

CONSULTATION
2012

2015



Québec Immigration Planning for the Period 2012-2015

▪ Summary



*Immigration
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Production

The Direction de la recherche et de l'analyse prospective of the ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles produced this document, in collaboration with the sectors and branches of the MICC.

Note: In the interests of stylistic clarity, the masculine form of pronouns is used in this document to refer without discrimination to both women and men.

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Introduction

For over 30 years, Québec has regularly engaged in planning to determine the numbers and origins of the immigrants that it intends to admit during a given period. Since the release in 1990 by the Québec government of the *Énoncé de politique en matière d'immigration et d'intégration*, the government has engaged in pluri-annual planning. The next immigration planning process, for the period 2012 to 2015, will include a public consultation. This document summarizes the consultation document,¹ which was elaborated to support the consultation process.

1- Immigration to Québec in 2010

In 2010, Québec admitted 53 985 immigrants, the highest level in its recent history. This represents a 66% increase over 2000, when 32 502 immigrants were admitted, a reflection of the adoption since the beginning of the decade of higher limits on the number of immigrants admitted.

More specifically, in 2010:

- 69.4% of the immigrants were under 35 years of age (45.2% of them were under 24 years of age);
- more or less equal numbers of men and women were admitted;
- 65.1% of the immigrants (and 77.3% of skilled workers) knew French;
- nearly two-thirds (65.7%) of immigrants 15 years of age or over had 14 years or more of education;
- 76.4% of immigrants 15 years of age or over said they would seek employment.

Moreover, 36.8% of the immigrants admitted to Québec in 2010 came from Africa, 25.4% from Asia, 21.1% from the Americas, and 16.6% from Europe.

¹ The consultation document is available on the Website of the ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles (www.micc.gouv.qc.ca).

2- Immigration issues and challenges

The contribution that immigration makes to Québec's development bears on:

- demographic vitality;
- economic prosperity;
- the vitality of the French language;
- openness to the world and the management of diversity; and
- regionalization.

These issues serve as a backdrop to the recent changes that Québec society has undergone and to its future.

Demographic vitality

The most recent *Portrait social du Québec* published by the Institut de la statistique du Québec (ISQ) notes that Québec's population increased by 500 000 between 2000 and 2009. In 2009 alone, Québec's population rose by over 80 000, a relative increase of 1%, an upturn that had not been observed since 1990.² Higher levels of immigration and the increase in births recorded since 2005 have contributed greatly to this favourable situation.

Influenced by this favourable situation, the new population projections published by the ISQ in 2009 for the period 2006-2056 also presented markedly more positive outcomes concerning Québec's demographic future than preceding prospects had done.

On the other hand, the ageing of the population remains inevitable. Individuals in the older age groups will be proportionally more and more numerous while those in the younger age groups will be clearly less numerous.

Economic prosperity

A significant proportion of the immigrants admitted to Québec are in the 20-64 age group. A majority of these immigrants intend to integrate the labour market and they contribute significantly to its vitality.

² Chantal Girard and Martine St-Amour (2010). Chapter 1, "La situation démographique, tendances récentes et projetées," in *Portrait social du Québec. Données et analyses* (2010 edition), Institut de la statistique du Québec.

Because of the ageing of the population, in 2011 the number of individuals leaving the labour market could exceed those entering it, according to the ISQ reference scenario.

Accordingly, immigrants will take jobs left vacant because of retirement as well as other jobs, which, generated by economic growth, could not have been filled given the insufficient size of the available manpower.

To a large extent, the economic contribution that immigration makes is linked to the ability of immigrants to integrate the labour market and the pace at which such integration occurs. Recent newcomers to Québec often come up against difficulties in this respect.

Such difficulties are, furthermore, exacerbated by less favourable economic conditions, as was the case during the economic crisis in 2008-2009.

However, while immigrants have been harder hit by the economic downturn they have also benefited more extensively from the upturn. Accordingly, while the overall unemployment rate in Québec fell by 0.5 percentage point in 2010 to 8% (compared with 8.5% in 2009), the unemployment rate among immigrants declined during the same period by 1.2 percentage points, from 13.7% in 2009 to 12.5% in 2010. Furthermore, immigrants occupied over 50% of all of the jobs created in 2010.

The vitality of the French language

French constitutes a fundamental dimension of Québec's identity and a knowledge of this language strongly contributes to the integration of newcomers.

Data from the 2006 Census reveal that:

- in 2006, 78% of immigrants knew French, compared with 76% in 2001 and 71% in 1991;
- 75% of immigrants whose mother tongue is neither French nor English said that they knew French, compared with 67% who said that they knew English.

The increase in overall admissions and the growing proportion of selected immigrants have significantly increased the proportion of individuals who say

that they know French when they arrive in Québec, i.e. 65% in 2010,³ as against just over 37% in 1991.

Aside from the identity issue associated to the knowledge of French, it should be noted that such knowledge promotes integration into the labour market, participation in community life and the development of a feeling of belonging in Québec. In addition, immigrants who know French when they arrive are more likely to remain in Québec in the long term.

However, immigration does not automatically enhance the vitality of French in Québec, above all when account is taken of the challenges that Montréal must face as the main reception region.

Moreover, while the number and proportion of immigrants who know French is increasing, the proportion of immigrants who master the language well is declining, as French is the mother tongue or the main language of instruction for fewer and fewer of them.

It has been noted, for example, that 21% of the skilled workers admitted between 2005 and 2009 who said that they knew French registered in courses offered by the MICC, as against 19% between 2000 and 2004, 11.7% between 1995 and 1999, and 4.8% between 1990 and 1994.

Greater reliance on francization services stems, by and large, from the desire of immigrants in this category, most of whom are highly educated, to improve their knowledge of French not only to foster their integration into the labour market but also to find jobs commensurate with their skills.

The main challenge facing the government is to pursue the implementation of the projects under way to francize earlier on, more extensively and better while offering diversified courses to large clientele both abroad and in Québec.

Openness to the world and its diversity

Immigration enriches Québec's artistic and cultural potential and enhances its educational level.

In particular, it has been noted that the favourable evolution of the knowledge of French among immigrants is also accompanied by a general increase in the language skills of the immigrant population. According to the 2006 Census, nearly half of immigrants (48.7%) said they were trilingual, and the proportion is

³ Preliminary figure.

even higher among their descendants (88.5%). Against a backdrop of economic globalization, the opening up of new markets is an especially apparent contribution made by immigrants.

The regionalization of immigration

In all countries that attract immigrants, metropolises draw the majority of newcomers and most of them settle there for the long term. Canada and Québec are no exception in this respect.

According to the 2001 Census, 118 095 immigrants were living outside Metropolitan Montréal,⁴ i.e. 16.7% of Québec's immigrant population overall, compared with 158 370 immigrants (18.6%) in 2006.

Attempts to regionalize immigration reflect the government's desire to promote the dynamic occupation of Québec's territory and ensure that immigration helps address the regions' needs, in particular with regard to manpower availability.

3- Policy directions submitted to the consultation

While in keeping with immigration plans adopted since the late 1990s, the policy directions pertaining to the 2012-2015 planning period hinge on a slight reduction in the volumes of immigration in relation to the record levels reached in 2010 and 2011 while optimizing the characteristics of such immigration.

Accordingly, in the skilled worker category, the proportion of immigrants with training in areas that correspond to labour market needs should be increased since the possession of such training clearly accelerates access to employment. The orientation in this respect is intended, among other things, to ensure the gradual rise of this proportion to 50%.

Knowledge of French among immigrants is an identity issue for Québec. However, such knowledge is also an asset to enable newcomers to enter the labour market and, more broadly speaking, integrate into Québec society. Furthermore, this knowledge is a decisive factor with respect to the retention of immigrants to Québec and is thus contributing to attaining the demographic objectives of the immigration policy. The policy direction in this regard is in keeping with the one adopted in the context of the last pluri-annual immigration

⁴ Metropolitan Montréal refers to Montréal Island, the agglomeration of Longueuil and Laval.

planings, which called for a majority of the immigrants admitted to Québec to know French.

Moreover, beyond the change in the number and proportion of immigrants admitted to Québec who know French, it is also important to increase the actual level of mastery of the French language, especially among immigrants in the skilled worker category.

In fact, the immigrants that Québec selects in the skilled worker category usually have a high level of training and thus wish to find in Québec employment commensurate to this level. Access to such jobs, which allows immigrants not only to achieve their aspirations but also enables Québec to take full advantage of the potential underlying the selection at the outset, demands a mastery of French that is appreciably greater than what is required to interact in everyday life.

Settlement in Québec by relatively young people is likely to broaden immigration's contribution to meeting the demographic and economic challenges that Québec society is facing. Younger immigrants are slowing, even marginally, the ageing trend in the population and are mitigating the impact of this trend, in particular because young adults are more likely to increase the birth rate. In the same way, the duration of their contribution to economic life is longer thus responding, in particular, to labour market needs. One policy direction therefore seeks to maintain at between 65% and 75% the annual proportion of immigrants under 35 years of age in admissions overall.

Québec's immigration policy seeks, in particular, to ensure that immigration enriches Québec's sociocultural heritage. The attainment of this objective hinges on the maintenance of a certain level of diversity in the migratory flow that Québec admits. For this reason, the annual immigration plan that is tabled in the National Assembly includes targets concerning the breakdown by major geographic area of the admissions anticipated for the year in question. One policy direction thus seeks to ensure that the proportion of admissions from each of the major areas is gradually re-balanced during the period 2012-2015 such that at the conclusion of the period no area exceeds 30%.

In addition, immigrants in the economic immigration category display a profile that is more favourable to rapid integration into the labour market, in particular as regards training and language skills. It is, therefore, desirable to maintain the

high proportion of economic immigrants among the immigrants overall admitted to Québec. However, a relative reduction in the total number of admissions can only generate a concomitant reduction in the proportion of economic immigrants in admissions overall. One policy direction therefore seeks to maintain this proportion at at least 65% during the period 2012-2015.

It seems desirable to achieve relative stability in the volume of admissions during the same period. One policy direction seeks, consequently, to establish at 50 000 the average annual number of admissions at the end of the period in 2015.

In accordance with section 3.0.0.1 of the *Act respecting immigration to Québec*, the Québec government is thus submitting to the consultation in respect of immigration planning for the period 2012-2015 the following policy directions:

- gradually raise to 50% the proportion of principal applicants in the skilled worker category with training in areas that correspond to labour market needs;
- maintain a majority of individuals who know French in overall admissions;
- raise the level of knowledge of French among applicants in the skilled worker category;
- maintain annually between 65% and 75% the proportion of individuals under 35 years of age among overall admissions;
- gradually re-balance the proportion of immigrants from each of the major geographic areas such that by 2015 the proportion for each area is limited to a maximum of 30%;
- maintain annually at a minimum of 65% the proportion of economic immigrants in overall admissions;
- seek relative stabilization in the number of admissions during the period 2012-2015 such that, at the end of the period in 2015, the average annual number of admissions stands at 50 000.

Conclusion

The following table presents foreseeable trends in immigration that should stem during the period 2012-2015 from the implementation of the policy directions described earlier. It should be noted that the structuring impact of the policy

directions on admissions and the composition of the immigrants admitted will gradually become apparent during the period.

The public consultation on immigration planning in Québec for the period 2012-2015 will take place in the spring of 2011. The policy directions submitted in this document will then be examined by a parliamentary committee.

At the conclusion of the consultation and bearing in mind all of the viewpoints expressed during the consultation, the government will adopt the policy directions governing immigration planning in Québec for the period 2012-2015.

The Minister will subsequently table in the National Assembly in respect of each year an annual immigration plan that updates the anticipated number of immigrants by taking into consideration, in particular, the number of selections planned and carried out, and changes in certain factors that can influence Québec's capacity to welcome and integrate immigrants.

Number of projected admissions, 2012-2015^a

| | 2012 | | 2013 | | 2014 | | 2015 | |
|---------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| | Min. | Max. | Min. | Max. | Min. | Max. | Min. | Max. |
| Economic immigration | 34 300 | 36 100 | 33 800 | 35 600 | 33 200 | 35 000 | 32 300 | 34 100 |
| Skilled workers | 31 000 | 32 400 | 30 400 | 31 800 | 29 700 | 31 100 | 28 700 | 30 100 |
| Business people | 2 300 | 2 600 | 2 400 | 2 700 | 2 500 | 2 800 | 2 600 | 2 900 |
| Other economic categories ¹ | 1 000 | 1 100 | 1 000 | 1 100 | 1 000 | 1 100 | 1 000 | 1 100 |
| Family reunification | 10 700 | 11 200 | 10 800 | 11 300 | 10 900 | 11 400 | 11 000 | 11 500 |
| Refugees and persons in similar situations | 4 700 | 5 200 |
| Refugees selected abroad ² | 2 300 | 2 600 | 2 300 | 2 600 | 2 300 | 2 600 | 2 300 | 2 600 |
| Refugees recognized locally ³ | 2 400 | 2 600 | 2 400 | 2 600 | 2 400 | 2 600 | 2 400 | 2 600 |
| Other immigrants⁴ | 1 800 | 2 000 | 1 200 | 1 400 | 700 | 900 | 500 | 700 |
| Immigration overall | 51 500 | 54 500 | 50 500 | 53 500 | 49 500 | 52 500 | 48 500 | 51 500 |
| Share of Québec's selection ⁵ | 75% | 75% | 74% | 74% | 73% | 73% | 72% | 73% |
| Share of economic immigration | 67% | 66% | 67% | 67% | 67% | 67% | 67% | 66% |
| Proportion of immigrants who know French | 64% | 62% | 63% | 61% | 62% | 61% | 61% | 60% |

a. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest hundred. Consequently, the totals may not correspond exactly to the sum of the components.

1. Includes live-in caregivers and other categories of economic immigrants.

2. Includes, in particular, government-assisted refugees and sponsored refugees.

3. Includes their dependants abroad.

4. Includes various specific categories of immigrant admitted for humanitarian reasons or in the public interest.

5. Economic immigration, refugees selected abroad and other immigrants.

Source: Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles, Direction de la recherche et de l'analyse prospective.