



**United for Love:
Québec Réunifié Fights for
Timely Family Reunification Amidst Provincial Policy Challenges**

Who is Québec Réunifié?

Quebec Réunifié is a grassroots collective composed of family-class PR applicants, their sponsors who live or intend to live in Quebec, and their supporters. The organization was founded by Rydia Levesque-Martinet and Sonia Ouellette. Since our inception in June 2023, our cause has been increasingly visible in the press in Quebec¹ and Canada² since this summer and, lately, in Spanish³ on Radio-Canada international. We were interviewed by CTV during our first protest in July and again after testifying at the National Assembly, but we've not had further coverage by English-language media since. Our collective counts over 1200 members and our numbers increase every day.

The aim of our collective is to defend the interests of over 38,800 Quebec families waiting to be reunited, whose wait time has now been tripled by arbitrary provincial policy⁴. Indeed, family reunification was not even mentioned during the government's press announcements relative to the Quebec immigration plan and is barely mentioned *in* the Quebec immigration plan.

Our provincial policy challenge

Worse, the provincial government has excluded family reunification stakeholders from all conversations about immigration, even though we were mentioned in several parliamentary commissions by other stakeholders and testified in the presence of Provincial Immigration Minister Christine Frechette. All commissions dealing with our immigration category mentioned that it was necessary to resolve the existing backlog and ensure that for all applications, delays align with those of the rest of Canada: 12 months or less. Our petition⁵, sponsored by MNA Guillaume Cliche-Rivard, collected 2599 signatures. Three of our members, including Laurianne Lachapelle and Nathalie Coursin, both members of Quebec Réunifié's governing board, were able to speak publicly⁶ in the National assembly⁷.

¹ [Des familles lancent un cri du cœur face aux longs délais du regroupement familial | Le Devoir](#)

² [Family reunification takes longer in Quebec | CTV News](#)

³ [\[Reportaje\] Inmigración: La amarga espera para reunirse con un familiar en Quebec | Radio-Canada.ca](#)

⁴ [Les cibles de Québec en immigration ralentissent le regroupement familial, confirme Ottawa | Le Devoir](#)

⁵ [Consulter une pétition présentée à l'Assemblée - Assemblée nationale du Québec \(assnat.qc.ca\)](#)

⁶ [Vidéos - Assemblée nationale du Québec \(assnat.qc.ca\)](#)

⁷ [Activités de presse - Assemblée nationale du Québec \(assnat.qc.ca\)](#)

Sadly, despite all these communications, the Government of Quebec has stayed its course, with disastrous consequences. **As of december 4th 2023, inland applications' average treatment time is stated at 25 months, though this may yet change. Outland applications are now told to expect to wait a staggering 33 months⁸.** As Quebec is currently set to accept between 10600 and 11000 applicants⁹ in the family class category this year, and will continue to do so into 2027, and there is currently a backlog of about 38 000 applications, we expect this trend of increasing wait times to continue until 2028.

We understand that **the CAQ government wants to select immigrants based on their French language ability**, though acting on our category of immigration is of spurious benefit, seeing as **68%¹⁰ of family-class PR applicants in Quebec are counted as francophone**, a figure which explicitly excludes bilingual applicants who have admitted to being more comfortable in English, but who could nonetheless function in French¹¹.

Either way, love does not choose. **Nowadays, no one is immune to falling in love with a foreign national. The decision whether to live in Quebec or elsewhere will arise. And if Quebec is the first choice, the couple will have to wait over 2 years, if not 3, before being 100% reunited.**

Some questions worth asking about this policy

Whether capping family reunification is even in line with the dispositions of the Canada-Quebec agreement is worth questioning. There appears to have been a terminological slip from “target” (the minimal number of permanent residents that the province wishes to receive) to “quota” (the maximum number of permanent residents the province wishes to accept). We have spoken with Minister Miller’s office staff about this several times, but as of now, this has not been meaningfully addressed.

With IRCC’s 12 month service standard seemingly upheld in other provinces, the CAQ’s recent immigration policy shift poses fundamental questions of equality for Canadians: **any Canadian is entitled to IRCC’s 12 month service standard¹², except those resident in Quebec, due to arbitrary provincial policy**, a policy which may well backfire and prompt French-speaking Canadians and their immigrant

⁸ [Check processing times - Canada.ca](#)

⁹ [Le Plan d'immigration du Québec 2024 \(quebec.ca\)](#)

¹⁰ This figure is deduced from the data which counts 32% of “anglophone” PR applicants for Quebec. See <https://open.canada.ca/data/fr/dataset/f7e5498e-0ad8-4417-85c9-9b8aff9b9eda/resource/dd71de12-7886-4006-88e4-f3877922446e> and <https://open.canada.ca/data/fr/dataset/f7e5498e-0ad8-4417-85c9-9b8aff9b9eda/resource/c5f2d5d3-e1c7-44d6-a54d-b6b2fb62fdb>.

¹¹ [Des immigrants parlant le français au quotidien déplorent leur exclusion des « statistiques de Legault » | Le Devoir](#)

¹² [Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada service standards - Canada.ca](#)

family members to leave Quebec for a more welcoming province¹³. This policy also leaves some applicants and their sponsors in dire straits, as was reportedly the case of a Haitian mother, stranded in the midst of civil unrest while her husband and child are safely in Canada¹⁴ and as is the case of LGBTQ+ couples hailing from less gay-friendly countries.

What follows are summaries of accounts collected from our members who are willing to speak to the press, sometimes anonymously, about their circumstances.

Members of the LGBTQ+ community sponsored by their Quebec partners may also face dire odds.

- D. (26) is seeking employment as a junior QA engineer and is an Outland applicant. As she is a member of the LGBTQ community living in Russia, the delays have a significant impact on her plans with her partner and on her overall safety. D. has now been waiting since October 2022 for PR and has been without any news from IRCC for 12 months now. She and her partner are now facing another year apart, with D. having to stay in Russia's hostile environment while she waits. D's name is withheld, at her partner's request, for obvious reasons.
- N. and his partner have been in a relationship for 7 years. With Canada's reputation for openness winning the deal, the couple quickly determined to make their move. Both being perfectly capable of integrating a French-speaking society, Quebec seemed a natural choice for their new haven. Having received several study permit denials, the couple applied for PR under the conjugal partner class in spring 2022 and are now past the Canadian service standard. As the wait stretches on, N. fears for his partner's wellness.

French-speaking sponsors feel trapped in Quebec while waiting for their outland applicant spouses.

- Melanie H., 40, a business owner, and her Moroccan husband, also 40, have been waiting for years to reunite. With no visitor visa in sight, they stand to be kept apart for another year or so before they can live together. Melanie's children have not seen their stepfather in years. The couple hoped to conceive a child but now must wait until they are reunited.
- Marie-G, 46, a public service worker, has recently begun the outland application process for her European husband, a 41-year-old IT specialist. With the exponentially increasing wait times, her husband may not have permanent residency until she is close to 50. As a primary caregiver to an elderly parent, considering a relocation is difficult for the sponsor. After giving up on hopes of conception during their pandemic-induced separation, the couple now must choose between the

¹³ [Pour les futurs parrainés du Québec, le nouveau rêve est ontarien | Le Devoir](https://www.ledevoir.com/actualites/politique/590237/pour-les-futurs-parraines-du-quebec-le-nouveau-reve-est-ontarien)

¹⁴ [Un père de famille craint pour la sécurité de sa femme coincée en Haïti alors qu'elle attend après l'immigration depuis 17 mois | JDM \(journaldemontreal.com\)](https://www.journaldemontreal.com/2022/07/17/un-pere-de-famille-craint-pour-la-securite-de-sa-femme-coincée-en-haïti-alors-qu'elle-attend-apres-l-immigration-depuis-17-mois/)

safety of permanent residency status and filial piety while needlessly maintaining the cost of two households.

- Nadine B., a health professional, has been waiting since for over 130 days for her Syrian husband's visitor visa application to come through. Having minor children from a previous union in shared custody, she may struggle to leave for another province and could therefore have to wait years to be reunited with her husband.
- André Lefort, 65, a Quebec Hydro retiree, has been waiting to reunite with his Columbian wife (60) for a year. If André were living in any other province, they would already have confirmation of PR. Their hopes of experiencing retirement under the same roof dwindle as time passes.
- Laurianne Lachapelle, a finance professional, has had to terminate a pregnancy due to avoid going through pregnancy, labor and possibly the first few years of their child's life without her Guatemalan husband.

Even couples who are together through inland sponsorship or are now outland living in Canada are not at peace and experience hardship.

- Amandine, a French construction worker, is currently trapped in Canada until her inland permanent residency application is processed. She fears not being able to return if she travels to France to visit her ailing father.
- François P., (28) is a PhD student and an Inland Applicant. A Native French speaker, he's been waiting for PR since June 2022. This long wait has forced him and his partner to put their professional and personal projects on hold.
- Rydia L., 22, a graphic designer, has been waiting since over a year for an update on her application. She even left the country for 2 years in 2020 to be with her husband. After despairing for years as her husband was denied a visitor visa, he finally was miraculously able to land in Canada as a visitor in October 2023. However, their file has remained untouched since 2022. Though reunited at last, they now face stressful bureaucracy and financial duress after applying for an open work permit which may or may not be approved.
- Zakaria and his wife, both bilingual IT professionals, having waited 7 months for a visitor visa, should now be half-way through their inland application process but are instead looking down the funnel of multiple years waiting for her PR. Given the delays, they worry about living from work permit to work permit and having to shell out thousands of dollars in health insurance during the wait. They are seriously considering moving out of province.