

# WITNESSES' GUIDE

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PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS  
IN PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE

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April 2020

*This guide is for individuals and organizations who are invited or wish to take part in a public consultation held by a parliamentary committee of the National Assembly.*

Parliamentary committees may hold consultations on bills, documents or other matters of public interest in order to gauge public opinion. They may hold consultations either on their own initiative or under an order of reference from the National Assembly. For that, committees generally hold public hearings at the Parliament Building in Québec City. At a public hearing, individuals and organizations present their opinion and answer parliamentarians' questions. The committee concerned then tables a report in the Assembly. The report may contain observations, conclusions or recommendations.

If you would like to be heard in committee on a bill even though no consultation has been announced, please contact the Parliamentary Committees Directorate. Your request will be sent to the members of the Committee for consideration should a consultation be held.

## IF YOU WISH TO TAKE PART IN A GENERAL CONSULTATION<sup>1</sup>

**General consultations are intended for the public as a whole.** A consultation notice containing details on the subject of the consultation and how to participate is published:

- in the *Gazette officielle du Québec*;
- in Québec's major daily newspapers;
- on the National Assembly website;
- on social media (Facebook and Twitter).

**COMMISSION DES INSTITUTIONS**

**Consultation générale**

Sur le rapport quinquennal 2016 intitulé *Rétablir l'équilibre – Rapport sur l'application de la Loi sur l'accès aux documents des organismes publics et sur la protection des renseignements personnels et de la Loi sur la protection des renseignements personnels dans le secteur privé*

**Comment participer**

- Mémoire écrit : organismes et citoyens (un seul fichier en format PDF non verrouillé)
- Intervention sans mémoire : citoyens seulement

**DATES À RETENIR**

- Les mémoires et les demandes d'intervention sans mémoire doivent être reçus au plus tard le 31 juin 2017.
- Les auditions publiques débiteront le 16 août 2017 à l'Assemblée nationale, à Québec.

Information : [an.nat.qc.ca](http://an.nat.qc.ca)  
M. Maxime Perreault, secrétaire de la Commission des institutions - 418-643-2722  
Numéro sans frais : 1-866-529-0725 / 866-329-0827  
Courriel : [ci@an.nat.qc.ca](mailto:ci@an.nat.qc.ca) | Twitter : @CommParlQc | Facebook : <https://fr-ca.facebook.com/ParlNatQc>

**COMMISSION DES INSTITUTIONS**  
SECRET

Plus que des opinions

**Individuals** are asked to submit, to the secretariat of the committee concerned, either a brief or a request to address the committee without a brief accompanied by a short statement summarizing the nature of the presentation to be made.

**Organizations** are asked to submit a brief to the secretariat.

<sup>1</sup> See diagram on page 6.

You have at least 30 days to express your interest in taking part. The committee then chooses which individuals and organizations it wishes to invite to the public hearings. If you are chosen, the secretariat will notify you at least seven days in advance. A period of up to 45 minutes is set aside for all presentations without a brief.

### **IF YOU HAVE BEEN INVITED TO TAKE PART IN SPECIAL CONSULTATIONS<sup>2</sup>**

**Participation in special consultations is by invitation only.** The Assembly or committee chooses which individuals and organizations will be heard on the basis of their experience or their knowledge of the matter being studied.

You are not required to submit a brief, but briefs are much appreciated by and very helpful to committee members. Your brief should be submitted as soon as possible and not later than the day before the hearing so parliamentarians can consult it beforehand.

If you wish to take part in special consultations but have not received an invitation, you may send a participation request to the committee's secretariat, which will forward it to the members to inform them of your interest.

In addition, any individual or organization, whether invited or not, may submit a brief to the committee.

### **WHAT TO DO AFTER RECEIVING A NOTICE INVITING YOU TO A PUBLIC HEARING**

The committee's secretariat notifies the individuals and organizations chosen to be heard by email. **The notice** states:

- the subject of the consultation;
- the date, time, place and duration of the hearing;
- the time available for your presentation, including discussion with committee members.

Please contact the secretariat as soon as possible to confirm your presence or decline the invitation. **Organizations** are asked to give the name and title of their representatives who will be addressing the committee. In the case of **special consultations**, please indicate whether or not you intend to submit a brief. You are responsible for all costs incurred in taking part in a public hearing.

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<sup>2</sup> See diagram on page 7.

Please also inform the secretariat if you wish to:

- use audiovisual material or make a presentation (PowerPoint);
- use a videoconferencing or simultaneous interpretation service, since discussions are generally conducted in French. Such requests will be forwarded to the committee for a decision.

## HOW TO ACCESS THE PARLIAMENT BUILDING

Access to the Parliament Building is through the visitors' entrance. You must pass a security check and present photo ID to obtain your access card. Neat, conservative clothing is required to attend or take part in parliamentary proceedings. It is important to arrive well in advance for the hearing, as specified in the notice you received.

## WHAT HAPPENS DURING A HEARING

The hearing will be divided in two parts: your **presentation** and a **period of discussion** with the committee members. The steps are as follows:



**Come forward to the witnesses' table**



**Wait for the committee chair's signal before starting**



**Introduce yourself, your organization and any individuals accompanying you**



**Make your presentation.** Express your opinion, emphasizing the most important points – you need not read your brief



**Answer the parliamentarians' questions.** Parliamentary groups and independent Members are each allotted a specific amount of time for discussion with you

Once you have been heard, you may remain in the room to hear other witnesses.

If, during the hearing, you committed to providing additional information to the committee members, please forward the information to the committee's secretariat as soon as possible.

Hearings are generally **public** and media representatives could be present.

Public hearings are **live-streamed** and archived in the [Video](#) section of the National Assembly website. Certain hearings are broadcast on the National Assembly Channel in real time or later on. Hearings are also recorded verbatim in the Assembly's [Journal des débats](#) (Hansard).

## HOW TO SUBMIT A BRIEF

A **brief** is a document in which an individual or organization expresses a point of view on a subject being studied by a committee. All briefs and other documents submitted to a committee's secretariat during a consultation are forwarded to the committee members and their main collaborators as soon as they are received. A brief containing defamatory, insulting or obscene language or inciting hatred or violence could be refused.

### Content

There is no pre-established model for a brief. However, it is suggested that a brief be separated into three parts:

- Introduction of the author and, if applicable, of the organization;
- Summary (in particular for briefs over 10 pages long);
- General presentation (setting out your position on the subject, recommendations, etc.).

### Layout

A brief must be presented on letter-size paper (21.5 cm x 28 cm or 8.5 in x 11 in). Writing style, length and layout are left to your discretion.

## Sending

Please send your brief to the committee's email address in a **single unlocked PDF file**. Unless otherwise indicated, you need not provide a hard copy.

## Publication

After the hearing, unless the committee decides otherwise, your brief will be posted on the Assembly's website and a copy placed at the Library of the National Assembly. Please avoid including any personal information in the brief. To be made public, briefs of individuals and organizations not invited to take part in special consultations **must be received on or before the last day of hearings, as posted on the website**.

## PRACTICAL INFORMATION

### National Assembly of Québec

Parliament Building  
1045, rue des Parlementaires  
Québec (Québec) G1A 1A3

General access by the visitors' entrance.

The Parliament Building provides universal accessibility to all visitors. If you have special needs, please contact the committee's secretariat.

Consult the [Visiting the Parliament Building](#) section for further details.

### ANY QUESTIONS?

Consult the [Voice Your Opinion](#) and [Committee Proceedings](#) sections of the Assembly website

OR

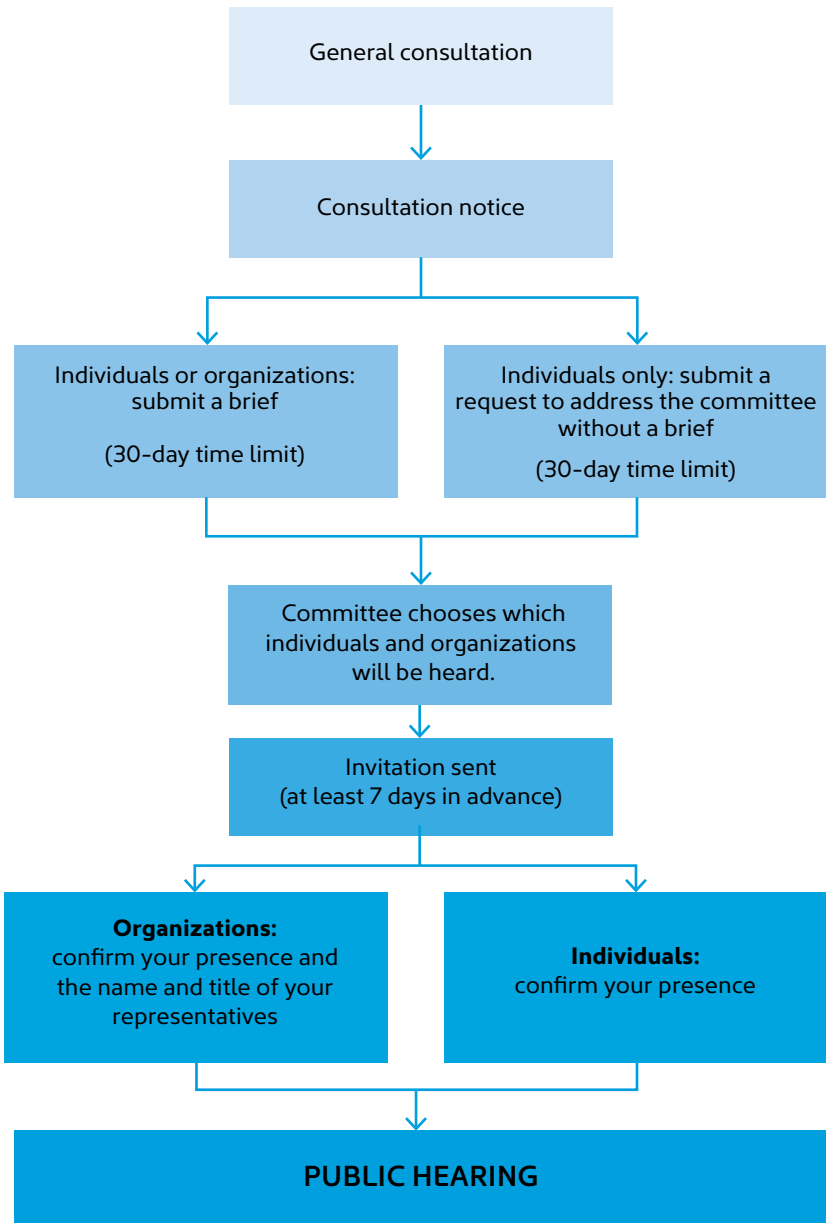
Contact the National Assembly's Parliamentary Committees Directorate

#### By telephone:

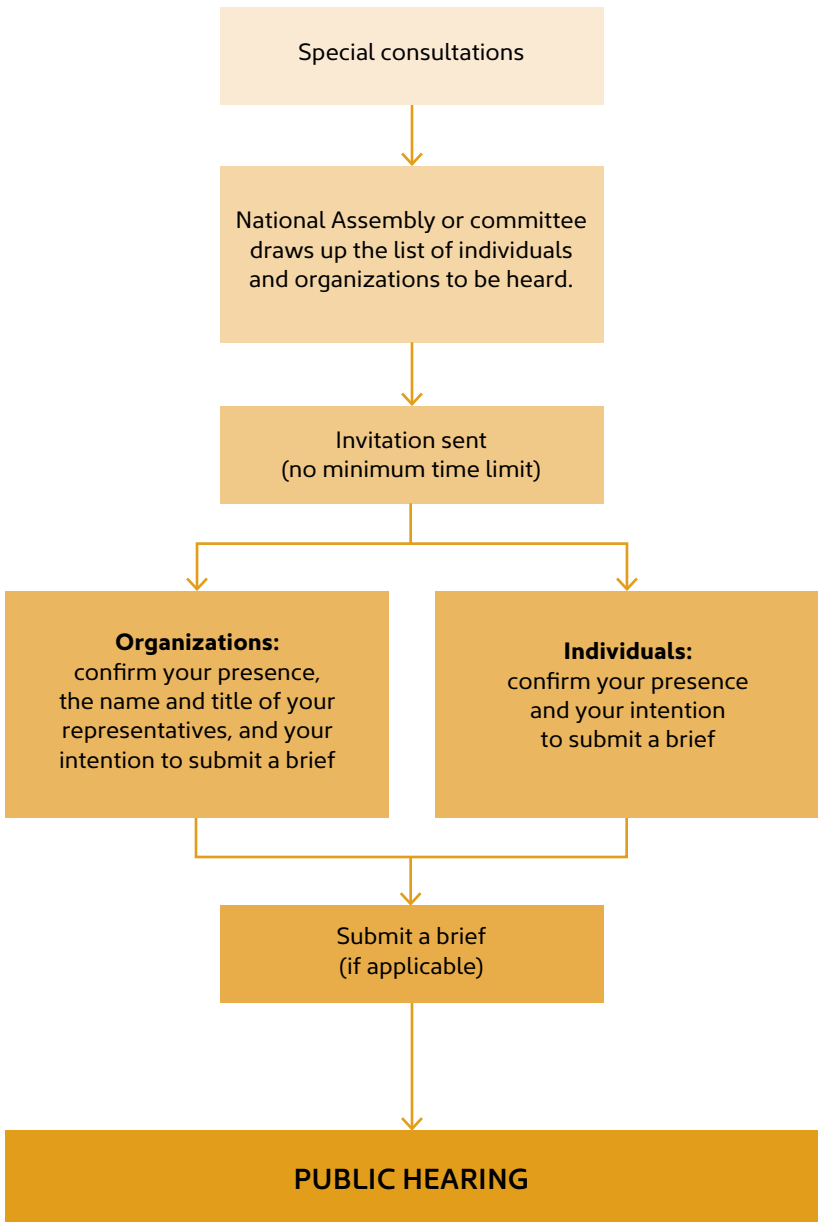
Québec City area: 418 643-2722  
Toll-free: 1 866 337-8837

**By email:** [commissions@assnat.qc.ca](mailto:commissions@assnat.qc.ca)

## STAGES OF A GENERAL CONSULTATION

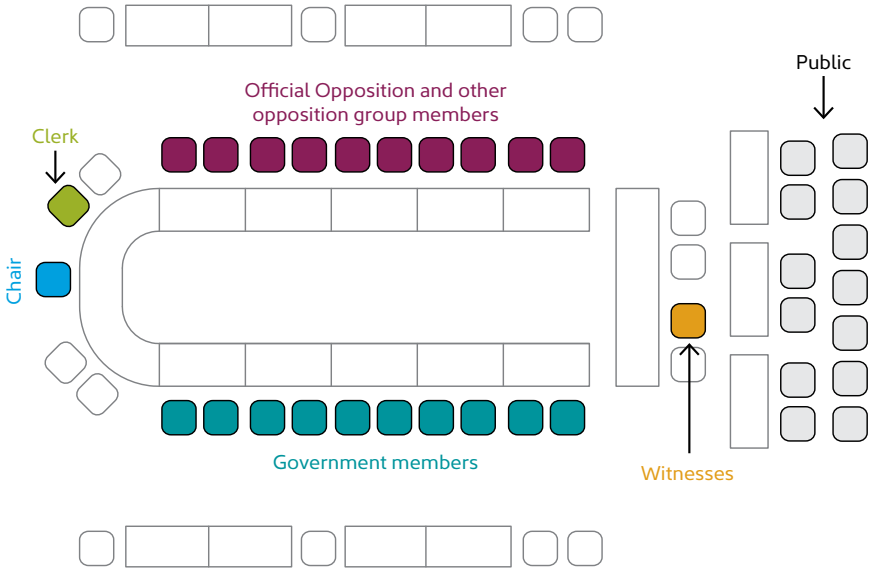


## STAGES OF SPECIAL CONSULTATIONS

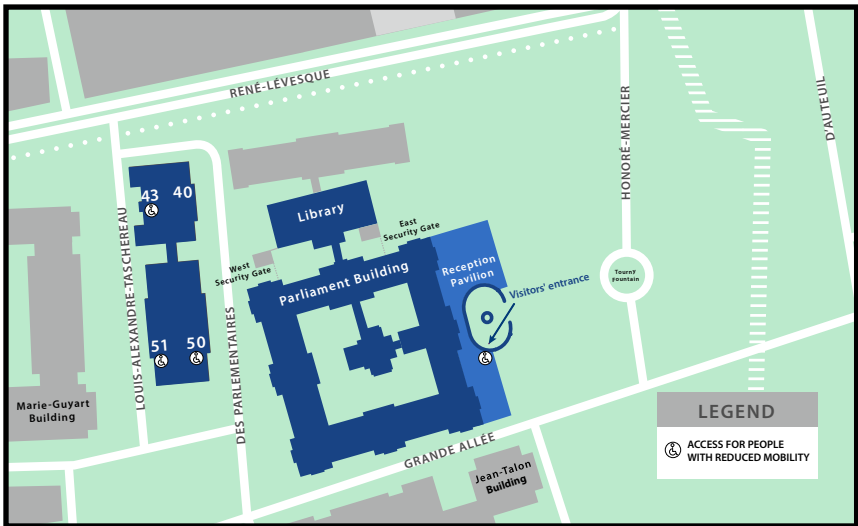




**DIAGRAM OF A COMMITTEE ROOM**



**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ENTRANCES**



## **PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES DIRECTORATE**

Édifice Pamphile-Le May  
1035, rue des Parlementaires  
3<sup>e</sup> étage  
Québec (Québec) G1A 1A3

**Telephone:** 418 643-2722

**Email:** [commissions@assnat.qc.ca](mailto:commissions@assnat.qc.ca)