

Towards a New Québec Policy on Immigration, Diversity and Inclusion

SUMMARY

This summary document was developed to support the public consultation aimed at providing Québec with a new policy on immigration, diversity and inclusion.

It presents the vision, guiding principles and strategic choices that, once adopted, will become the foundation for Québec's new policy.

This process is more than a public consultation. What is proposed is a concerted effort aimed at mobilizing Québec society. It propounds the following objectives in particular:

- foster a better understanding of current issues regarding immigration, diversity and inclusion as well as the basic tenets of Québec's interculturalism model;
- engage partners and stakeholders in building an intercultural, plural and inclusive Québec;
- identify objectives and effective courses of action.

This summary document and all other documents prepared for the public consultation are available on the National Assembly website: www.assnat.qc.ca/en/index.html.

The preparation of the Consultation paper and its summary are in keeping with the principles of gender-based analysis, sustainable development and the occupancy and vitality of territories. These principles, represented by the symbols below, will guide actions resulting from the public consultation.



Gender-based analysis



Sustainable development



Occupancy and vitality of territories

This document was prepared by the Direction générale de l'énoncé de politique of the ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion.

For more information, please contact:

Direction des affaires publiques et des communications
Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion
Édifice Gérald-Godin
360 McGill Street, Suite 2.09
Montréal, Québec H2Y 2E9

Montréal area: 514 864-9191
Elsewhere in Québec: 1 877 864-9191



TTY for the hearing impaired
Montréal area: 514 864-8158
Elsewhere in Québec: 1 866 227-5968

The French version is available under the title *Vers une nouvelle politique québécoise en matière d'immigration, de diversité et d'inclusion – Synthèse*.

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AN INTERCULTURAL, PLURAL AND INCLUSIVE QUÉBEC

For almost 25 years, Québec has relied on *Let's Build Québec Together* policy statement as a basis for its immigration and integration courses of action. The signing in 1991 of the *Canada-Québec Accord Relating to Immigration and Temporary Admission of Aliens* consolidated and expanded Québec's powers in three key areas: immigration planning; exclusive selection of immigrants to Québec, except those sponsored under the family reunification category or who obtain refugee status on-site; control over immigrant reception services and linguistic, cultural and economic integration for permanent residents in Québec.

During the following years, Québec structured its interventions through a number of strategies based on the fundamentals of the *Let's Build Québec Together* policy statement. The pluri-annual planning exercises completed since 1990 have been guided by the will stated in the policy to link immigration to four major challenges: demographic recovery, economic prosperity, enduring vitality of the French language and openness to the world.

Québec has demonstrated openness, sensitivity, forcefulness and originality in seizing the opportunities provided by its ethnocultural diversity. It has gradually built a model of Québec interculturalism, striving to find a balance between, on the one hand, the continuity of a collective identity intrinsically linked with Québec's history and its distinct and Francophone character and, on the other hand, openness to mutual and collective enrichment through the recognition of diversity and the promotion of intercultural dialogue and rapprochement.

Although many previous findings remain relevant, some issues have changed considerably. Moreover, in spite of the significant progress made since 1990, efforts over the past few years have not yielded the results expected and new phenomena have emerged.

The new policy being proposed and submitted to public consultation conveys a vision of a unifying collective project for all of society. The consultation paper aims to foster a better understanding of the basic tenets of Québec interculturalism and of current issues regarding immigration, diversity and inclusion. It also aims to engage the public, partners and stakeholders in building an intercultural, plural and inclusive Québec.

The public consultation is therefore an opportunity for a concerted mobilization to bring immigration more in line with the societal choices of Québec. The purpose of the consultation is to find solutions to barriers to the participation and integration of immigrants and ethnocultural minorities. It also intends to address the concerns expressed by a segment of the population with regard to immigration, and that are being fuelled by a fear of seeing the national identity and common values compromised by the growing ethnocultural diversity.

This new Québec policy will later update the basic principles guiding the pluri-annual immigration planning to begin in 2016.

The new policy on immigration, diversity and inclusion

The new policy proposes a vision, guiding principles and strategic choices that will orient Québec's actions with regard to immigration, diversity and inclusion. It rests on the key tenets of Québec interculturalism, which are:

- The Québec identity, plural and dynamic, enriched by the contribution of people of all origins, yet deeply committed to preserving its distinct and Francophone character and the historical contribution made by the Native peoples and the Québec English-speaking community;

- The French language, official language of Québec and common language of public space in Québec society;
- Openness to multiple contributions, where the diversity and plural affiliations of the population — freely and openly manifested in public life — are recognized and valued;
- Fair access for all citizens to resources, services, institutions and public spaces without discrimination;
- Active participation in society, which is expected and encouraged;
- Intercultural rapprochement, where positive encounters between people of all origins foster harmonious civic relations and new bonds of solidarity while contributing to prevent prejudice, intimidation and discrimination;
- An approach to the integration of immigrants that rests on reciprocity and the sharing of the common values of Québec society;
- Mediation and mutual adjustment with due respect for the fundamental principles of Québec society.

The first part of the Consultation paper explains the foundations of Québec's proposed new policy. The collective choices made to build a pluralistic, free and democratic society are set out as a reminder. They are:

Québec, a pluralistic, free and democratic society that:

- is determined to assert its distinct and Francophone character in North America and to preserve the established rights of the Native peoples and of the Québec English-speaking community;
- is deeply committed to human rights;
- is relying on all Quebecers to contribute to its democratic, economic and cultural vitality;
- perceives its diversity as an asset and is relying on immigration's essential role in fostering its development.

The Vision

The proposed policy examines what stands in the way of societal choices and looks to the future to realize the following vision:

Québec, a Francophone inclusive society, proud of its diversity, that aspires to greater social cohesion through the participation of all Quebecers in collective life and that perceives immigration as an asset essential to its development.

It is through the participation of the entire population, in all of its diversity and with due respect for the fundamental principles of Québec society, that the bonds of solidarity that unite Quebecers will be strengthened and lead to greater social cohesion.

Guiding principles

The policy is based on six guiding principles. The first three are ethical norms: recognition, fairness and shared commitment. The other three are governance principles. They are: access to knowledge, subsidiarity and efficiency. They help bring about the vision by ensuring the coherence of the strategic choices implemented. In other words, they provide a framework for analyzing and interpreting the public engagement.

Challenges and strategic choices

The proposed policy adopts a comprehensive approach structured by three key challenges that Québec faces in implementing the proposed vision. For each challenge, strategic choices have been made to determine actions likely to adequately address the concerns raised.

First challenge – An inclusive society that allows for full participation through collective and individual commitment

This first challenge refers to the principle of shared commitment, where integration, participation and inclusion are the responsibility of both the individuals actively involved in Québec society through successful participation, and society as a whole, which recognizes and values the contribution of everyone.

As a plural society, Québec must be inclusive. It must ensure that no one is pushed aside because of ethnocultural differences—whether real or alleged—by allowing for the full participation of people of all origins within the guidelines imposed by the common public culture. Societies that do not concern themselves with inclusion foster marginalization and identitarian closure, fertile ground for social tensions.

Second challenge – Immigration that reflects societal choices

This second challenge proposes to modernize and improve practices to bring immigration more in line with Québec's needs, i.e. the vitality of the French language, prosperity and diversity, and ensure that it contributes significantly to the vitality of the regions. A better match between societal choices and the profiles of the immigrants admitted would prevent important losses, both for the people themselves, who may experience integration difficulties, and for society, which is deprived of their contribution, given that the participation of each individual is an important factor for economic, social and cultural development.

Quebec must also continue to see to family reunification and pursue its contribution to international solidarity by welcoming people fleeing war and threats and by addressing other humanitarian situations.

Third challenge – Responsible, coherent, effective governance

This third challenge calls for mobilization by building on the contribution and coordination of all stakeholders based on a mainstreaming approach. It also aims to establish a management framework providing relevant, effective and efficient leverage to achieve the objectives set by the policy. If a policy is not based on a coordinated overall effort, it runs the risk of being unable to put words into action and effectively realize its vision.



Overall, 10 strategic choices are proposed and 30 points for consideration are set out in order to further the analysis and put forward potential action strategies likely to foster the full participation, in French, of people of all origins towards the economic, social and cultural development of Québec society and in building an open society, proudly sharing an identity based on common language and values as well as a specific historical journey.

AN INTERCULTURAL, PLURAL AND INCLUSIVE QUÉBEC

Towards a New Québec Policy on Immigration, Diversity and Inclusion

Québec is a pluralistic, free and democratic society that:

- is determined to assert its distinct and Francophone character in North America and to preserve the established rights of the Native peoples and the Québec English-speaking community;
- is deeply committed to human rights;
- is relying on all Quebecers to contribute to its democratic, economic and cultural vitality;
- perceives its diversity as an asset and is relying on immigration's essential role in fostering its development.

However, it remains that:

- the ability to act of immigrants and ethnocultural minorities is facing systemic obstacles, thereby jeopardizing the fundamental principles, vitality and prosperity of Québec society;
- concerns are being voiced within society regarding ethnocultural differences;
- some segments of society are calling into question the volume and composition of immigration;
- current practices and legislation governing immigration, both outdated, limit the optimum balance between the profile of immigrants and Québec's needs.

VISION

Québec, a Francophone inclusive society, proud of its diversity, that aspires to greater social cohesion through the participation of all Quebecers in collective life and that perceives immigration as an asset essential to its development.

PRINCIPLES

Normative

Recognition
Fairness
Shared commitment

Governance

Access to knowledge
Subsidiarity
Efficiency

STRATEGIC CHOICES

FIRST CHALLENGE AN INCLUSIVE SOCIETY THAT ALLOWS FOR FULL PARTICIPATION THROUGH COLLECTIVE AND INDIVIDUAL COMMITMENT	1.1 Recognized diversity and open, active intercultural exchanges
	1.2 Inclusive institutions and communities
	1.3 Individuals actively involved in Québec society through successful participation
	1.4 A society that is free of prejudice, discrimination, intimidation and racism
SECOND CHALLENGE IMMIGRATION THAT REFLECTS SOCIETAL CHOICES	2.1 A competitive immigration system that makes it possible to attract, select and promote the long-term settlement of strategic talents that contribute to the vitality of the French language, prosperity and diversity
	2.2 An attachment to the principle of family reunification and a will to share with the international community the reception of refugees and to respond to other humanitarian situations
	2.3 An efficient immigration system that values the autonomy of individuals in the immigration process
	2.4 A significant contribution to the vitality of the regions
THIRD CHALLENGE RESPONSIBLE, COHERENT, EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE	3.1 A concerted commitment from all government departments, bodies and partners in various living environments and a mainstreaming approach to diversity in their action strategies
	3.2 Rigorously, responsibly implemented initiatives in a perspective of efficiency and ongoing evaluation to ensure their relevance

