

**POUVOIR**

67<sup>th</sup> CSN  
Convention  
Montréal – 2023

## THE CSN ON THE MOVE

**MAINTENANT**









# THE CSN: AN ORGANIZATION BUILT ON DEMOCRACY AND SOLIDARITY



**FOUNDED IN 1921**, the CSN—along with its members—has successfully influenced and navigated diverse social, political, and economic changes for nearly a century while assuming the role grudgingly surrendered to the labour movement by those in power. However, governments today are more willing to take rights away from workers than to grant them new ones.

The CSN is a labour organization working towards a democratic, just, equitable and sustainable society that practises solidarity. Thanks to the involvement and activism of its members, the CSN has been and will remain a collective force dedicated to defending workers' rights and promoting the interests of Québec's society. This commitment on the part of our members and their representatives is the best guarantee that the proposals we make are inspired by our values and that the decisions we take are the result of our deliberations.

In addition to democracy, which is the bedrock of the CSN and is enshrined in our Declaration of Principles, the CSN believes in solidarity—a solidarity that is concrete, active and constantly nurtured and enriched. The current global economic and social situation leaves us fearing the worst. Wherever austerity policies are

introduced, the workers and the population at large are their first victims. Unfortunately, we must acknowledge that markets dictate government policy, and that this puts social projects based on the common good at risk. In order to challenge these policies, the CSN has always believed that we must maintain solidarity not only amongst ourselves here at home, but also with like-minded organisations around the world. That is why it is so important to build alliances wherever possible: in Québec, across the continent, and globally.

The CSN has always defined itself as a movement and it is that definition, I believe, that best characterizes the organisation. To the great displeasure of those on the right, we will not permit ourselves to be confined within the limits of their corporatism. We will continue, along with other progressive organizations, to stand up for the collective good and sustain this movement that is so dear to us.

**CAROLINE SENNEVILLE**  
**PRESIDENT OF THE CSN**

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## WHY A UNION?

**You might ask, why join a union? Several employees do; it's a legitimate question. This is a question that you've perhaps asked yourself. Many employees ask themselves the same thing; it's perfectly normal! Indeed, if unions were discussed during family gatherings and nutrition breaks the way that people talk about the latest television hits, no one would have to ask this question. Unfortunately, that's not the case.**

Unfortunately, there are few places in society where people can find accurate information on the nature of unions, their effects, operations, contribution and importance.

A union brings together employees in the same factory, business or institution who decide they need a legal framework in which to face arbitrary employers and workplace injustice. A union is a collective tool to defend your rights and assert your professional and social demands. It's a place for exchange, sharing and action. It is the democratic expression of the majority and a way to protect individual rights.

All employees may unionize if a majority (more than 50%) is in favour. Creating and obtaining union recognition is often the result of a tenacious commitment by activists. Every individual should get involved to earn the right to control such a collective instrument and benefit from its existence. Participating in its organization and day-to-day operations ensures that a union stays the course in defending the rights and values of its members.

**A UNION IS ALL THAT!**

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## WHY A CSN UNION?

### IT COMMANDS RESPECT!

A union is part of the CSN when its members decide to join the group of unions that constitute the Confédération des syndicats nationaux. It is a choice made by workers after serious reflection.

Employee groups sometimes turn to the CSN when they have reached the limit of what they can achieve with a non-affiliated union or when they have been disappointed by another union organization. This choice is often made when a union finds out about the CSN's democratic autonomy and the solidarity and support provided by the CSN.

Being part of a CSN union means joining forces with 330,000 people working in more than 4,300 workplaces in all industries who are grouped into unions fighting for better conditions for their members.

Being part of the CSN is a choice to defend our rights, knowing that there will be a positive impact on those who are unable to defend themselves.

Being part of the CSN gives you an opportunity to participate in the social, economic and environmental advancement of Québec society.

**A CSN UNION IS ALL THAT...  
AND MORE!**

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# THE “CHAÎNON”: SYMBOL OF THE CSN

This symbol expresses the solidarity and strength of the links between CSN workers. The three links in this symbol represent groupings within the CSN.



## 1

### A CSN UNION AN AUTONOMOUS UNION

The union is the primary grouping of workers; it's within their union that members adopt their collective agreement and make all decisions concerning union life.

The CSN is based on the principle that all member unions are autonomous. This autonomy allows each union to determine its own priorities, carry out its own struggles and make decisions it deems necessary.

This autonomy does not mean isolation. By affiliating with the CSN, a union chooses to team up with many other worker groups to respect decisions made collectively within the confederation and to develop solidarity.

## 2

### THE FEDERATION A PLACE OF SOLIDARITY AND SHARING

At the CSN, unions are also organized by profession or sector of activity into federations. There are eight such federations at the CSN. The federation's role is to provide all affiliated unions with the necessary tools to negotiate and enforce their collective agreements.

Each federation has its own decision-making bodies (federal councils) and holds a policy convention every three years. During this triennial Convention, the resolutions adopted constitute the federation's three-year plan. Federations address large sectoral issues, develop positions and participate, like the CSN, by filing briefs at parliamentary commissions. They assume responsibility for political representation. They help workers in times of crisis through sectoral campaigns. They also support the CSN's national campaigns.

Federations are an important source of solidarity within the CSN movement.

### CSN FEDERATIONS

#### CSN-Construction

Fédération du commerce  
(FC-CSN)

Fédération des employées  
et employés de services publics  
(FEESP-CSN)

Fédération de l'industrie  
manufacturière  
(FIM-CSN)

Fédération nationale des  
communications et de la culture  
(FNCC-CSN)

Fédération nationale  
des enseignantes et des  
enseignants du Québec  
(FNEEQ-CSN)

Fédération des professionnelles  
(FP-CSN)

Fédération de la santé  
et des services sociaux  
(FSSS-CSN)





### 3

## CENTRAL COUNCIL A RALLYING POINT AND AN IMPORTANT POLITICAL PLAYER

Union life in each region revolves around the central council. There are 13, covering all regions of Québec. The central council brings together all CSN unions in its territory.

This is the ideal place to develop solidarity among unions in the region, especially during conflicts. The central council is called on to speak out on questions affecting its region and on themes associated with CSN campaigns (March 8, May 1, etc.).

The central council is also a place to hold debates as well as union and public consultations. It is a base for the organization and a manifestation of regional solidarity. Each central council has its own decision-making bodies, general assemblies and holds an annual policy convention every three years to define its work plan.

The central council helps workers organize into unions. It provides training to activists in its unions on questions relating to the organization of union life, the role of executive committee members and other union responsibilities such as health and safety, union information, women, integration of cultural communities, etc.

Central councils are responsible for representing the interests of CSN union members in their region on a political level. They participate in many discussions on economic or social issues such as regional councils of workforce partners and regional conferences with elected officials.

**TOGETHER,  
WE ARE THE CSN.**

## CSN CENTRAL COUNCILS

Abitibi-Témiscamingue-  
Nord-du-Québec

Bas-Saint-Laurent

Cœur du Québec

Côte-Nord

Estrie

Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine

Lanaudière

Laurentides

Montréal

Montréal métropolitain

Outaouais

Québec Chaudière-Appalaches

Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean

Outside of Québec :  
UCCO-SACC-CSN (Union of  
Canadian Correctional Officers)













## 100 YEARS OF STRUGGLE

**The Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN) was founded in 1921. It started out with another name: the Confédération des travailleurs catholiques du Canada (CTCC) or Catholic Workers Confederation of Canada. The clergy exercised a considerable influence in Québec at that time. The CTCC stood apart from the typical American union because it promoted autonomous unionism.**

The CTCC became secular in 1960 and changed its name to the CSN. All of Québec was in upheaval during the end of the period known as the Grande Noirceur (Great Darkness). For this early CSN, the goal of union action was to transform all aspects of working life: wages, job security, pensions, and also unsafe working conditions, discrimination of every kind, hierarchy, gruelling work pace, a lack of training; everything that affects workers' dignity. The CSN fought for respect.

The CSN has worked for many years to develop international solidarity. It is affiliated with the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) that formed in 2006 with the merger of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and the World Confederation of Labour (WCL).

The CSN has been involved in many fights to improve the working conditions and lives of thousands of Québec workers. The CSN today strongly supports efforts to improve the working conditions and lives of its members. It fights for social, cultural, economic and environmental policies that enrich the fabric of society and that benefit the entire population.

After more than 100 years in existence, the CSN is a constant participant in debates and public struggles for a more just, more egalitarian, more democratic society. It takes a lead role on many issues, whether it concerns the right to unionize and negotiate freely, or women's equality in the workforce, pay equity in the private sector or an end to all discrimination.



**THE CSN  
IS A DEMOCRATIC,  
INDEPENDENT  
AND PROGRESSIVE  
ORGANIZATION.**

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## IT HAS CAMPAIGNED FOR:

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Labour Relations Act (first labour code)

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Anti-Strikebreaker Legislation

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Health Insurance Act

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Act allowing union dues to be deducted  
at source (Rand formula)

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Automobile Insurance Act

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Work Health and Safety Act

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Implementation of a public child care system,  
the centres de la petite enfance (CPE)

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Québec Parental Insurance Plan

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Reform of Public Education

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Unionization of child care workers and,  
more recently after a long judicial fight,  
those who work in home-based daycares

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Pay Equity Act and its application  
in the workplace

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## SOME ONGOING STRUGGLES INCLUDE:

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Improving the Employment Insurance program  
and implementing a federal anti-scab law

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Updating anti-strike-breaker provisions  
in the Québec Labour Code

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Bargaining for all workers

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Access to public, universal and free health care

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Recognition of education as a true national priority

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Preserving public services and social programs

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Protection of the French language,  
the language of the workplace

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The right to freedom of expression and information

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Workplace health and safety prevention

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The right to a decent lifelong income

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Development of the forestry  
and manufacturing industries

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Implementing a policy on sustainable development

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# THE CSN: A MOVEMENT



**The CSN is a movement comprised of unions, federations and central councils. This union's goal is to provide a common approach for union action in order to strengthen and increase our balance of power.**

## **DEMOCRATIC DECISION-MAKING BODIES**

The CSN has democratic decision-making bodies to ensure the central union functions properly: the Convention, Executive Committee, Confederal Council and Confederal Bureau.

Held every three years, the Convention is the CSN's highest authority. More than 2,000 union, federation

and central council delegates elect the CSN's Executive Committee, adopt the budget and define policy and union directions.

The Executive Committee leads the confederation between conventions and sees to the implementation of mandates voted by the various decision-making bodies. There are six positions: president, secretary general, treasurer and three vice presidents.

The Confederal Council meets four times a year and consists of more than 200 delegates. It is the highest body outside of the Convention. Decisions relating to the movement's direction are made here.

The Federal Bureau is composed of 50 delegates and is the CSN's administrative body.



## CONFEDERAL COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

The CSN Convention establishes various confederal committees and working groups to study important issues and implement resolutions voted on by the Convention or Confederal Council.

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### Confederal Occupational Health and Safety Committee

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This committee proposes intervention and action strategies to ensure our health and safety are not threatened by exposure to unsafe work and environmental conditions. Among other things, the committee analyzes legislation and rules concerning health and safety and develops proposals to submit to CSN decision-making bodies.

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### Confederal Intercultural Relations Committee

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This committee has the mandate to take action and advise the CSN on intercultural and race relations, as well as on immigration, with a view to encouraging closer ties among groups, notably by highlighting the contributions that cultural communities have made in history and to society in Québec.

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### Confederal Status of Women Committee

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This committee's mandate is to support activists involved in the women's cause. It publishes reports, promotes the creation of women's committees in local unions, federations and central councils, and ensures coordination between these committees. The committee sees that the CSN is involved and contributes to the struggle of women by circulating information on demands specific to women.



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### Confederal Youth Committee

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The principal mandate of the National Youth Committee is to advise the CSN on youth issues and act as the CSN's ambassador with youth. The committee also concerns itself with training, promoting the union movement and conditions that encourage the next generation of union members.

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### Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBTQ+) Committee

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This committee provides information on the realities faced by lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transsexuals. Its role is to propose concrete measures aimed at eliminating all forms of discrimination they face.

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### Confederal Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development

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This committee's mandate is to advise the CSN on issues related to the environment and sustainable development.

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### Working groups

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The Executive Committee may also set up working groups. Such groups currently exist on health and social services, education and childcare services, fair trade and responsible consumption as well as on aboriginal issues.



## PROFESSIONAL DEFENCE FUND (FDP)

### A SOLIDARITY TOOL

Since 1952, the FDP has been an instrument of solidarity to aid the struggles led by individual unions. This fund is fed by contributions from all CSN-affiliated unions.

This gesture of solidarity helps fund the payments made to members in job conflicts and supports activists who have been fired or suspended because of their union activities.

It also serves to support policies in health and social services, education, workplace health and safety, women's issues, the fight against poverty and more. This relief fund has become an indispensable economic tool. It supports our collective struggles and allows CSN unions and their members to make their positions known and take the actions required to achieve their goals. A majority of unions peacefully settle their collective agreement.

At the last CSN Convention, the unions decided to increase support for workers involved in a labour dispute by raising strike and lockout benefits to \$300 per week and making them available more quickly.



# A RANGE OF SERVICES UNIQUE TO THE CSN

At the CSN, union dues provide access to an array of unparalleled services. Advisors from each federation are appointed to guide unions through the bargaining process and supply information about union life. The CSN provides unions and their members with a diverse range of services that no other organization is capable of offering.

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## Legal Service

Our lawyers plead cases before the courts, arguing for the diversion of labour relations. They offer their expertise as consultants in support of negotiation and mobilization efforts. They also ensure follow-up on bills introduced in the National Assembly and the House of Commons.

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## Health & Safety and Environment Service

In addition to supporting the unions' efforts to promote occupational health and safety, protect the environment and fight climate change, the advisors in the Health & Safety and Environment Department (industrial engineers, mental health professionals, ergonomists, etc.) work directly with workers who have suffered occupational accidents or injuries to help them exercise their rights, particularly with respect to compensation.

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## Research and Status of Women Service

The economists and researchers in the Research and Status of Women Department provide wide-ranging support for the CSN's components: economic studies of specific industries, analyses of Québec's public finances, analyses of the state of our public services, etc.

**BY JOINING THE CSN, WORKERS HAVE THE CONCRETE MEANS TO IMPROVE THEIR LIVES AND WORKING CONDITIONS!**

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## Bargaining Support Service

Some aspects of a collective agreement, such as pension plans and group insurance plans, can be complex and require specialized expertise. CSN bargaining teams can always turn to the actuaries and other specialists at Bargaining Support for assistance.

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## Administrative Service

Our accountants help unions file transparent financial statements.

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## Communications Service

Our communications team is made up of four units: printing, distribution, documentation, and outreach. In particular, advisors prepare outreach and public relations strategies as well as develop a range of communications tools.

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## Service Supporting Mobilization and Regional Life

Our advisors help meet the conditions for action and mobilization to achieve the union's objectives and broader social goals. They provide assistance in collective bargaining and putting plans into action, and play a supportive role in union life more generally.

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## Unionization Service

Our advisors develop recruitment strategies and support workers who want to join the CSN at every stage of unionization

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## Human Resources and Education Service

Human Resources and Education is responsible for recruiting and training staff for the CSN and its affiliated organizations. It also develops training sessions for all CSN member unions.

**Fully backed by support staff at all levels.**

# EXCERPTS FROM THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

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**THE CSN IS AN OPEN AND DEMOCRATIC UNION.** At all levels, important decisions about union life must result from discussion and debate.

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**THE CSN WELCOMES THE EXPRESSION OF OPINIONS,** and once the democratic process has run its course members should support final decisions taken by the majority.

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**THE CSN PUTS PEOPLE FIRST,** both in terms of its action and its ideology.

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**THE CSN CONSIDERS THE UNION MOVEMENT** to be an instrument of workers' liberation in a democratic society.

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**THE UNION MOVEMENT IS ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL** pillars of a vigorous democracy.

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**THE CSN BELIEVES THAT ONLY A DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM** can allow men and women to reach their true potential in all of their dimensions: social, economical, environmental, political and cultural.

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**THE CSN FIGHTS IN MANY WAYS TO ENSURE** that individual and collective rights are respected.

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**THE CSN COMBATS ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION** identified in the organizations to which it belongs.

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**THE CSN WANTS THIS DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES TO BE A SOURCE OF INSPIRATION** for workers. It is important to realize that we contribute to lasting, lifelong change by transforming things in our daily routine, in our workplaces and through our union action.

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