Montréal, June 14, 2012 – Although there is now a greater awareness of the problem of racial profiling in Québec, a taking stock exercise by the Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse finds there are few tangible changes, one year after the release of its Report on racial profiling and systemic discrimination of racialized youth.

“The conclusion may be disappointing, but what is most important is to continue to work so that we can report on more concrete results in the very near future,” states the Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse in an interim report released today.

“We are still waiting for targeted commitments in response to our recommendations but we hope that the openness shown recently by the ministère de la Justice, which is coordinating the government response to our report, will result in the implementation of a concerted strategy to tackle this important social problem,” said the president of the Commission, Gaétan Cousineau.

The Commission, he said, had promised to ensure a follow-up to its 2011 report which raised expectations among members of racialized communities and human rights organizations in Québec. While acknowledging that such changes take time, especially considering the issues at stake and the scope of the challenge, it was nevertheless important to report on the progress this far.

The report Racial Profiling and Systemic Discrimination of Racialized Youth, released in May 2011, contained 93 recommendations, six of which were of general scope, 44 were directed at the public security sector, 33 were directed at the educational sector and 10 were aimed at the youth protection system. Over the last year, the Commission met with representatives of government departments through an inter-ministerial panel created for the purpose.

Members of this panel were asked to provide a report outlining which measures they had either implemented or planned to implement and their responses are reproduced in full in the interim report. The City of Montréal and its police force (SPVM) also provided a report. Meanwhile, the Commission collected observations from representatives of community organizations working with racialized communities who participated in the consultation process.

“This first taking stock exercise is an opportunity to acknowledge once again, that fighting racial profiling and systemic discrimination is a long-term undertaking,” the Commission states in its document. “There is a growing understanding and recognition of the problem, the term “racial profiling” is being used today in areas where it had never been heard before, and the discourse is beginning to change.”

The Commission notes however that most of the measures or actions that government departments mentioned in their reports were already planned before the Commission issued its recommendations, some of which had even been singled out by the Commission as problematic.

During the year, the Commission commented more fully on a number of these measures or actions, including those put forward by the ministère de l’Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport with respect to welcome classes, special needs students and the educational path.
It also commented on Bill 46, an Act respecting independent police investigations, tabled in the National Assembly in December 2011, stating that it was not a satisfactory response to its recommendations.

And, in January of this year, it welcomed the publication by the SPVM of its Strategic plan on racial and social profiling (2012-2014), noting it was a step in the right direction.

This being said, an unscientific survey conducted by the Commission with community organizations who had participated in the consultation process begun in 2009 revealed that a majority of groups reported that they have not noticed any progress in the field. They say that much more remains to be done to eliminate racial profiling and systemic discrimination in Québec.

The Commission is also committed to remaining responsive to racialized communities providing rigorous follow-up to its recommendations, as well as to the commitments that it made for itself, including reducing the time involved to investigate racial profiling complaints.

– 30 –


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