



e2r Alert!

Quebec Bill 96 – One year later

You may recall that approximately a year ago, the Quebec government passed the controversial Bill 96. This Bill, which came into effect on June 1, 2022, was aimed to provide enhanced protections for the French language in Quebec.

Bill 96 – *An Act respecting French, the official and common language of Quebec* (the “Act”) modified sections of the Charter of the French Language and created new language rights. Some of the most significant employment related changes for Quebec businesses (and those employing individuals in Quebec) were as follows:

- Employers are required to use the French language in their written communications to their employees – unless an employee explicitly requests that the employer communicate in another language. Please note, this can include email communications.
- Contracts of adhesion (contracts that are not open to negotiation) must be drawn up in French – if they are not, any non-French clause will be unenforceable (this could affect ‘standard’ intellectual property agreements or other restrictive agreements offered outside of the hiring process).
- All paperwork related to the hiring process, employment conditions (like an Employee Handbook, policies or memorandums) and any training materials now have to be in French.
- Employers will no longer be able to require knowledge of another language other than French when hiring, unless the employer can show that another language is necessary for the work they do and that an existing employee does not have the requisite language skills.

A one-year grace period to allow employers to arrange for translations and make the necessary adjustments had been built into the Act when it came into force. That grace period expires **June 1, 2023**. After this date employers are expected to have the above changes in place.

Additionally, employees who previously had an English (or other) language employment agreement have up to June 1, 2023 to request a French language version of that agreement.

If you have any questions about how these requirements apply to your workforce, please contact an e2r™ Advisor.