

PRESS RELEASE

Minister Caroline Proulx's decision to cancel the Palais des Congrès' Pro-vie event has no legislative basis.

UVVC vigorously denounces the CAQ government's cancellation of the "Rallye foi, feu liberté" event, scheduled to take place at the end of the month at the Quebec City Convention Centre. Minister Caroline Proulx concluded that the event was not welcome in an institution belonging to a pro-choice government.

This decision has no legislative basis. In a parliamentary democracy, only the legislator can grant the power to act through laws and regulations, and, therefore, any executive member of Parliament must base his or her decisions on a legislative text, which is not the case here.

First of all, the Act to Promote Respect for the Religious Neutrality of the State cannot be used as a basis for the decision to cancel the said event. There is nothing in this law that would allow it. On the contrary, we remind the government that it imposes a duty of religious neutrality in the performance of their duties on staff members of public bodies, not on organizations using or renting government buildings.

In addition, article 4 stipulates that: "4. respect for the principle of the religious neutrality of the State includes, in particular, the duty of the personnel of public bodies to act, in the performance of their duties, in such a way as not to favour or disadvantage any person by reason of that person's membership or non-membership of a religion, or by reason of their own convictions or religious beliefs or those of a person in authority."

Secondly, the Société des congrès du Québec is governed by two laws: the Act respecting the Government Procurement Centre Corporation, RLRQ c. M-30, a.3.0.1 and the Act respecting the governance of state-owned enterprises, RLRQ c. G1.02 . These statutes cannot serve as a basis for the Minister's decision. Nothing in these laws stipulates that a minister has the power to intervene in contracts signed by the convention centre.

¹ <https://www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca/fr/pdf/lc/R-26.2.01.pdf>

¹ <https://www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca/fr/pdf/rc/M-30,%20R.%201%20.pdf>

¹ <https://www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca/fr/document/lc/G-1.02#:~:text=1.,des%20composantes%20de%20leur%20direction.>

Thirdly, the President of the Convention Centre is subject to the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct for Administrators of Government Procurement Centres, as well as to the Regulation respecting the ethics and professional conduct of public administrators.

Article 7 of the aforementioned Code of Ethics stipulates that: "The public administrator must, in the performance of his duties, make his decisions independently of all partisan political considerations."

Article 8 also stipulates that: "The Chairman of the Board of Directors, the Chief Executive Officer of an organization or company and the full-time public administrator must show reserve in the public manifestation of their political opinions".

Consequently, the President of the Centre des Congrès, Mr. Pierre-Michel Bouchard, made comments to the media that in no way respect the Code of Ethics and the Regulation respecting the ethics and professional conduct of public administrators when he stated, "In this case, as a Crown corporation, we think it's our role to adhere to certain values that the government promotes."

In conclusion, in a country such as Canada, which recognizes the primacy of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, it is contradictory, biased, and discriminatory for a provincial government to prohibit the holding of an event by an organization whose values differ from those of the state. What's more, these buildings are paid for out of the taxes of all taxpayers in a province, regardless of their beliefs.

According to the UVVC administrative committee, this decision does not respect the values of inclusion, equality, and respect for any duly recognized organization with values for life.

We therefore ask the Legault government to reverse their decision and allow Harvest Ministries International the opportunity and freedom to hold their event as planned at the Quebec City and Montreal Convention Centres.

Légal UVVC