplace, by raising awareness of the issue among union reps, members and employers.

The Executive Committee recommends:

That the Anti-Racism Committee should henceforth be composed of a political officer and six racialized union reps elected exceptionally at the Federal Council in December 2025.

NOTES

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