

PART 2

THE PUBLIC
ADMINISTRATION

Departments

On March 31, 2008, the public service was made up of 22 government departments or related secretariats. Detailed information on accountability is provided here for six of them. Some organizations were selected because the Québec Ombudsman received a significant number of complaints about them. Our attention may also have been drawn by unresolved problems or a case whose broad impact affected numerous citizens.

The selected departments are

- Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport
- Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale
- Ministère de la Justice
- Ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune
- Ministère du Revenu
- Ministère de la Sécurité publique

Very few complaints were received with regard to other departments, for which no specific comments were issued. This may be explained by the nature of their mandates which, for example, do not require them to directly serve the public. Some departments are primarily responsible for defining policies and ensuring their implementation and government coordination; others, like Ministère des Finances or Secrétariat du Conseil du trésor, play a more central role.

Agencies

The Québec Ombudsman also has jurisdiction over government agencies. A large number of agencies, like some departments, do not directly deal with the public but serve in an advisory capacity. During 2007–2008, four government agencies in particular were the subject of complaints or their operations were deemed of public interest:

- Commission de la santé et de la sécurité du travail
- Curateur public
- Régie du logement
- Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec

Agencies that generally generated few or no complaints include the administrative courts and some agencies with jurisdictional responsibility. If the Québec Ombudsman is unable to intervene with such an agency while it is taking legal action – such

as monitoring proceedings and decisions that are handed down – it does maintain jurisdiction over such administrative aspects as complaint processing, over-the-counter services, and so on.

All files selected for the purpose of this document involve situations that were corrected during 2007–2008. The examples selected serve to illustrate various problems that were resolved during the year.

Most of the following sections will apply to each department or agency:

- Types of complaints
- Overview of the situation
- Ombudsman follow-up and actions
- 2007–2008 recommendations
- Comments from the department or agency
- Parliamentary watch

Complaint analysis is viewed from the perspective of situational changes within departments and agencies. While not comprehensive, the status report recalls the department or agency mission and addresses how any new laws, regulations, or programs implemented in this area during the year may be impacting public services.

This annual report also covers department or agency follow-up in response to earlier recommendations made by the Québec Ombudsman. Problems are illustrated with compelling cases. In addition to recommendations related to handling of individual complaints, broader recommendations for problems analyzed throughout the year have been formulated for certain departments and agencies. The Québec Ombudsman will follow up on each of these recommendations.

It is important to emphasize that remarks and recommendations made by the Québec Ombudsman do not constitute a value judgment on all department and agency actions, but are the result of impartial examination into situations reported by citizens.

The following pages present public service sector results for fiscal year 2007–2008. Government departments and agencies are listed in alphabetical order using their titles as of March 31, 2008.

In addition, the section “Other activities” describes selected individual cases for some departments and agencies that were the subject of interventions during 2007–2008 but that were not the subject of detailed reports.