

**Press release**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Commissioner Viens satisfied with first year accomplishments**

**Val-d'Or, December 14, 2017** – Jacques Viens, President of the Public Inquiry Commission on relations between Indigenous Peoples and certain public services in Québec: listening, reconciliation and progress is satisfied with his team's achievements during the first year of the mandate.

### **A significant challenge**

Since its creation on December 21<sup>st</sup> 2016, everything was to be done: finding a location for both an office and a hearing room, building a solid team in a region with almost full employment, developing various deployment strategies to cover the provincial territory and putting everything together to be operational as quickly as possible.

One year later, the team now counts 76 devoted employees. From this number, 16 are from four Indigenous nations of Québec (Atikamekw, Anishinabe, Innu, and Cree), working with passion to realize the Commission's mandate. As of today, the Commission performed 62 information sessions as well as 19 courtesy visits in many Indigenous nations across Québec.

Last week, the 11<sup>th</sup> week of hearings concluded for 2017. A total of 131 witnesses have generously accepted the invitation to testify. Also, since opening officially its offices in March, the Commission opened 281 investigation files as well as 20 other investigations lead by its Legal team.

Some major themes have emerged from the 2017 hearings. The importance of education and training have been underlined by many. Homelessness conditions, women's rights, youth protection, cultural safety and problems related to language have also emerged from the testimonies. Finally, a lack of resources has been reported at many levels, particularly in housing, health, police, justice and correctional services, to name a few.

## Outlook for 2018

2018 will definitely be a busy year for the Commission. Hearings will resume on January 15<sup>th</sup> for a two week period. Hearings will then move to Montreal for two weeks in February and another two weeks in March. The Commission does not exclude the possibility of moving its hearings elsewhere in Québec in either April, May or June.

At the same time, members of the CERP's team will continue to travel across the province. Eight Cree communities have indicated their interest in having public information sessions. The Commission is also targeting Nunavik in order to cover it entirely.

Discussions are also underway with other Indigenous nations in order to schedule information sessions.

Please note that many investigation agents, liaison agents and support and wellness agents have been hired to provide a province wide presence. Additional staff will also be hired in the weeks to come.

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### Source:

Benoit Bigué-Turcotte

Communications Coordinator

T. 1 844 580-0113

[benoit.bigue-turcotte@cerp.gouv.qc.ca](mailto:benoit.bigue-turcotte@cerp.gouv.qc.ca)

[www.cerp.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.cerp.gouv.qc.ca)