TIME TO ACT FOR THE FUTURE OF FRANCOPHONE COMMUNITIES:
REDRESSING THE IMMIGRATION IMBALANCE

JOINT REPORT
BY THE COMMISSIONER OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES GRAHAM FRASER
AND ONTARIO FRENCH LANGUAGE SERVICES COMMISSIONER FRANÇOIS BOILEAU
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1 COMMISSIONERS’ PREFACE

Immigration is an integral part of the history of Canada – a country that has welcomed wave after wave of immigrants in line with political and economic imperatives. These immigrants have played a major role in Canada’s economic, political and social development, and contributed to the country’s wealth and diversity. “Since 1869, Canada has had laws and regulations governing the admission of immigrants. Immigration legislation has evolved and changed over time, shaped by the shifting social, political and economic climate, as well as dominant beliefs about race, desirability and integration.”

To remedy a selection process that was sometimes arbitrary and relied on immigration officers’ discretion, in 1967 Canada introduced regulations that established a points system for selecting certain categories of immigrants. Proficiency in English or French was one of the criteria. One objective was to end the discrimination to which some ethnic and religious groups had been subjected.

Immigration has since taken a new turn, with a shift in the source countries for immigration. Immigrants who speak several languages (including English or French) are choosing to settle in Canada. This diversity is also apparent in Francophone communities and among the newcomers who settle there. Whether they hail from Belgium, Romania, Mali or Haiti, these immigrants typically speak more than one language. This multicultural mosaic is reflected today in various settings; for example, in French-language schools in Francophone communities ranging from Moncton to London, Edmonton and Vancouver.

Over the past decade, a number of initiatives at the federal level and in some provinces and territories have been launched to support the vitality of Francophone minority communities through immigration. One result has been the setting of numerical targets.

Though those targets and statistics are important, even necessary, we must remember that the people we count are also the people we meet every day: the neighbour across the hall, the teacher at the school next door, or the local baker or pharmacist. They are real people with a variety of life stories and backgrounds. They include mothers, single fathers and young couples who have often left family and friends behind, choosing to settle and start a new life in our Francophone communities. Others, such as refugees, come here under more difficult circumstances and with greater needs.

Francophone immigrants, who often arrive with more than one foreign education credential and years of work experience abroad, are not only hoping to make a place for themselves, but also to contribute to the social and economic development of their new communities. Some have left everything behind in their home countries in the hope of becoming contributing members of Canadian society.

Given these expectations and aspirations, the federal, provincial and territorial governments, with the support of partners (including Francophone communities), should do everything in their power to help newcomers get settled and promote their social, economic and professional integration so that their dreams can become reality. The more newcomers feel appreciated and welcome in French, the more likely they are to identify with their new communities and contribute to their vitality.

There is no escaping the fact that the job market in French is relatively limited: not every newcomer will be able to find employment in a French-language workplace. Also, the first few months after arrival are critical: newcomers are weighing their potential for integrating into their new surroundings against the availability and quality of French-language programs and services. And newcomers have specific service

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needs: getting their Social Insurance Number, health card or driver’s licence; finding affordable housing; and landing their first job. As well, those with children must find a school. Some newcomers do choose to send their children to English-language schools because they want them to get a good grounding in English. They often make that choice not knowing that there are French-language schools in their communities and that it is an education in French that will give their children an outstanding opportunity to become truly bilingual.

Before they arrive here, newcomers often know little about the challenges of living in our Francophone communities; many have to come to terms with a reality that is different from the picture that they had of Canada when they left. Often, newcomers erroneously believe that Canada is an entirely bilingual country. Consequently, prospective Francophone immigrants need to be better informed before they arrive. It is very difficult, if not impossible, for new immigrants to grasp the confusing subtleties between the various settlement, training and integration services and programs to which they are entitled, as well as to know about the French-language services that various levels of government provide.

In this era of globalization and the knowledge-based economy, developed countries and emerging economies are competing worldwide to attract skilled workers. Canada, too—with its aging population, a declining birth rate and an acute shortage of workers in key economic sectors—relies on immigration to maintain its economic competitiveness and preserve its social model. Therefore, in recent years the federal government has embarked on a sweeping reform of the immigration system, focusing on the economy and giving employers a greater say in choosing foreign workers.

However, these changes must take into account the make-up of the country’s social and linguistic fabric and the circumstances of its communities. Over the years, Francophone minority communities in Canada have gained little from immigration. As it rolls out this new system, the federal government must ensure that Francophone communities benefit fully from the opportunities it offers. The government needs to recognize the major role that Francophone communities can play in welcoming and supporting newcomers and work with its partners—particularly to employers—so that they may seize the opportunities that this offers.

As we approach the 150th anniversary of Confederation in 2017 and celebrate the 400th anniversary of the French presence in Ontario in 2015, we believe that the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario must join forces and show leadership so that immigration truly contributes to the development and vitality of Francophone minority communities and ensure that Canada’s changing demographic mosaic continues to be in line with the specificities of Canadian society. We are convinced that our recommendations will contribute to building a fair and equitable immigration system—an immigration system that successfully balances government policies with constitutional and legislative obligations. One that helps linguistic duality flourish as an essential facet of Canadian identity in a context of much-needed and diverse immigration. Canada must become a destination of choice for French-speaking immigrants; now is the time to act. Paraphrasing a Canadian government immigrant recruitment campaign in Great Britain in 1905, we might say today: “Francophones—Canada needs you.”
2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Objectives

This report was prepared jointly by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages and the Office of the French Language Services Commissioner of Ontario. It examines the issue of immigration to Francophone minority communities (“Francophone communities”) across Canada, and in certain provinces such as Ontario. The report contains recommendations for the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario.

2.2 Methodology

The report is based on a review of relevant documents from various sources, including Statistics Canada, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), recent appearances before the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages and the Ministerial Conference on the Canadian Francophonie. It also examines issues raised by partners at informal gatherings and presents accounts given during interviews by immigrants living in Francophone communities. These immigrants were identified with the help of regional representatives of the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages. The report provides an overview of the situation rather than a detailed examination of the various aspects mentioned.

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 The importance of immigration for Canada

From the beginning, Canada has been a land of settlement with its colonization by the French and British, followed by various immigration waves and policies.

During the 20th century, the country saw significant fluctuations in the number of immigrants and in immigration rates. Peaks were reached around particular historical events. In 1913, a wave of more than 400,000 immigrants (52.5 immigrants per 1,000 population) entered the country and settled in the Western provinces. Immigration reached another high in 1957 as 282,000 immigrants arrived, many of whom were Hungarian refugees. Finally, in 1967 immigration increased again to 10.9 immigrants per 1,000 population, following the establishment of a points system, with economic and linguistic criteria, for entry to Canada. In the first decade of the 2000s, the rate of immigration to Canada fluctuated between 7.0 and 8.1 immigrants per 1,000 population.²

Prior to 1960, most immigrants came from Europe and the United States. Between 1981 and 2009, the proportion of immigrants from those regions fell by more than half, from 34.8% to 15.4% in the former case and from 6.8% to 3.2% in the latter. Furthermore, the proportion of immigrants from Africa and Asia rose over the same period, from 4.6% to 13.2% in the former case and from 39.5% to 56.4% in the latter.³

Canada, like other Western countries, has seen its population decline for some time now, particularly because of lower birth rates and an aging population. To reverse that trend, Canada is counting on immigration to ensure its demographic and economic vitality, among other things.

³ Ibid.
In 2011, the immigrant population numbered some 6,775,800 individuals, representing 20.6% of Canada’s total population. That proportion was the highest of all the G8 countries. In that year, some 1,162,900 persons were recent immigrants, having immigrated to Canada between 2006 and 2011. Those recent immigrants made up 17.2% of the immigrant population and 3.5% of Canada’s total population.4

3.2 Importance of immigration for Francophone minority communities

Francophone communities are not only experiencing significantly lower birth rates and higher rates of population aging, but they are also being affected by intergenerational linguistic shifts to English, weakening their demographic vitality over time. Immigration is therefore essential for these communities to thrive. However, “overall, Francophone minority communities outside Quebec received little benefit from the demographic contribution of international immigration, owing to the strong propensity of these immigrants to integrate into communities with an English-speaking majority.”5 We see that in 2011, in Canada outside Quebec, 4% of the total population had French as its first official language spoken (FOLS), whereas 2% of the immigrant population outside Quebec had French as its FOLS.6

3.3 Legal framework

3.3.1 Official Languages Act

Part VII of the Official Languages Act requires federal institutions to take positive measures to support the development and vitality of the official language minority communities (OLMCs) and to promote Canada’s two official languages. The Act therefore requires that CIC and the other federal institutions active in the immigration sector take positive measures to ensure that the OLMCs will, among other things, benefit from immigration. The federal government also has to ensure that the immigration policies and strategies it implements benefit these communities equally and that they support those communities’ development and vitality. It is true that immigration is a very complex sector and that, besides CIC, numerous stakeholders, such as the provinces and territories, have a significant role to play. Nevertheless, the federal government and CIC need to play a major role in terms of leadership and coordination.

3.3.2 Immigration and Refugee Protection Act

Besides the Official Languages Act, paragraph 3(1) (b.1) of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act clearly states that one of its aims is “to support and assist the development of minority official languages communities in Canada.” Subsection 3(3) goes on to say “this Act is to be construed and applied in a manner that

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(d) ensures that decisions taken under this Act are consistent with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, including its principles of equality and freedom from discrimination and of the equality of English and French as the official languages of Canada;

(e) supports the commitment of the Government of Canada to enhance the vitality of the English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada.”

3.3.3 French Language Services Act of Ontario

The preamble of the French Language Services Act of Ontario talks about preserving the cultural heritage contribution of Ontario’s French-speaking population, honouring the legacy of the past and safeguarding existing rights. But the purpose of the Act goes far beyond that. The Legislative Assembly showed audacious foresight by unanimously passing a law that has since become quasi-constitutional. Of course, Ontario’s French Language Services Act is not as detailed as the federal Official Languages Act, but it guarantees active delivery of French-language services, particularly in designated areas of the province. Moreover, even though these laws concern services to the public, they strongly urge the two levels of government to ensure that their settlement, training, integration and retention programs address the needs of Francophone communities, including Francophone newcomers. Failing that, these services may be, at best, unused and, at worst, useless.

4 DEFINITIONS AND QUESTIONS USED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

There is no one clear-cut definition of “Francophone” and therefore, by extension, no one definition of “French-speaking immigrants and newcomers.” Their definitions and criteria can serve different purposes. One of those purposes is the need, pursuant to Part IV of the Official Languages Act and its Regulations, to use the size of the official language minority population to determine the provision of communications and services in both official languages in specific regions and communities. Federal institutions are also required, under Part VII of the Act, to support the vitality of OLMCs. Statistics Canada surveys containing statistical data and analyses on the sociolinguistic characteristics and dynamics of the communities are helpful in that regard. In the immediate future, on an operational and administrative level, it may also be necessary to determine in which official language individuals (in this case, newcomers and immigrants) wish to be served by a federal institution—CIC, in other words. The following sections therefore examine some points of reference to help clarify what “French-speaking immigrants and newcomers” means.

4.1 Statistics Canada’s count and definition of the French-speaking population

Various definitions may be drawn from census data, depending on the variables selected: knowledge of official languages, mother tongue, language spoken at home (most often or regularly) and FOLS (which is derived from the responses to the first three questions). Each has its advantages and disadvantages, and the choice of definition can affect the count, depending on the region and community.8

Statistics Canada traditionally used the criterion of mother tongue—the language first learned at home in childhood and still understood—for which there are comparable data going back more than 50 years.9

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Given the demographic changes that have taken place in Canada in recent decades, the concept of Francophone group or community has had to be redefined to take into account the growing number of persons whose mother tongue is neither English nor French, but who nevertheless use French on a daily basis.\textsuperscript{10} In response to these changes, including those driven by immigration, the concept of FOLS was created and adopted in 1991 in the \textit{Official Languages (Communications with and Services to the Public) Regulations}. The Regulations provide a definition of the English and French linguistic minority population—specifically, the official language population of a given region, which is determined by Statistics Canada using Method I in the publication titled \textit{Population Estimates by First Official Language Spoken, September 1989}. That method “gives consideration, firstly, to knowledge of the official languages, secondly, to mother tongue, and thirdly, to language spoken in the home, with any cases in which the available information is not sufficient for Statistics Canada to decide between English and French as the first official language spoken being distributed equally between English and French.”\textsuperscript{11}

It should be noted that, depending on the calculation method used—that is, before or after the equal distribution of cases in which the FOLS is uncertain—demographic data, socio-demographic characteristics and linguistic practices may differ.\textsuperscript{12}

\section*{4.2 Statistics Canada’s definitions of immigrants and non-immigrants}

According to Statistics Canada, “non-immigrant” refers to a person who is a Canadian citizen by birth. “Immigrant” refers to a person who is or has been a landed immigrant or permanent resident. Some immigrants have resided in Canada for a number of years, while others are recent arrivals. “Recent immigrants” and “new immigrants” are those who arrived in Canada recently—for example, within the last five to 10 years.\textsuperscript{13}

\section*{4.3 Citizenship and Immigration Canada’s definition of permanent residents and temporary residents}

In the immigration process, there are two main ways to settle in Canada that lead to permanent or temporary residency. Immigrants choose between different classes of programs to land in Canada as permanent residents. The federal economic immigration stream consists of the Federal Skilled Trades Program, the Federal Skilled Worker Program, the Canadian Experience Class and the Provincial Nominee Program. Candidates for permanent residence can also immigrate if they are members of the family class, refugees or persons affected by humanitarian crises. Temporary residents include visitors, temporary foreign workers and foreign students.

Chart 1 provides an overview of the immigration program classes.

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\textsuperscript{10} Ibid.
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4.4 Citizenship and Immigration Canada’s definition of French-speaking immigrants

In its Strategic Framework to Foster Immigration to Francophone Minority Communities (2003), CIC defined “French-speaking immigrants” as “persons born outside Canada and residing in Canada whose mother tongue is French or who have knowledge of the French language.” However, that definition was imperfect in that knowledge of French was based on unverified voluntary declarations, which cast doubt on the reliability of the numbers. CIC modified that definition with its 2006 Strategic Plan to Foster Immigration to Francophone Minority Communities. It defined “French-speaking immigrant” as “an immigrant whose


15 The new system is now called Express Entry.

mother tongue is French, or whose first official language is French if the mother tongue is a language other than French or English.”

In 2012, CIC’s Evaluation of the Recruitment and Integration of French Speaking Immigrants to Francophone Minority Communities Initiative revealed that the number of French-speaking newcomers could vary significantly, depending on the definition and method used. The evaluation also documented challenges resulting from the lack of a method, validated and adopted by consensus, for calculating the number of French-speaking newcomers according to the definition in the Strategic Plan. The evaluation report recommended that “CIC, in collaboration with appropriate partners, determine the formula that it intends to use to measure the number of French-speaking immigrants who settle in [Francophone communities].”

5 GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO’S INCLUSIVE DEFINITION OF FRANCOPHONE

Since June 2009, Ontario’s Francophone population has benefitted from a new inclusive definition of Francophone (IDF), a first in Canada that occurred in response to the Ontario French Language Services Commissioner’s first recommendation to the provincial government. The IDF reflects the diversity of Franco-Ontarians, regardless of their place of birth, ethnic origin or religious affiliation. The IDF includes, in addition to people whose mother tongue is French, individuals whose mother tongue is neither English nor French (allophones) but who have a knowledge of French as an official language and use it at home. The IDF also applies to exogamous families, who now account for just over two thirds of Francophone households.

The criteria used to count Francophones based on FOLS and IDF are very similar in terms of their composition. In fact, they take into account the same questions Statistics Canada asks during censuses to determine who is Francophone: mother tongue, knowledge of official languages and languages spoken at home. Only the order in which they are calculated is different. In other words, the starting point for FOLS is knowledge of official languages, whereas for IDF, it is mother tongue.

In March 2012, the Government of Ontario developed a communications plan to improve ministries’ awareness of the use of the IDF as a calculation method common to all levels in the design of policies and programs and the provision of French-language services. Ontario has also been active on the national scene through the Ministerial Conference on the Canadian Francophonie, calling for the IDF alone to be used to count the Franco-Ontarian population, even though none of its federal, provincial and territorial counterparts have yet to follow suit.

5.1 Impact of the IDF for Ontario

In 2011, there were 611,500 Francophones in Ontario, accounting for nearly 5% of the total population, based on the IDF. It is true that the IDF adjusted the province’s Francophone population figures to include some 50,000 Francophone immigrants. However, there is no question that aside from the statistical exercise, the adoption of the IDF is enabling newcomers to identify as Francophones in Ontario and takes their contribution to the Francophone community into account, thereby reinforcing their feeling of

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belonging to their new community. And some of them no longer hesitate to advertise that sense of belonging, whether they are in London, Ottawa or Toronto.

“Franco-Ontarian? I don’t know. Francophone? Absolutely. Personally, I had always, rightly or wrongly, associated being Franco-Ontarian with having a Francophone ancestry. But, thanks to the new definition, I have the impression, for the first time, that I am a full-fledged member of the Francophone community. Of course, I don’t have the same connection with the French language as those who have fought to preserve it, but our common denominator is that we live in French every day and we have a desire to transmit the language to our children.”

Ayan Aden, Coordinator, Association canadienne-française de l’Ontario (ACFO), London-Sarnia Regional Council

Some regions stand to benefit more than do other regions from the IDF, as they see their Francophone population grow substantially. This is especially the case for the areas to which French-speaking newcomers gravitate, mainly central and eastern Ontario. In addition, “this new definition will give the government a more accurate picture of the demand for French-language services across the province and help ministries better plan for the delivery of these services.”

Furthermore, in the wake of the adoption of the IDF, the Ontario Ministry of Education encouraged the French-language school boards to standardize their admission policies to make French-language schools more welcoming for exogamous families, Francophone newcomers and children with grandparents who have French as their first language. It is nevertheless important to bear in mind that the IDF does not change the conditions for admission to French-language school in Ontario, conditions that are set out in the Education Act and are consistent in every respect with the rights set out in section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

6 THE NATIONAL CONTEXT

Since the early 2000s, many stakeholders have been grappling with the issue of immigration to Francophone communities.

In 2002, CIC announced the creation of a first steering committee tasked with studying the issue of immigration to Francophone communities. The committee’s membership at the time consisted of federal government, Francophone community and provincial partners, and its work was coordinated by CIC and the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadiennes (FCFA). In 2003, the Steering Committee unveiled the Strategic Framework to Foster Immigration to Francophone Minority Communities. One of the objectives of the Framework was to ensure that 4.4% of immigrants settling outside Quebec were French-speaking. At the time, it was expected that the target would be reached by 2008. Following certain

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challenges, including questions about the actual definition of a “French-speaking immigrant” and about data collection, that target was pushed back over the years to 2023.

This strategic framework was followed by other tools to support the targets. These tools included the Strategic Plan to Foster Immigration to Francophone Minority Communities (2006); allocation of funding to the immigration sector in the federal government’s five-year plans for official languages;\(^\text{24}\) studies by parliamentary committees\(^\text{25}\) and researchers; day-long workshops on immigration to Francophone communities organized as part of the Metropolis Conference; involvement of the Ministerial Conference on the Canadian Francophonie; and actions by provinces such as Manitoba, Ontario and New Brunswick, among other players.

Many Francophone communities have developed tools and resources to welcome and integrate newcomers. In addition to the coordination work and efforts carried out by the FCFA, many Francophone organizations and institutions across Canada work to raise awareness among and mobilize key players, including governments, municipalities and employers, to promote, both in Canada and abroad, their communities and the benefits they have to offer to newcomers, and to welcome and integrate them. In these communities, there are now 13 Francophone immigration networks across nine provinces and two territories.\(^\text{26}\) These networks play a vital role in coordinating and mobilizing regional stakeholders. In the fall of 2013, the FCFA also announced the creation of a national community table on Francophone immigration to, among other things, align national, provincial and territorial initiatives and coordinate actions between the various sectors.

This past year, changes were also made to the governance structure and to the federal government’s approach to supporting immigration to Francophone communities. The Strategic Plan to Foster Immigration to Francophone Minority Communities expired in March 2013. While continuing to work in the spirit of the Plan and its objectives, CIC does not intend to renew it. The Steering Committee’s scope was scaled back to focus its activities and trim its structure. CIC created a new Official Languages Secretariat to coordinate the Department’s official languages obligations. Since its launch, the Secretariat has been the gateway to the Department for all official languages matters. Despite having only limited resources, the Secretariat performs important coordinating functions in the Department and with partners.

Over the course of the past year, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration reiterated the federal government’s commitment to the issue of Francophone immigration to minority communities. In 2013, the Minister participated in celebrations during the first National Francophone Immigration Week by issuing a news release jointly with the FCFA. Recently, the Minister also pledged to hold consultations that would help to increase the number of French-speaking immigrants settling in Francophone communities outside Quebec. However, shortly thereafter, CIC announced its decision to terminate the Francophone Significant Benefit program, which was designed to facilitate the recruitment of Francophone temporary workers and which helped community organizations build bridges with employers in their regions. The Commissioner of Official Languages has received complaints about the closure of the program, and has launched an investigation.


\(^{25}\) House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages: reports and recommendations published in 2003 and 2010; Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages: study under way on the impacts of the recent changes to the immigration system on official language minority communities.

7 THE ONTARIO CONTEXT

In Ontario, responsibility for newcomer integration programs (settlement, language training and employment) is shared between the provincial government (Ministry of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade) and the federal government (CIC). The first Canada–Ontario Immigration Agreement, signed in 2005, led to the development, a year later, of a strategic plan for settlement services and language training. The five-year agreement has expired and has not been renewed. In addition, although Ontario is home to nearly 70% of Francophone immigrants outside Quebec, the province does not receive funding to support Francophone immigration from the federal government as some provinces do under the Roadmap for Canada’s Official Languages 2013-2018.

7.1 Programs and services for immigrants

There are many assistance programs for newcomers: settlement programs, housing assistance, employment services, language training and citizenship preparation classes. The Ministry of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade seems to be fairly active in assisting and supporting organizations working with Francophone newcomers. The federal and provincial ministries each deliver their own immigrant integration programs. At the provincial level, the school boards provide immigrants with classes in French or English as a second language, which are funded by the Government of Ontario.

There is certainly some overlap between programs, but the Ontario government has looser eligibility requirements than its federal counterpart. Indeed, all immigrants whose mother tongue is neither English nor French, including Canadian citizens, permanent residents, refugees or refugee claimants, can take advantage of the province’s programs and services.

At the provincial level, settlement and training programs are to be aligned with Ontario’s Immigration Strategy which presents a vision and objectives relevant to all immigrants, including Francophone newcomers. To that end, the Ministry of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade is conducting program by program reviews to ensure that each is effectively supporting immigration strategy targets, including the goal of achieving 5% Francophone immigration.

Nevertheless, it is important that before and as soon as they arrive, immigrants realize that they can not only obtain service in French from the federal and provincial governments, but also live in French, such as applying to have their children educated in French and obtaining community assistance in French.

7.2 The 5% target

In 2012, the Ontario government announced the development of its first immigration strategy to attract more highly skilled workers. This clear goal and this leadership by the government were reflected in the announcement of a 5% target for Francophone immigration, which will contribute to the vitality and the social, economic and cultural development of the Francophone community if it is reached. The Ministry stated that the 5% target applies to the aggregate annual immigrant intake from both federal and provincial programs. However, this raises concerns in the choice of the calculation method to be used. Ontario’s immigration strategy states that the 5% target will be reached by working cooperatively with the federal government and stakeholders. In fact, the province is jointly overseeing, with the federal government, the work of developing the new “Express Entry” federal immigration system, to be implemented in 2015. The Ministry of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade will be attending Destination Canada for the second year in a row to promote immigration to Ontario to potential Francophone immigrants and, specifically, Ontario’s role in Express Entry.
7.3 Actions undertaken

Since the publication of Ontario’s first immigration strategy in 2012, the provincial government has undertaken a number of actions. A working group was formed to develop measures for achieving the 5% target under the leadership of the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade. The working group has identified a number of priority action areas, such as recruitment and retention of qualified Francophone applicants in other countries and those who are already in Ontario. The working group also aims to strengthen the partnership with CIC and improve access to provincial settlement programs. In that vein, the Ministry changed the eligibility criteria for its language training programs in November 2013 to allow Francophones whose mother tongue is French to take English-as-a-second-language classes.

In February 2014, the Ministry introduced Bill 161, *Ontario Immigration Act*, which was intended in part to facilitate and enhance Ontario’s role in immigrant selection and settlement. If reintroduced and passed, this bill will enable the government to commit itself to making sure that the Franco-Ontarian community also benefits fully from attracting, welcoming and integrating immigrants.

In addition, the Ontario government sits as the provincial/territorial representative on the new CIC-Francophone Minority Communities Committee, whose mandate is to restart the national effort to increase Francophone immigration in minority areas.

7.4 Importance of accountability mechanisms and an experts group

In his 2012–2013 annual report, the Ontario French Language Services Commissioner expressed a desire to see the government introduce transparent accountability mechanisms for Francophone immigration so that it can report tangible results in achieving the objectives. He repeated that wish over the past year. The Ministry of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade was supposed to publish its first progress report on its efforts to reach the 5% target in the spring of 2014, followed by consultations with Francophone stakeholders. However, owing to the provincial elections in June, the Ministry has yet to publish its report. But Commissioner recognizes the various ministerial initiatives in this area, including the establishment of the interministerial working group. Nevertheless, the Ontario government currently has no transparent accountability and evaluation mechanism of its own.

It is true that, every year, the federal government publishes statistics on admissions to Canada by province of settlement and language. As the Ministry itself admits, these statistics may present a certain challenge, since the federal government uses a very different definition of “Francophone” and a very different computation method from Ontario.

The Commissioner is wondering how the government hopes to implement a winning strategy for achieving its 5% target without having the main players—Francophone immigration key players, municipalities and employers—involved from the outset. The same also applies to the importance of involving the federal government since the issue of immigration is very much a shared responsibility between the two levels of government.

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government and because it is the federal government which will continue to select the large majority of Ontario’s immigrants. Ad hoc consultations cannot replace the need to work closely and continually with partners that are not only intimately familiar with the field, but also dedicated to playing a greater role in building the new Canadian immigration system.

It is therefore important for the government to take a holistic approach that would involve combining a number of tools and initiatives in support of the effective implementation of a strategy for promoting, recruiting, welcoming, training, integrating and retaining Francophone immigrants. Among these tools, the establishment of a group of experts on Francophone immigration and transparent accountability is crucial, as are annual evaluation mechanisms. The group of experts involving the provincial and federal governments as well as key stakeholders would be tasked with developing a government-wide strategic plan to achieve the 5% target within a reasonable and realistic timeframe. That plan would also take into account the regional realities of popular settlement areas for Francophone newcomers. Moreover, the establishment of such structures, which contribute to the vitality and development of Ontario’s Francophonie, is not unprecedented within the government. Examples include the Provincial Advisory Committee on Francophone Affairs, which reports to the Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs, the French Language Health Services Advisory Council, which provides advice to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, and the Permanent Working Group of the Minister of Education. This structure is especially critical since, unlike the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, the Ministry of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade does not have a division or branch responsible for French-language programs and services.

The Commissioners recommend that the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade of Ontario establish a group of experts on Francophone immigration during the 2014–2015 fiscal year. This group of experts would:

a. Develop a holistic strategy for promoting, recruiting, welcoming, training, integrating and retaining Francophone immigrants;

b. Develop a government-wide strategic plan, with a specific timetable, for achieving the 5% target;

c. Establish annual evaluation and accountability mechanisms that are transparent and accessible to the public; and,

d. Include at least the following parties:
   • Representatives from Citizenship and Immigration Canada
   • Representatives from concerned provincial ministries and led by the Ministry of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade
   • Francophone immigration stakeholders
   • University and college administrators or professionals
   • School board administrators or professionals
   • Business and chamber-of-commerce leaders
   • Municipal representatives
8 OVERVIEW OF IMMIGRATION TO FRANCOPHONE COMMUNITIES

8.1 Main challenges pertaining to immigration to Francophone communities

The large number of stakeholders from different sectors, such as governments, communities and employers, makes immigration a very complex issue. The road to success for Francophone immigrants—leading from promotion and recruitment, reception and settlement, and economic and social integration through to prosperity and participation in the community—is often encumbered with challenges. Some communities are concentrated in a particular location, making them easier to identify. Other communities, though just as vibrant, are more scattered or harder for newcomers to identify, making referrals to Francophone institutions and services in French even more important. In addition, French-speaking refugees who settle in Francophone communities often have different needs than other newcomers do.

Prior to their arrival, many prospective French-speaking immigrants know little about the linguistic situation in Canada, incorrectly believing that the country is completely bilingual. They either know little about the options available to them in the provinces and territories outside Quebec or are unaware that there are Francophone communities in those regions. Many stakeholders have affirmed that continuing efforts must be made to promote Francophone communities and the benefits they have to offer to prospective immigrants and to employers needing to recruit foreign workers.30 Prospective immigrants also have to know about the prevailing realities in Canada’s different regions. Destination Canada is a key initiative for promoting immigration and recruiting immigrants abroad. However, community stakeholders are displeased that they can no longer access funding for travel to promote their regions.

“I arrived here with a Canadian flag in my suitcase. But I wasn’t necessarily aware of the existence of Francophone communities outside Quebec. I knew there were some Francophones in Ontario, but that’s about it. In 2012, I participated in Destination Canada in Brussels, and this is when I learned that there were Francophones outside Quebec. In 2013, one year before arriving, I had come on an exploratory trip to Nova Scotia. Even if you can live in French, some services are just not available. Living in a minority community means you have to know English. In a perfect world, services would be available in both languages.” [translation]

Newcomer who settled in Halifax

When they arrive, newcomers are sometimes referred to English or bilingual settlement services that know little or nothing about Francophone communities and institutions.31 Stakeholders also point to the uneven nature of services provided by bilingual organizations. At her June 2, 2014 appearance before the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages, the President of the Société de l’Acadie du Nouveau-Brunswick (SANB) stated that in her province, “too many clients from Francophone countries who receive services at purportedly bilingual centres do not have access to all the necessary information. For example, many Francophone immigrants think they must register their children in an anglophone education system in order to learn English. That is why many choose to settle in anglophone regions or neighbourhoods.”32

Newcomers’ unfamiliarity with services available in French or the presence of Francophone communities and institutions in their new region is often cited as a challenge. At her appearance before the Senate Committee, researcher Nicole Gallant, like other witnesses, stressed the fact that for French-speaking immigrants to integrate successfully, they need more than just services in French. Furthermore, several Francophone community representatives, including the FCFA and the Assemblée de la francophonie de l’Ontario (AFO), said that it is important for services and support (including language training) for French-speaking newcomers to be provided in an integrated fashion by Francophone institutions and communities at each stage in the immigrant experience. This means services “by” and “for” Francophones. The belief is that meaningful ties between newcomers and Francophone communities will be established when services and education are provided by Francophone institutions.

“After staying in Quebec briefly, my family and I decided to move to Ottawa to improve our chances of finding work. I took a language test at a community centre so I could enrol in an integration program for newcomers. When the officers at the centre discovered that I speak French, they strongly suggested that I take the integration program in English. I told them that I wanted to integrate first in a language that I understood before tackling English. To me, English was an asset and a means of communication for employment purposes, not a settlement language. In the end, I took a program in French, and it helped me capitalize on my foreign credentials and experience. I was subsequently able to find a job.” [translation]

Apollinaire Yengayenge, newcomer who settled in Ottawa

Many Francophone communities are located in rural areas or in small centres that are grappling with a generalized population exodus. Given that many immigrants prefer to settle in large urban centres, owing to the presence of services and cultural communities or for economic reasons, it is more difficult for these Francophone communities to attract and retain newcomers. In these regions, newcomers also have to be able to find jobs. As researcher Chedly Belkhodja put it, “in rural contexts, there has to be an economic attraction, an employer, something.”

For most immigrants, be they Francophones or Anglophones, labour market access and integration are significant challenges. For French-speaking immigrants who settle in a province or territory outside Quebec, the importance of English is an added challenge, because that language predominates in the workplace. It is therefore recommended that newcomers have access to language training in both official languages to integrate successfully, and that this training be provided by Francophone institutions.

Employers have a significant role to play in recruiting workers and integrating newcomers into the labour market. That is especially true in the light of Canada’s new immigration system, which will be discussed later in this paper. At their appearances before the Senate Committee, some stakeholders, including the Société franco-manitobaine (SFM) and the Association canadienne-française de l’Alberta (ACFA), were

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unhappy that very few Francophone countries are on employers’ radar as places for recruiting temporary and permanent immigrants. Educating and Mobilizing employers to recruit Francophone or bilingual workers remains a major issue for Francophone communities. The added value that Francophone and bilingual workers can bring to companies and the added value that communities can provide in worker reception and settlement and employer support therefore need to be promoted.

These challenges are compounded by other difficulties, such as a lack of resources and a lack of data on immigrant pathways; immigrant mobility, which can be affected by a number of factors, including employment; the impact that this mobility has on service delivery; recognition of foreign credentials; and socioeconomic issues, such as poverty.

### 8.2 Atlantic region

The decreasing demographic weight of Francophone communities is a pressing issue for the Atlantic provinces. The demographic decrease is a result of such factors as the aging population, low birth rates and the exodus of part of the population to urban centres or regions with more favourable economic prospects. Over the years, Francophone communities in Atlantic Canada have received little benefit from immigration, however. According to Statistics Canada, between 2006 and 2011, of those immigrants who had French as their FOLS and settled outside Quebec, just 5.2% chose one of the Atlantic provinces.  

In general, Francophone communities in the Atlantic provinces are facing challenges similar to those in other Francophone minority communities when it comes to attracting and retaining newcomers. Among other things, many of these communities are located in rural areas. At the third Atlantic symposium on Francophone immigration, held in February 2014, a number of challenges pertaining to the labour market in Atlantic Canada were also identified. They include limitations of the Francophone job market, the importance of educating receiving communities and employers about immigration and cultural diversity, the importance of proficiency in English, and the difficult economic conditions in some regions. Action priorities that were identified include the development of a formal action plan for educating and engaging employers, the targeted promotion of the Atlantic region abroad, and the availability of tools for integrating immigrants into the labour market.  

In the spring of 2013, the federal government announced the new Roadmap for Canada’s Official Languages 2013–2018. The Roadmap calls for $4 million to be allocated for Francophone immigration to New Brunswick, a decrease of $6 million over the previous plan. Responsibility for this file was also transferred from the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency to CIC. It is to be hoped that communities’ efforts to take charge of the situation in recent years are not overly affected by these changes and that the new reception and integration centres established through the funding in the 2008–2013 Roadmap can adapt to the new financial environment, continue their work and help retain Francophone immigrants across the province.

### 8.2.1 New Brunswick Francophone Immigration Action Plan 2014–2017

According to Statistics Canada, 31.9% of New Brunswick’s population had French as its FOLS in 2011. However, it was estimated that, for the same year, only 11.7% of recent immigrants had French as their

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In the spring of 2014, Katherine d’Entremont, Commissioner of Official Languages for New Brunswick, called on the provincial and federal government to act in order to protect New Brunswick’s Francophone communities. She asked the two levels of government to adopt a framework agreement on Francophone immigration.

On July 3, 2014, the Government of New Brunswick announced a Francophone immigration action plan for the province. The government has set 2020 as its target for the number of Francophone immigrants who settle in New Brunswick to reflect the province’s linguistic make-up—that is, about 32%. According to our observations, the community appreciates the fact that there is a clear and realistic plan that will hold the government accountable. However, according to the strategy, a corrective plan will be needed over the long term to ensure that the demographic weight of the two language communities remains balanced. This immigration strategy addresses only the New Brunswick Nominee Program. In 2013, approximately 65% of permanent residents were admitted to the province through the New Brunswick Nominee Program. Other mechanisms will therefore have to be established to ensure that the province’s linguistic make-up is truly respected.

In the other Atlantic provinces, Nova Scotia has had a marketing and recruitment plan for French-speaking immigrants since 2012. In Prince Edward Island, the Francophone and Acadian community has developed an integration and population growth strategy for 2012–2017.

8.3 Prairie region

The made-in-Manitoba model for welcoming and integrating Francophone immigrants, based on the participation and engagement of the federal and provincial governments, the municipalities and the Franco-Manitoban community, has been described several times by Commissioner of Official Languages Graham Fraser as worthy of emulation. A key aspect of the model is the collaborative and integrated approach put forward by the SFM and especially by Accueil francophone, an organization that guides newcomers through the various stages of their settlement process. Manitoba also has a 7% target for Francophone immigration, aiming to take in some 700 French-speaking immigrants each year.

According to the Manitoba government, some 507 Francophone immigrants (proficient in French or in English and French) settled in the province in 2012. Over the years, Manitoba has welcomed a large number of French-speaking refugees, a category of newcomers who often face particular challenges. The province also takes in a number of economic-class immigrants via the Provincial Nominee Program, for example. Despite Manitoba model’s success, some stakeholders maintain that, internationally, there is still a significant lack of knowledge and awareness about the French fact outside Quebec.

As in many provinces in Canada, the importance of proficiency in both official languages in order to access the labour market, double-minority status (immigrant and Francophone) and cultural differences are some

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of the challenges that French-speaking newcomers face. According to stakeholders, other challenges include poverty among families and children, access to housing, and feelings of isolation, notably among some women.

In Saskatchewan, most immigration is economic in nature, and many immigrants arrive via the Federal Skilled Worker Program (FSWP). Many also come after spending several months or years in another province, such as Ontario or Quebec. If things changed and jobs became rarer, many of these immigrants could leave the province for regions where there are jobs, and they would do so regardless of their level of integration in the community. That issue, which is also present in many other regions, was raised time and again at the 2013 Rendez-vous fransaskois and an immigration conference held at the Institut français at the University of Regina in 2013. And as is the case in many provinces, most jobs require proficiency in English.

Despite Saskatchewan’s strong economy, Francophone newcomers face a number of obstacles in accessing the labour market and working in their areas of expertise. These obstacles include recognition of foreign credentials, as well as training and skills that are not always in step with labour market needs. For example, many of the Francophone immigrants are from Africa, where their training is mostly in professional fields. The strong economy in Saskatchewan and the predominant industries require labourers with a specific skill set or training. The unemployment rate for immigrants in the province is also higher than that for the population as a whole. Integration into the workplace is a challenge, because some employers do not have the level of awareness, knowledge or experience needed to integrate foreign workers. Managing diversity in the workplace continues to be a challenge, and learning is needed all round to create inclusive work environments.

**8.4 Western Canada region**

Alberta and British Columbia are experiencing strong economic growth. Unlike in other regions, the economy in these provinces is drawing large numbers of newcomers and migrants from other provinces in Canada, which is contributing to a growing Francophone population in Western Canada. However, attracting suitable workers to meet the needs of industry is still proving difficult. Recently, the President of the ACFA said, “since 2001, that [Alberta] plural and very diverse Francophone community has taken in over 10,000 direct immigrants, as well as several thousand Francophones who immigrated through other provinces and territories, especially Quebec.”

However, many newcomers settle only temporarily for work purposes and are not very engaged in their communities or in promoting the French language. Such immigration or migration, even temporary, puts additional pressure on Francophone organizations, which have to meet the greater demand for services in French, but do not always have the resources they need to do so.

In this region, newcomers are often welcomed by Anglophone integration networks, because there is very little tendency to refer them to Francophone communities. There is also a lack of knowledge about services available to Francophones.

In addition to problems integrating into the general population, French-speaking newcomers in the West experience difficulties integrating into existing Francophone communities. They often tend to turn to the Anglophone community, which offers more services and has better connections with networks that can

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make job searches easier. For French-speaking immigrants, ties with Francophone communities tend to revolve more around language and culture.

As is the case in many provinces, English is almost always the language of work in Western Canada. Consequently, immigrants who are not proficient enough in English will have difficulty finding work.

**RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT:**

In order for Francophone organizations and institutions to offer services and guidance in French to French-speaking newcomers throughout their settlement process, and for Francophone communities to build close ties with newcomers, the Commissioners recommend that the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration:

- rely principally on Francophone organizations as providers of services and support to French-speaking newcomers in the context of any calls for proposals.

Both before French-speaking newcomers leave their home countries and upon their arrival in Canada, they need to be made aware of the existence of Francophone communities, the potential that these communities represent for welcoming and integrating them as well as the settlement programs and services available to them in French. In order for this to occur, the Commissioners recommend that the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration:

- develop a strategy and pre-departure tools in French for prospective French-speaking immigrants wishing to settle in Francophone communities outside Quebec; and,
- implement a mechanism which will ensure that French-speaking newcomers are systematically informed by government before and after their arrival in Canada about the presence of services, resources and Francophone organizations in their new region of settlement.

**9 CHANGES TO CANADA’S IMMIGRATION SYSTEM**

A few years ago, the federal government began working on modernizing Canada’s immigration system and on establishing mechanisms to reduce the backlog of applications from skilled workers. In the drive to modernize the immigration system, modelled after the systems in place in Australia and New Zealand, the focus is on the economy, quicker integration into the labour market and recruitment of immigrants with skills in demand in Canada. The changes include the following:

- the option for the Minister to issue ministerial instructions to help Canada attain its immigration objectives;
- the creation of the Canadian Experience Class (CEC) to facilitate the passage from temporary residency to permanent residency for international students and temporary workers;
- changes to the Federal Skilled Worker Program (FSWP) points grid, which now places more importance on language skills, Canadian experience and Canadian diploma equivalencies;
- the creation of the Federal Skilled Trades Program (FSTP);
• the impending implementation of an express entry system, which will lead to the creation of a pool of skilled immigrants (through the FSWP, FSTP, CEC or a part of the Provincial Nominee Program) and is designed to better meet Canada’s labour needs.

“Through Express Entry, foreign nationals who meet the criteria for one of the federal immigration programs will be placed into a pool, from which employers will be able to consider candidates who meet their needs when they cannot find a Canadian or permanent resident for the job. The Government of Canada's new and improved Job Bank will help facilitate matches between Canadian employers and Express Entry candidates.

“Express Entry candidates who receive a qualifying job offer from a Canadian employer or nomination under the Provincial Nominee Program will be invited to apply for permanent residence soon after...”

The changes to the immigration system have been quick and many. Some changes were made recently, while others are still to come, such as the launch of the Express Entry system in early 2015. In June 2013, the Ministerial Conference on the Canadian Francophonie published an analysis of the impact of the reform for Canada’s Francophone communities. Ronald Bisson and Matthieu Brennan, the study’s authors, concluded that the changes to the immigration system represent a positive change for Francophone communities, opening up many opportunities for them. However, they also indicated that “Francophone communities will have to make a major adjustment in order to take advantage of these opportunities.”

In 2013, the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages undertook a study of the impact of the recent changes to the immigration system on the official language communities. During their appearances before the Committee, many stakeholders shared their concerns about the changes.

The following sections examine avenues to be explored in response to the changes that have been made and those to come. Some of the concerns raised by immigration stakeholders are then addressed.

9.1 Opportunities for Francophone communities

9.1.1 International students

International students present an important opportunity for Francophone communities seeking to ensure their vitality. According to the Association des universités de la francophonie canadienne (AUFC), “The presence of international students in Canada’s Francophone communities not only adds to their diversity, but also generates significant economic benefits.” [translation] In addition, studies have shown that more immigrants lead to more French schools in Francophone communities, which in turn create employment opportunities for Francophone communities.


for teachers. A 2009 study by Ronald Bisson showed that “in total, without first- and second-generation Francophone immigration, there would be 17 fewer French schools in Ottawa. . . .”\textsuperscript{48} [translation]

9.1.1.1 Canada’s International Education Strategy

The number of international students in Canada is growing at a faster rate than in any other country, increasing by 51% between 2007 and 2012. These students represent a clear value added for Canada. In 2012, the 265,400 international students in Canada spent $8.4 billion in communities across the country, helping to sustain 86,570 jobs.\textsuperscript{49} They are well placed to immigrate to Canada, since they typically have obtained Canadian credentials, are proficient in at least one official language and often have relevant Canadian experience. They are eligible for permanent residency through immigration programs such as the CEC. Launched in 2008, the CEC is the most accessed transition stream for international students wanting to become permanent residents. “Since its inception, the CEC has issued over 20,000 visas to foreign students and workers in Canada. Admission has risen from about 2,500 in 2009 to more than 6,000 new Permanent Residents in 2011.”\textsuperscript{50}

In the Economic Action Plan 2013, ongoing funding of $5 million a year was earmarked to support the objectives of the International Education Strategy launched by the federal government on January 15, 2014. As part of the Strategy, the Government of Canada has committed to working with the provinces and territories, as well as with Canadian educational institutions and other stakeholders, to double the number of international students by 2022. Certain priority markets have been identified as the focus for this Strategy: Brazil, China, India, Mexico, North Africa and the Middle East, and Vietnam.

9.1.1.2 Issues and opportunities

According to Statistics Canada, the largest Francophone population is currently in Africa. Target markets of AUFC members have historically been concentrated in the Maghreb and Francophone Africa.\textsuperscript{51} It will therefore become increasingly important for Francophone communities to attract immigrants from African countries. The International Education Strategy’s general lack of emphasis on Francophone countries, and the absence of attention to countries from the sub-Saharan region of Africa, poses a problem for Francophone communities. It is important to ensure that specific issues related to Francophone communities are taken into account and that these communities have the tools to attract and retain international students.

The Strategy accords an important role to governments and educational institutions in the selection and recruitment of international students. Furthermore, CIC has announced new rules to its current policies for international students, which took effect on June 1, 2014. Provinces and territories will now be empowered through these reforms to designate which institutions qualify to receive international students, based on a set of minimum standards. Designation of educational institutions will be guided by the Educational Institution Eligibility Policy Framework. This set of minimum common standards that educational institutions must meet to host international students will be developed by provincial governments in consultation with CIC.\textsuperscript{52} This could be an opportunity for provinces and territories to ensure that

\textsuperscript{51} Association des universités de la francophonie canadienne, \textit{Stratégie d’expansion internationale}, 2014.
Francophone communities, through institutions such as those represented by the AUFC, receive their fair share of international students.

According to Yvon Laberge from Collège Éducacentre, the CEC “will have a major impact,” since it will make it possible for temporary foreign workers and international students to apply for permanent residency in Canada. The CEC will also facilitate the immigration process for French and Belgian youth who come to Canada on a working-holiday permit.

In order to capitalize on the potential value added of international students, the AUFC has developed an expansion strategy to increase the number of international students in Francophone institutions. The AUFC will also be examining the activities of its member institutions in Francophone sub-Saharan Africa to determine what sort of efforts could be undertaken in that region.

An issue that is common to the Francophone minority community and the colleges and universities of the Francophonie is the importance of matching educational program choice with labour market need in the community. To ensure that international students have the right skills to fill the labour market needs of the communities, tools must be put in place to provide this information to students when they are planning to come study in Canada to help them choose the appropriate community and program of study, as well as to help them plan their immigration.

Universities and communities have expressed concern over the fact that CIC offers services and funding for the settlement of permanent residents only, not for temporary residents. As a result, international students, who fall into the temporary resident category, must rely heavily on universities for services. However, there is a need to reinforce capacity and infrastructure of the colleges and universities in Francophone communities so that they can develop and implement services and instruments to provide better support for international students so that they can fully adopt the French language and culture.

9.1.2 Provincial Nominee Program

Another avenue the federal government and provinces and territories should explore further is the Provincial Nominee Program, one of whose objectives is to stimulate the growth of the OLMCs. Under the Provincial Nominee Program, there are agreements between the federal government and 11 provinces and territories. After the FSWP, the Provincial Nominee Program is the second-largest program in the economic class. In 2012, a record 40,899 immigrants were admitted through this program.

However, a 2009 evaluation of the program by CIC found that little attention was paid to the objective to stimulate the growth of OLMCs: “There was a limited focus on the federal objective of encouraging the development of [OLMCs], with only three [provinces or territories] identifying it as a priority for their

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54 Ibid.
55 Association des universités de la francophonie canadienne, Stratégie d’expansion internationale, 2014.
58 Ibid.
In that regard, the evaluation recommended that CIC work with the provinces and territories to review that objective and that the Department reconsider how to incorporate it into the design and delivery of the program.

As shown by the evaluation, use of the Provincial Nominee Program as a tool for increasing the number of Francophone immigrants varies by province. However, it is important to note efforts by New Brunswick, which, as part of its Francophone Immigration Action Plan, signalled its intent to work with CIC “to introduce a Francophone stream to the [New Brunswick Provincial Nominee Program].”

RECOMMENDATION TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT:

Immigration is an area of jurisdiction shared between the federal government and the provinces and territories. The Commissioners therefore recommend that the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration:

- develop, in concert with his provincial and territorial counterparts, a substantive action plan including targets for Francophone immigration and a timetable for enhanced efforts aimed at better supporting one of the objectives of the Provincial Nominee Program which is to stimulate the growth of official language communities.

9.2 Concerns about the new immigration system

In 2013–2014, a number of stakeholders testified before the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages in the context of its study on the impact of the recent changes to the immigration system. At their appearances, the stakeholders described initiatives put forward by their organizations and the work that many organizations and networks were already doing to adjust to the changes. A major component of that work involves raising awareness among and mobilizing Francophone and Anglophone employers. However, for Francophone communities to benefit from these changes, many stakeholders said that it was important to see things from a Francophone perspective, take positive measures and establish mechanisms to support the communities. The importance of consulting and involving the communities was also mentioned. In its brief to the Committee, the FCFA reiterated, “although the communities have adapted many of their activities and practices to ensure their relevance and effectiveness in the new immigration system, it is crucial to see things from a Francophone perspective and to establish mechanisms to support the Francophone communities”.


context, that in no way diminishes governments’ responsibility to ensure that the recent changes to the immigration system have a positive impact on Francophone communities.’’

Several stakeholders also expressed concern regarding employers’ increased role in recruiting and selecting immigrants. As the ACFA observed,

“We feel that the important role employers are offered to play in the selection of immigrants, coupled with the major involvement provinces and territories will have in this file—and none of this is subject to language obligations—could dilute the federal government’s commitments toward official language minority communities. We recognize the economic benefits of immigration our government is interested in. However, we are worried that our communities’ vitality may be negatively affected if assistance is not provided.”

Stakeholders indicated that, since most employers and companies outside Quebec are English-speaking, employer mobilization and participation to recruit Francophone and bilingual workers continue to be major challenges. Ibrahima Diallo, Chair of the National Community Table on Francophone Immigration, indicated that “the majority of jobs in Francophone minority communities are in Anglophone settings, over 95 per cent. Consequently, our big challenge will be urging Anglophone employers to seek out Francophone workers. That is a huge challenge. We really need to think long and hard about how to address the issue so as not to keep making the Francophone-Anglophone imbalance worse.” Others said that the current immigration source countries are predominantly English-speaking and that employers already had a habit or history of recruiting abroad in countries that were not necessarily source countries for the Francophonie. The president of the SFM, Mamadou Ka, also noted that “The last challenge we are facing is that source countries are predominantly Anglophone. In other words, all recruitment is done in Anglophone countries. It is often said that Africa is the future of the Francophonie. That is said because Africa ultimately produces more Francophones than any single country in the world.”

Consultant Matthieu Brennan reiterated some of the conclusions of the study conducted for the Ministerial Conference on the Canadian Francophonie. Among other things, he noted that the changes to the immigration system would have a positive impact on Francophone communities and that the public policy environment for Francophone immigration was better than it had been in 10 years. However, he too indicated that the employers’ role in the changes remains a problem:

“This will always be a problem because we do not have a Francophone economy. We live in an economy, period. As long as employers tend to evaluate based on commercial economic success, as long as that is employers’ reference point, it will be difficult to develop the argument that will make them active players. That will require stakeholders in the community who have the community’s

interests at heart and who are able to speak the employers’ language. There are not many of them. Money talks.\textsuperscript{67}

**RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT:**

In order for Francophone communities to benefit from the new immigration system, the Commissioners recommend that the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration:

- develop long-term tools and incentives for Canadian employers to assist in the recruitment and selection of French-speaking and bilingual workers outside Quebec, thus allowing Francophone communities to address past shortfalls and catch up in terms of their levels of immigration.

The Commissioners further recommend that the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration:

- report, by April 30, 2015, on the actual or anticipated impact of the changes to Canada’s immigration system, including Express Entry, on immigration to Francophone communities; and,

- report, by December 31, 2015, on the measures taken by Citizenship and Immigration Canada to implement all of the Commissioners’ recommendations.

**10 CONCLUSION**

With Francophone minority communities’ demographic weight shrinking, immigration holds much promise for their renewal and vitality. However, over the years, Canada’s Francophone communities have benefitted less from immigration than have Anglophone majority communities.

The Commissioners’ report presents an overview and analysis of the issues surrounding immigration to Francophone communities. The goal was not to present a comprehensive account, but to highlight some of the main challenges. The report examines, among other things, the work that has been done by key players, including the federal government, the Ontario government and the communities, and notes some of the obstacles that Francophone newcomers face during their settlement process. It then focuses on the new immigration system.

The changes to the immigration system will pave the way for the years ahead. The new system provides an opportunity for the federal government and its provincial and territorial partners to turn immigration into a source of strength and renewal for Francophone communities. It is an opportunity not to be missed, and it is on that note that the Commissioners would like to conclude this report.

Even though the new system gives priority to economic considerations and the role of employers, Francophone communities are nonetheless leading partners and offer value in attracting and retaining newcomers. Whether it be through the services and resources they provide in French, the infrastructure they have (e.g. schools and community centres) or their expertise, these communities are well positioned to support employers and immigrants. As such, the federal government must ensure that Francophone communities benefit fully from the opportunities created by the new system and that the major role they can play is recognized and leveraged.

11 LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 Recommendations to the federal government

Francophone minority communities have received little benefit from immigration to date. In implementing the new immigration system, it is imperative that the federal government adopt a Francophone perspective to contribute to their development and vitality. Such a perspective will ensure that Francophone minority communities benefit from the opportunities created by the new system, and that these opportunities help rectify past imbalances in terms of immigration.

To guide the federal government and its partners in their work, the Commissioners are making the following recommendations.

Support for French-speaking immigrants through Francophone institutions and organizations:

In order for Francophone organizations and institutions to offer services and guidance in French to French-speaking newcomers throughout their settlement process, and for Francophone communities to build close ties with newcomers, the Commissioners recommend that the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration:

1. rely principally on Francophone organizations as providers of services and support to French-speaking newcomers in the context of any calls for proposals.

Information and resources for French-speaking newcomers:

To date, prospective French-speaking immigrants have benefitted little from pre-departure services and information in French. The Commissioners have noted some positive changes in CI's 2014 call for proposals for pre-arrival settlement services which now includes Francophone countries as part of their pre-departure sessions.

Both before French-speaking newcomers leave their home countries and upon their arrival in Canada, they need to be made aware of the existence of Francophone communities, the potential that these communities represent for welcoming and integrating them as well as the settlement programs and services available to them in French. In order for this to occur, the Commissioners recommend that the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration:

2. develop a strategy and pre-departure tools in French for prospective French-speaking immigrants wishing to settle in Francophone communities outside Quebec; and,

3. implement a mechanism which will ensure that French-speaking newcomers are systematically informed by government before and after their arrival in Canada about the presence of services, resources and Francophone organizations in their new region of settlement.

Cooperation with the provinces:

Immigration is an area of jurisdiction shared between the federal government and the provinces and territories. The Commissioners therefore recommend that the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration:

4. develop, in concert with his provincial and territorial counterparts, a substantive action plan including targets for Francophone immigration and a timetable for enhanced efforts aimed at better supporting one of the objectives of the Provincial Nominee Program which is to stimulate the growth of official language communities.
Incentives for employers to recruit and select Francophone and bilingual workers:

In order for Francophone communities to benefit from the new immigration system, the Commissioners recommend that the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration:

5. develop long-term tools and incentives for Canadian employers to assist in the recruitment and selection of French-speaking and bilingual workers outside Quebec, thus allowing Francophone communities to address past shortfalls and catch up in terms of their levels of immigration.

Accountability:

The Commissioners recommend that the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration:

6. report, by April 30, 2015, on the actual or anticipated impact of the changes to Canada’s immigration system, including Express Entry, on immigration to Francophone communities; and,

7. report, by December 31, 2015, on the measures taken by Citizenship and Immigration Canada to implement all of the Commissioners’ recommendations.

11.2 Recommendation to the Government of Ontario

8. The Commissioners recommend that the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade of Ontario establish a group of experts on Francophone immigration during the 2014–2015 fiscal year. This group of experts would:

   a. Develop a holistic strategy for promoting, recruiting, welcoming, training, integrating and retaining Francophone immigrants;

   b. Develop a government-wide strategic plan, with a specific timetable, for achieving the 5% target;

   c. Establish annual evaluation and accountability mechanisms that are transparent and accessible to the public; and,

   d. Include at least the following parties:

      ▪ Representatives from Citizenship and Immigration Canada
      ▪ Representatives from concerned provincial ministries and led by the Ministry of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade
      ▪ Francophone immigration stakeholders
      ▪ University and college administrators or professionals
      ▪ School board administrators or professionals
      ▪ Business and chamber-of-commerce leaders
      ▪ Municipal representatives
12 LIST OF ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

ACFA: Association canadienne-française de l’Alberta
ACFO: Association canadienne-française de l’Ontario
AFO: Assemblée de la francophonie de l’Ontario
AUFC: Association des universités de la francophonie canadienne
CEC: Canadian Experience Class
CIC: Citizenship and Immigration Canada
IDF: Inclusive definition of Francophone
FCFA: Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne
FOLS: First official language spoken
FSTP: Federal Skilled Trades Program
FSWP: Federal Skilled Worker Program
OLMCs: Official language minority communities
SANB: Société de l’Acadie du Nouveau-Brunswick
SFM: Société franco-manitobaine