

# 5. TRAC REPORT

RFIQ-A17-C-I-D5

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## 2017 CONVENTION

From November 27 to December 1, 2017  
at the Lévis Convention and Exhibition Centre



# providing care: a collaborative affair

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## THE REGIONAL ACTION AND CONSENSUS-BUILDING TABLES (TRAC)

The passing of Bills 25 and 30 in 2003 put the issue of regional union action at the Federation front and centre. The delegates at the May 2004 Federal Council gave the Executive Committee of the Federation the mandate to present a working document in order to, once again, discuss the regional action and consensus-building tables (TRAC), a place for encouraging and supporting regional collective action. The TRACs were finally set up at the Federal Council of March 2005.

The particular context that prevailed at the time the TRACs were created is strangely similar to the one that we have been navigating since spring 2015: reorganization of the governance of the health institutions and forced mergers of local unions. This backdrop led the Federation to define the TRACs as a place of consensus and solidarity with other labour and community organizations. Political education and citizen mobilization were also supposed to be the main focus of the TRACs which meant moving the struggles outside of the workplaces, so to speak.

The TRAC report presented at the 2014 Convention pointed out that:

“The sociopolitical context cannot deny the relevancy of the TRACs: the consensus building between the unions in each territory, mobilization and solidarity are now more crucial than ever to fight against the attacks on the unions and public services.”

Over time the players have changed but the reflections and findings over the last 13 years remain relevant. This document first presents an overview of the actions carried out by the TRACs between November 1, 2013 and April 29, 2017. Given that the context related to the restructuring of the structures of the health and social services network has a direct impact on our organization, we will need to deepen our reflections on solutions in order to adapt the TRACs to this context and make them more functional and pertinent.

## SUMMARY

List of basic elements of the TRACs:

<b>OBJECTIVES OF THE REGIONAL CONSENSUS-BUILDING STRUCTURE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Stimulate consensus building around union action between the FIQ, other labour organizations and social groups;</li><li>● Develop territorial solidarity;</li><li>● Provide political education;</li><li>● Increase grassroots mobilization.</li></ul>
<b>TRAC ROLE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Analysis of and discussions on the issues that concern the members as union members, women and citizens;</li><li>● Make the necessary representations to the agencies or other decision-making bodies in the territory;</li><li>● Create and maintain ties with other groups;</li><li>● Defend social gains and express disagreement with certain policies.</li></ul>
<b>COMPOSITION OF THE TRAC</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● One local respondent per site or pavilion in the territory;</li><li>● One representative from the regional or sectional unions in the territory;</li><li>● One representative from the FIQ Executive Committee;</li><li>● One union consultant (at least).</li></ul>

A series of major challenges have mobilized the organization since the last Convention. Hence, the TRACs have had to veer away from their primary mission to respond to important ad hoc needs. Indeed, every year since 2014, a specific action plan linked to an urgent matter pushed aside all the other priorities and was supported by the TRACs. This put them front and centre of the action plans for the raiding in 2014, the negotiation of the provincial collective agreement in 2015 and the change of union allegiance period resulting from the application of Bill 10 in 2016. Despite the constant bustle and hectic pace maintained by the union teams for those three years and notwithstanding certain problems linked to union leaves, participation at the TRAC meetings has remained stable.

The following table presents the specific activities of the TRACs over the last three years. These activities were structured around four main areas: visibility, consolidation, grassroots education and support of community organizations.

AREAS	ACTIVITIES
VISIBILITY	FIQ-Lab Coat Challenge
	Presence at community events (Expo agricole de Saint-Hyacinthe, St-Tite Western Festival, Montréal Just for Laughs Festival)
	Occupation or demonstration in front of MNAs offices (Paul Busque, Gaétan Barrette, Sam Hamad, etc.)
	Meeting with MNAs
CONSOLIDATION	Meetings and training of department pivots
	Member Appreciation Day
	Logistical support during the change of union allegiance period
GRASSROOTS EDUCATION	Production of a CD and video capsule on the privatization of health care (Lanaudière)
	REPAT ( <i>Regroupement d'éducation populaire de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue</i> )
SUPPORT OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS	Presentation of different organizations working in the region during the TRACs
	Participation in activities supported by community organizations (Night of the Homeless, making of Christmas baskets)
	Distributing donations

## PERSPECTIVES

Following the 2011 Convention, an intersectoral committee on the enhancement of the TRACs was set up. In its report presented at the 2014 Convention, this committee stated that:

“ (...) the consultations made it possible to highlight the relevancy of reviewing the objectives and the role that the TRAC must fulfill, and the role expected of the main players at the Tables. It also showed the relevancy of establishing a common theme that specifies the sense of the work to be conducted that connects them, to each other, but also each one of them with the Federation and the files they handle.”

With the changes since spring 2015, these questions are coming up again and new answers have to be given. The consultations held with the political officers, union spokespersons and union consultants on the TRACs in spring 2017, for the preparation of this Convention, indicated that the objectives and roles of these tables needed to be changed and redefined once again based on the current context.

Now, in 2017, there is concern over the composition of the TRACs. Several of them will now be composed of only one union representing the CISSS or CIUSSS, while in other regions, the TRACs represent several CISSSs, CIUSSSs and non-merged institutions. For the latter, the added value of the TRACs remains, but for the former, it becomes more difficult to separate the mission and role of the TRAC from that of the certified union for that region. For cases in which the TRACs are covered by only one CISSS or CIUSSS, the TRAC union spokesperson can also be the president of the union, which can often lead to confusion over the roles.

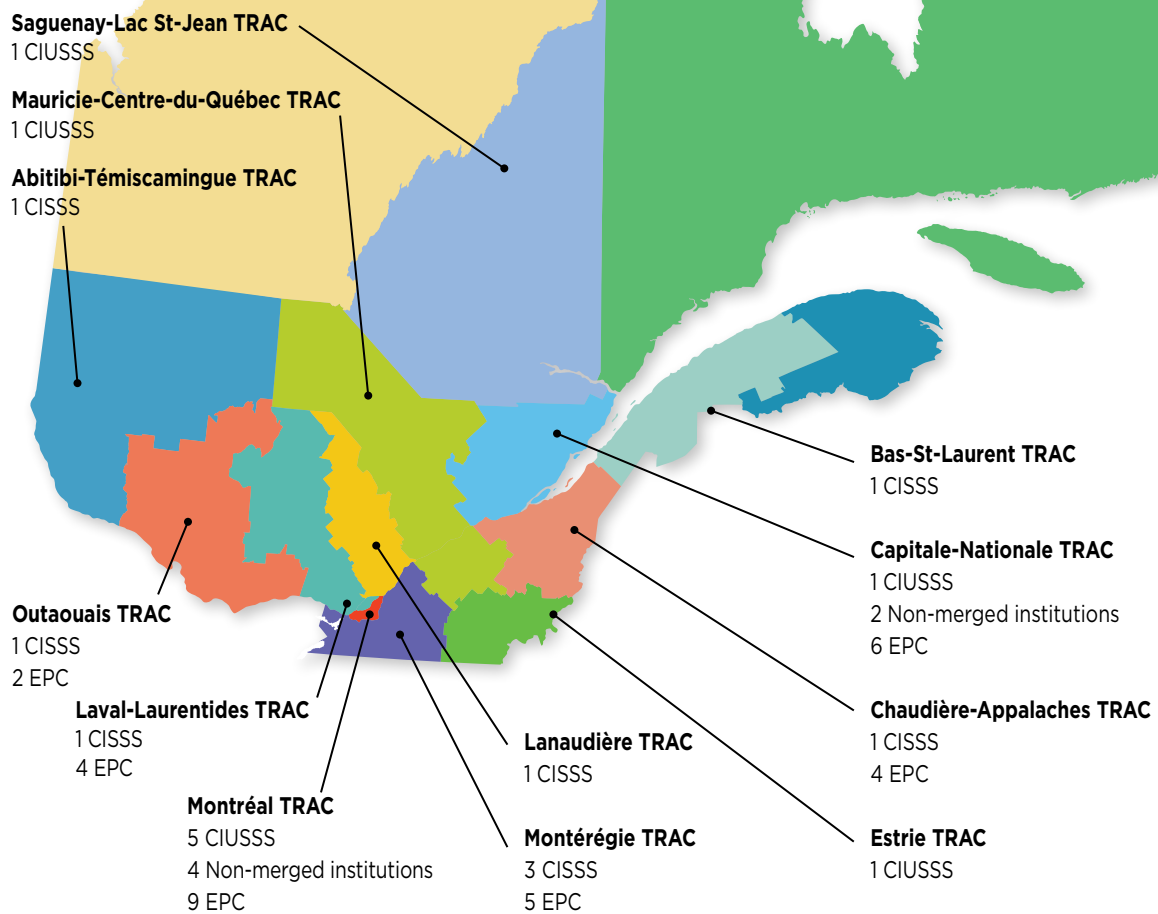
The discussions held in the spring with the people involved in the TRACs highlighted that the status quo is not viable and that a major realignment is needed. There are two proposals for a new TRACs mission:

- First, the participants are proposing a vision that deploys the **TRACs as a formal regional union structure**. The structure's main mandate would be to ensure proper communication between the union entities that compose it and to be responsible for the consolidation and mobilization around social issues, with a particular focus on union issues. This vision of the TRACs would require the involvement of the elected officers of the executive committees of every union in the region.
- On the other hand, the participants stated they wanted to see the TRACs become **a political focal point serving as a regional foothold for everything related to a social and community perspective**. To achieve this, the TRACs have to overcome the challenge of connecting the union issues (labour relations, negotiations) with the social issues in their region (right to health, education, environmental protection, etc.). They would no longer deal directly with issues related to the local unions' mandates, but become a bridge between the FIQ unions and the community around them. Therefore, the TRACs would need to be active in an area that is new to our organization. This realignment would mean that the TRACs have representatives who are not necessarily part of the union structures, but who are interested or already involved in their communities.

## CONCLUSION

The reflection on the TRACs is one that concerns the entire union mission. The TRACs, as a vehicle for consensus-building for planning action on the regional level, still play an important role. These tables also offer opportunities to pool ideas at the provincial level through annual meetings that promote the transfer of knowledge and limit work in a vacuum. That is why we are presenting a **recommendation** in the 2017 Convention Theme Document to set up an interdisciplinary committee that will work towards redefining the TRACs mandate. Lastly one thing is sure: the future of the TRACs lies in a realignment of their mandate and functioning. The upcoming months will pave the way for their future.

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