

To the members of the Board of Directors

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## 2015 EDUCATION SEMINAR CO-OPERATIVE VALUES: FOR IMPROVED DECISIONS AND MANAGEMENT OF OUR LIVING ENVIRONMENT

The preparation of FECHIMM's 2015 education seminar is going well and the program appears to interest the members of housing co-operatives, as three weeks from the event, nearly 100 participants have already confirmed their presence at the Collège de Maisonneuve on November 20 and 21.

The seminar will start Friday night with a reflection on the possible role of housing co-operatives in a changing world, led by a well-known figure, Gérald Larose, president of the Caisse d'économie solidaire and visiting professor at the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQÀM). Four speaker-panelists will stimulate this reflection that will lead to an exchange of views with the participants.

On Saturday, a choice of six workshops, designed and delivered in collaboration with the five GRTs of the territory, will enable participants to acquire or develop the skills necessary for community life and to a healthy real estate management

The full seminar program is annexed to this issue of the FECHIMM express. Participation is free and open to all. You can register at [fechimm.coop/colloque2015](http://fechimm.coop/colloque2015).

### A word from the president

#### Election of a new government in Ottawa

## OUR HEART WAVERS

Solidarity greetings to everyone,

First of all, a word on the outcome of the federal elections of October 19. Let's not spoil our fun and let's frankly admit it: GOOD RIDDANCE Harper! The Conservatives' defeat after 10 long years of a despising, retrograde, petty, insensitive and essentially opposed to any form of progress government, whether social, environmental or democratic, is a breath of fresh air.

For our movement, as for all labor, social, environmental, indigenous, women and defense of human rights movements, to name but a few, a cautious and careful optimism is possible. We can only assume that the Liberal majority government could hardly do worse in the social housing issue than the Conservatives.

Do not forget that the Liberals made a number of commitments concerning this issue. Admittedly, some of these proposals are potentially very interesting, first and foremost the commitment to renew operating agreements with housing co-operatives, and thus maintain subsidies to low income households. The Liberal Party has also pledged to make an inventory of all federal land and unoccupied buildings and offer some of the land for the construction of affordable housing.

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## A word from the president (continued)

The Party also announced its intention to ask the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and the new Canada Infrastructure Bank to provide funding to support the construction of new affordable housing rental units for middle and low income Canadians.

However, the word to remember in the latter proposal, as in the whole chapter of the Liberal program for housing, is "affordable". What will be the definition of this very elastic concept of "affordability" (sic) used by the Liberal government?

Also, most of the measures announced by the Liberals concern access to private property for the middle class or measures for very specific groups (homeless, elderly ...). Few measures are for the immediate development of social housing in the sense that we understand it. Let's give this new government a chance and offer them our collaboration, but we must still remain vigilant and mobilize.

Finally, I would like to remind you of the Federation's symposium to be held next November 20 and 21 at Collège de Maisonneuve. The symposium focuses on co-operative values in the current context. On Friday, November 20, a panel chaired by none other than Gerald Larose, former president of the CSN and now a professor at the l'École de travail social de l'UQÀM, will address this issue. The day will be devoted to workshops on concrete issues facing co-operatives in connection with the symposium's theme.

If you have not already done so, I invite you to register for this event, which promises to be successful and responds to a critical need identified by members at FECHIMM's last General Meeting.

Hoping to meet you soon,

Luc Brisebois  
President

## FEDERAL ELECTION

### THE LIBERAL PARTY'S VICTORY RESTORES HOPE FOR THE FUTURE OF SOCIAL HOUSING



FECHIMM congratulated Justin Trudeau, Canada's new Prime Minister, on his election as the head of a majority government in the federal election held on October 19. The Federation now hopes that the new Canadian government will act diligently in implementing the measures promised for social housing.

The reinstatement of subsidies for low-income tenants in housing co-operatives and other housing organizations at the end of their operating agreement with CMHC is the priority according to the Federation.

For Luc Brisebois, the president of FECHIMM's board of directors, "It is urgent that the government act in order to prevent the thousands of low-income households across the country facing rent increases that will force them to cut other essential needs such as food and medication to pay for their housing."

In addition to restoring grants to adjust the rent for low-income households according to their ability to pay, FECHIMM also decided to champion new federal investments allowing the realization of social and community housing, the maintenance of the current housing stock and increased budgets for the fight against homelessness, during this election campaign.

Together with its allies across the country, such as Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada (CHF-C), FECHIMM intends to maintain the pressure on the new government and all elected officials in Ottawa so that policies promoting the right to housing are adopted as soon as possible.

## Replacement of RGI subsidies

### FECHIMM URGES QUEBEC TO ACT

FECHIMM asks Pierre Moreau, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Land Occupancy, to intervene with the Société d'habitation du Québec (SHQ) so that the housing co-operatives' demands to obtain a temporary replacement of RGI subsidies at the end of their operating agreement with CMHC are processed without delay.

In a letter to the Minister, Francine Néméh, the Executive Director, expressed the concern of many member co-operatives concerning the SHQ's silence concerning the implementation of the measure promised by Quebec. She is demanding urgent action on its part.

In his latest budget tabled in April, the Minister of Finance, Carlos Leitão, provides six million dollars to replace, until

March 31, 2017, the federal subsidies to low-income households living in housing co-operatives at the end of their operating agreement.

However, since the budget was announced in April, nothing has really changed at the SHQ. All the information that FECHIMM could get amounts to a procedure for submitting an application and information indicating that all applications cannot be accepted, with no indication as to the criteria that will dictate the government's decision.

In addition to rapidly processing the applications from the co-operatives, FECHIMM demands clarification on the criteria that will be used to process the applications.

## Organizational Restructuring

### A SINGLE WINDOW APPROACH TO SIMPLIFY REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

In recent months, FECHIMM has planned an organizational restructuring to improve the experience of co-operatives that require assistance from their Federation. The approach also aims to supply services more adapted to the needs of member co-operatives. Official as of November 1, the reorganization has resulted in the establishment of a single window for receiving all requests for assistance and the redesign of the organization into two departments.

Louis-Philippe Myre became head of the co-operative assistance department, which now includes management assistance, workshops, bookkeeping and the planning and construction work. A team of coordinators will assist in organizing the work of the department's twenty employees.

"When a co-operative has a problem, there are several possible solutions. With the single window approach, the co-operative will



only have to call one person to find out their possible options and make a choice. It will also have the opportunity to assemble several services into one coherent offer. Better cohesion should result from the consolidation of all staff within the same team," says Louis-Philippe Myre.

The Department of associative and administrative affairs, under the direction of Grégory Brasseur, notably includes the organization of community activities, the management of political and promotional campaigns along with the development of member benefits.



"Co-operatives do not always have the same needs. According to their program, their borough or the type of ownership of their land, their realities are different. One objective of the reorganization is to intensify the exchanges we have with different groups of co-operatives and adapt our association activities even better than before, offer our support, our purchasing groups and our communications", argues Grégory Brasseur.

For Francine Néméh, FECHIMM's executive director, this change will not cause any disruption for the members accustomed to dealing with FECHIMM. "By bringing us even closer to our members, we reaffirm the foundations of FECHIMM's associative and democratic organization. This restructuring will also give the employees a greater leadership and foster continuous improvement," she says.



#### Emphyteutic leases

### STRONG MOBILIZATION OF AFFECTED CO-OPERATIVES

The consultation meeting of housing co-operatives under emphyteutic lease with the City of Montreal, held September 22, aroused great interest among the affected co-ops. 32 of the 58 invited co-operatives attended the meeting organized by FECHIMM to continue the discussions among co-operatives after the consultation held by the City of Montreal in June.

Two positions emerged after the meeting. Some co-operatives wish to renew their leases as favored by the City Housing Department. Others would rather acquire the land on which their co-operative is located.

FECHIMM sent a request to meet with the City in order to let them know their members' views and ask them questions about the conditions that would be linked to the extension of the leases. However, the City makes the ultimate decision in this matter.

In the context of the end of the federal operating agreements and the end of emphyteutic leases affecting the refinancing capacity of these co-operatives, the various parties, including FECHIMM, are working to find solutions to ensure the sustainability of existing housing.

#### Logement abordable Québec

### UPDATE ON ISSUES SPECIFIC TO CO-OPERATIVES IN THIS PROGRAM

In compliance with the resolution adopted by the members at the 2015 AGM, FECHIMM held a meeting on September 23 to bring its members up to date on the problems faced by housing co-operatives created under the LAQ program (Affordable Housing Quebec). Even if only 2 of the 11 invited co-operatives attended the meeting, it has allowed FECHIMM to draw a number of conclusions which will be the subject of a questionnaire to which 11 member co-operatives of this program will be called upon to answer.

After having received the answers from the co-operatives, FECHIMM intends to open negotiations with the SHQ to address the problems identified and get additional rent subsidies for low-income members of LAQ co-ops.

## Laval Housing Policy FECHIMM and GRT Réseau 2000+ are working together with TROCALL



On October 22, TROCALL, Table régionale des organismes communautaires en logement de Laval, of which FECHIMM and the GRT Réseau 2000+ are members, met the councillor Nicholas Borne, responsible for housing issues in Laval. The meeting

was an opportunity for the city to present its draft housing policy and housing code to be adopted by December 2016.

The city also invited the TROCALL to send a representative to the Commission on Housing, which brings together elected officials and civil servants. Martin Bazinet, Project Manager at GRT Réseau 2000+ has been delegated by the Table to participate in this committee. In connection with these projects, TROCALL also decided to organize a seminar in the fall of 2016 to make the voice of civil society heard in this process.

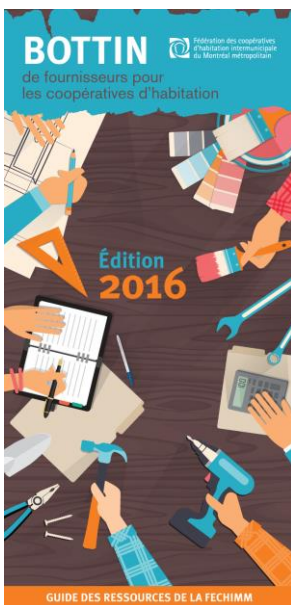
## Montréal-Nord

### FECHIMM JOINS THE CHANTIER FIERTÉ HABITATION (PROUD HOUSING COMMITTEE)

In 2008, in Montréal-Nord, faced with the important role housing played in the socio-economic dynamics, the district and other local and regional players set up the Chantier Fierté habitation (Proud housing committee), whose mandate is to ensure the preservation, consolidation, improvement and development of the rental and social housing stock of the borough.

This year, while several housing co-operatives of the district reach the end of their operating agreement with CMHC, FECHIMM

joined this committee involving representatives from the borough, the housing committee, the CSSS, the Bâtir son quartier and Groupe CDH GRTs along with the SHAPEM. The Federation hopes to contribute to the achievement of objectives taken by the committee and to the advancement of housing rights in the territory.



## Directory of suppliers

### WE ARE PREPARING THE 2016 EDITION

For the fourth consecutive year, FECHIMM will publish a directory of suppliers for housing co-operatives. Distributed in late November, the 2016 edition will again present the offers of advertisers wishing to develop business relationships with the Montreal metropolitan housing co-operatives as well as a wealth of practical information on the resources FECHIMM makes available to its members. An electronic version of the directory will also

be published at [fechimm.coop/bottin](http://fechimm.coop/bottin) so that a greater number of co-operatives can have access to offers from advertisers.

However, FECHIMM reminds its members that it cannot vouch for the quality of work of the advertisers in the directory. It urges them to always apply sound management principles by shopping for their co-operative's products and services at more than one supplier and carefully comparing the various proposals submitted.

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