



**QUÉBEC POLICIES AND PROGRAMS  
ON IMMIGRATION, INTEGRATION  
AND INTERCULTURAL RELATIONS**

**Notes for a presentation in the plenary session  
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## **OVERVIEW OF IMMIGRATION IN CANADA AND QUÉBEC**

### **1. Overview of immigration in Canada**

- In 2001, 5.4 million people, or 18.4% of the population, were born outside Canada. In comparison, 11% of the U.S. population was foreign-born as of 2000.
- Origins of recent immigrants to Canada (1991 to 2001): Asia (58%), Europe (19%), the Americas (14%), Africa (8%), Oceania (1%)
- Top ten countries of origin of recent immigrants: China (10.8%), India (8.5%), Philippines (6.7%), Hong Kong (6.5%), Sri Lanka (3.4%), Pakistan, Taiwan, U.S., Iran, Poland
- Canada received 221,400 new immigrants in 2003.
- The number of people belonging to visible minority groups in Canada increased from 1.1 million in 1981 to nearly 4 million in 2001.

## 2. Overview of immigration in Québec

- In 2001, 9.9% of the population of Québec was born abroad.
- Origins of recent immigrants to Québec (1993 to 2002): Asia (39%), Europe (25%), Africa (19%), the Americas (16%), Oceania (0.2%).
- Top ten countries of origin of recent immigrants: France (8.3%), China (7.2%), Algeria (5.5%), Haiti (5.4%), Morocco (4.9%), Romania, India, Lebanon, Hong Kong, Sri Lanka.
- Immigrants by category (1993 to 2002):
  - Family class: 30%
  - Economic class: 49%
  - Refugee class: 21%
- The number of new immigrants to Québec increased from 29,200 in 1999 to 44,200 in 2004.
- The number of people belonging to visible minority groups in Québec was 498,000 in 2001, or 7% of the total population.

## QUEBEC IMMIGRATION POLICY

### 3. Immigration issues in Québec

The main issues related to immigration and immigrant integration in Québec are the following:

- The first issue involves **demographics**. Québec wishes to minimize the impact of its aging population.
- The second issue is **linguistic** in nature. Québec wants to ensure the survival of the French language in the North American sea of English speakers.
- A third issue involves **economic development**. For Québec, like most industrialized countries, the immigration of specialized and qualified workers has become vitally important to ensuring the competitiveness of business and development of the economy.
- A fourth issue involves **social cohesion**. Québec must encourage new arrivals to take an active part in the promotion of the common good, while allowing them to maintain their cultural, social, and moral distinctiveness.

#### **4. Canada-Québec Accord Relating to Immigration**

- Under the Canadian constitution, immigration is an area of shared jurisdiction between the federal and provincial governments.
- The Canada-Québec Accord Relating to Immigration is the most detailed and far ranging of all immigration agreements currently in effect Canada.
- Main federal responsibilities under the Accord:
  - Monitoring the admission and presence of foreign nationals: health, criminality, and national security controls;
  - Recognition of refugee status (applications for asylum in Canada);
  - Acceptance of family-class applicants;
  - Granting of Canadian citizenship.
- Main responsibilities of Québec under the Accord:
  - Selection of immigrants in the “independent” category, i.e., laborers and business people, as well as refugees living abroad;
  - Reception services and linguistic, cultural, and economic integration of new arrivals.

## 5. Québec immigration policy

Québec immigration policy has a number of components, including:

- **The policy statement “Au Québec pour bâtir ensemble”** (1990), which includes two main orientations:
  - Immigration contributing to the development of an economically prosperous French-speaking society;
  - Successful integration of immigrants based on the promotion of harmonious cultural relations and encouraging new arrivals to learn and use the French language and play an active role in society.
  
- The **Act respecting Immigration to Québec** sets out Québec’s objectives in terms of the selection of foreign nationals, including the enrichment of its sociocultural heritage, the stimulation of its economic development, the pursuit of its demographic objectives, the reuniting of families, and the welcoming of refugees and temporary residents. This act also establishes an integration program to help them begin life in Québec and learn the French language.
  
- Lastly, **the Government of Québec’s three-year plan for immigration** sets out the following orientations for the 2005–2007 period: Continue raising immigration volumes to 48,000 admissions in 2007; increase the number of active young people, young families, and selected workers admitted; and maintain the proportion of French-speaking immigrants at no less than 50%.

## 6. Integration services

- **Immigration offices** have been set up in the main settlement areas in Québec.
- Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles provides a number of **arrival and settlement services**:
  - Greeting at the airport
  - Meetings or information session on the first steps to getting settled
  - Information, advice, and references for job search, schooling, and professional training purposes
  - Information sessions on the socioeconomic environment and the job market
  - Comparative analysis of education credentials earned outside Québec
  - Full or part time French courses (in various settings)
  - Support services for business people
  - Information on regulated professions
- **Community organizations** contribute with front line services (e.g., finding housing and jobs)
- Close collaboration has also been established with the **education community** and **professional corporations** in order to facilitate recognition of training and access to skills upgrading



## 7. Recent developments

- In May 2004, the Government of Québec launched a comprehensive **action plan on immigration, integration, and intercultural relations**.
- The plan set out 38 new measures aimed at
  - Making immigration more attuned to Québec's needs and values
  - Promoting rapid, lasting job integration
  - Improving the French language training available
  - Fostering greater openness to diversity
  - Engaging all regions of Québec
- For example, one measure consists of developing and distributing a new personalized tool called the “roadmap,” which will enable immigration candidates to start preparing for integration into Québec society as soon as they are accepted abroad.
- This tool, which will be distributed as a leaflet and made available online, will draw on the sense of responsibility and the initiative of the main artisans of the immigration process—the immigrants themselves.

## INTERCULTURAL RELATIONS IN QUÉBEC

### 8. Cultural communities from the countries of the Americas

Québec's main cultural communities from the Americas are the following:<sup>1</sup>

- The **Haitian community** (approximately 75,000 members)
- The **American community** (approximately 26,000 members)
- The **Jamaican community** (approximately 11,000 members)
- The **Chilean community** (approximately 10,000 members)
- The **El Salvadorian community** (approximately 9,000 members)
- The **Mexican community** (approximately 7,000 members)
- The **Colombian community** (approximately 5,000 members)
- The **Argentinean community** (approximately 2,500 members)
- The **Brazilian community** (approximately 2,000 members)

These communities all have associations in the greater Montréal area. Many organizations are active in a variety of spheres, including social action, business, culture, religion, the media, international cooperation, immigrant integration, and support for women in need.

Québec's Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles offers these communities personalized support through its cultural community liaison office.

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<sup>1</sup> Data from the 2001 census. This data also shows that over 25,000 Québec residents were born in the U.S.

## 9. Equality and nondiscrimination laws

- The **Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms** guarantees all citizens equality before the law without discrimination in any form, notably discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability (section 15).
- The **Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms** further guarantees protection for all citizens against various forms of discrimination, including discriminatory clauses in judicial acts, restricted access to public places, and discriminatory practices in employment (sections 10 to 19). **Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse** is responsible for upholding the principles set out in the Charter.
- The charters authorize the creation of **equal access programs** to remedy issues facing members of underprivileged groups, particularly with regard to discrimination.
- The **Act respecting equal access to employment in public bodies** establishes a special framework to provide equal access in all Québec public organizations employing 100 people or more, including public and municipal bodies, education organizations, and organizations in the health and social services sector. The objective of the Act is to increase the representation of groups facing discrimination in these organizations.
- Québec has also adopted a number of other laws that promote equality, such as the **Pay Equity Act** and the **Act respecting labor Standards**.

## 10. Government of Québec's activities in intercultural relations

- In terms of intercultural relations, the Government of Québec endeavors notably to
  - Promote an understanding of and respect for human rights and freedoms
  - Foster equality between people and their participation in community life and the development of society
  - Facilitate dialog and exchange between Quebecers to promote openness to pluralism and intercultural harmony
  
- To achieve these objectives, Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles has developed a number of measures, services, and activities, such as the **civic and intercultural relations support program**, the **employer hotline for intercultural relations**, the **Québec citizenship awards**, and the **women immigrant and entrepreneur awards**. The department also supports **Québec Intercultural Week** and **Action Week Against Racism**.
  
- Québec has also set up a **program to promote hiring of members of cultural, native, and English-speaking communities** in the Québec public service, as well as a **contract compliance program** for companies receiving \$100,000 or more in government contracts or subsidies. One of the objectives of the compliance program is to ensure fair representation of women, visible minorities, and natives in these companies.

## 11. Employment equity results

- Over the past years, Québec has made great strides toward employment equity.
- Employment rates among immigrants and visible minority groups increased significantly between the last two census years (1996 and 2001).<sup>2</sup>
- Employment among immigrants climbed from 48.5% to 52.7% between 1996 and 2001, while unemployment fell from 16.4% to 11.7%.
- The improvement was even more pronounced among visible minorities, employment rising from 45.9% to 53.6% between 1996 and 2001 and unemployment falling from 22.4% to 15.4%.
- The makeup of the Government of Québec is also beginning to reflect more diversity. The most recent data point to a rise in government hiring from among minority groups.

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<sup>2</sup> The extent to which this improvement has continued will be apparent from the 2006 census.

## 12. Recent developments

The **Action Plan on Immigration, Integration, and Cultural Relations** launched in May 2004 by the Government of Québec sets out a number of new measures to promote intercultural harmony and fight discrimination. Most of these measures began to be put into place in the second half of 2004.

The most significant measures in the action plan are the following:

- Designate, within MRCI, an agent acting as liaison between each cultural community and the government
- Support undertakings in civic and intercultural relations
- Create a center of expertise in intercultural relations
- Increase the employment representation of Quebecers from cultural communities
- Reach out to immigrant women and women from cultural communities who live in isolation
- Prevent conjugal violence and sexual assault of immigrants and members of cultural communities
- Promote intercultural learning among youths in schools
- Promote the contribution of immigrant and cultural communities
- Raise awareness among landlord associations
- Prevent racial profiling

## **CONCLUSION**

Québec society is open to immigration, and its residents are ever more diversified in their beliefs, lifestyles, and origins.

The challenge facing multicultural societies is essentially a collective one: ensure harmony by promoting acceptance of the values and practices that unite all of their members while respecting personal, cultural, and religious differences.

Québec's policies in immigration, integration, and intercultural relations aim to foster this harmony and respect. Its action plan on the issue, entitled "Des valeurs partagées, des intérêts communs," is already beginning to yield encouraging results. In the Government of Québec itself, diversity has increased significantly in the last year, which bodes well for the future.