



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

IMMIGRATION AS A TOOL FOR ENHANCING THE VITALITY AND SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF FRANCOPHONE MINORITY COMMUNITIES

Report of the Standing Committee on Official Languages

**Hon. Michael D. Chong
Chair**

JUNE 2015

41st PARLIAMENT, SECOND SESSION

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**IMMIGRATION AS A TOOL FOR ENHANCING THE
VITALITY AND SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT
OF FRANCOPHONE MINORITY COMMUNITIES**

**Report of the Standing Committee on
Official Languages**

**Hon. Michael D. Chong
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has the honour to present its

FIFTH REPORT

Pursuant to its mandate under Standing Order 108(3)(f) the Committee has studied the Government of Canada programs designed to promote francophone immigration into Canada's official-language minority communities (OLMCs) and has agreed to report the following:

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IMMIGRATION AS A TOOL FOR ENHANCING THE VITALITY AND SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF FRANCOPHONE MINORITY COMMUNITIES

1. Introduction

On 24 February 2015 the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages (“the Committee”) undertook a study of the Government of Canada programs designed to promote francophone immigration into francophone minority communities (FMC).

The purpose of the study was to better understand the role francophone immigration plays in enhancing the vitality and supporting the development of FMC and to study the impact of federal programs designed to recruit, welcome and integrate francophone immigrants into FMC.

Demographic growth in FMC is crucial in many respects, particularly for community vitality, in order to build a growing economy and maintain certain rights, such as access to government services in both official languages.

Like many communities in Canada, FMC are facing rural out-migration and low birth rates and need immigrants with the necessary skills to fill available jobs and to contribute to their vitality.

The Conseil de la coopération de la Saskatchewan (CCS) said that their “net demographic situation is still worsening because there are not enough coming in.”¹ However, francophone immigration into FMC has a direct impact on the vitality of these communities. The Assemblée de la francophonie de l’Ontario (AFO) said that “our community’s survival and vitality greatly depend on the arrival of francophone immigrants.”²

The federal government set a target of having 4% of the total number of francophone economic immigrants settling outside Quebec by 2018.

1 House of Commons, Standing Committee on Official Languages [LANG], *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 12 March 2015, 1620 (Robert Therrien, Executive Director, Conseil de la coopération de la Saskatchewan).

2 LANG, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 24 March 2015, 1540 (Peter Hominuk, Assemblée de la francophonie de l’Ontario).

2. Immigration as a source of vitality for francophone minority communities

According to Gilles LeVasseur, Professor at the Telfer School of Management, University of Ottawa, Canada's linguistic duality is based in part on "demographic growth that allows for a balance between Canada's two main linguistic communities."³ Increasing the demographic weight of FMC and striking a balance between the linguistic groups are key aspects of FMC immigration strategies.

Canada's linguistic duality is based on various principles, including promoting the economic aspect of official languages. As Gilles LeVasseur explained, this principle enables "Canadians and newcomers to fully identify with linguistic duality and to develop positive identity reactions toward both official-language communities."⁴

3. Managing immigration

3.1. Government of Canada programs

In the spring of 2013, the Government of Canada launched its *Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages 2013-2018: Education, Immigration, Communities*.⁵ As its name suggests, immigration is one of the three key official languages priorities over the next five years. The Government of Canada pledged to provide \$149.5 million to fund two immigration-related program activities: language training for economic immigrants, and the Settlement and Integration of Newcomers program.

Under the Roadmap 2013-2018, the language training program has been allocated a total of \$120,000,000. During the first year of the Roadmap (2013-2014), "in provinces and territories where CIC [Citizenship and Immigration Canada] manages settlement services, 29,208 economic immigrants (unique clients) were enrolled in Language Training...."⁶ That represents an investment of \$24,000,000.⁷

Access to language training is important for integrating immigrants and for fostering their full participation in Canadian society. Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) funds the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) Program and the *Cours de langue pour les immigrants* (CLIC) out of its regular programs. These are free basic English- and French-language courses for permanent residents.

3 LANG, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 12 March 2015, 1540 (Gilles LeVasseur, Professor, Telfer School of Management, University of Ottawa, as an Individual).

4 Ibid.

5 Government of Canada, *Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages 2013-2018: Education, Immigration, Communities*, Ottawa, April 2013.

6 Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, *Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages 2013-18: Plans, Spending and Results*.

7 Ibid.

3.1.1. Newcomers Settlement and Integration program

The Roadmap 2013-2018 allocates \$29,398,470⁸ for settling and integrating immigrants into official language minority communities (OLMC). In June 2013 the Hon. Jason Kenney said:

In fact, since 2006 our government has tripled settlement funding from about \$200 million a year outside of Quebec, to \$600 million this year. Quebec's funding is based on its own separate formula.

In recent years, we have significantly increased the number of settlement services in francophone minority communities. Between 2009 and 2012, we increased the number of points of service for French-speaking newcomers across Canada by almost 70%, from just over 100 to about 170. These are now located in 24 cities across Canada, outside Quebec.⁹

During his appearance before the Committee in connection with this study, CIC Minister Chris Alexander also referred to the Roadmap 2013-2018:

In 2013, we unveiled a new roadmap for official languages, which identified immigration as one of three pillars to ensure the future vitality of Canada's official languages. Under the roadmap, the government will invest nearly \$150 million in official language initiatives related to immigration over the next five years. One important focus is promoting the benefits of fluency in Canada's official languages and investing in language training for newcomers settling in official language minority communities.¹⁰

Despite the fact that francophone immigration targets have not yet been met, Minister Alexander pointed out that CIC is currently providing the necessary tools: "We now have the tools to achieve this: Express Entry, francophone immigration networks, a strategy under our Roadmap, as well as political will, which is perhaps the most important factor. Since 2006, we have been surpassing previous results and we will continue to do so."¹¹

8 Ibid.

9 LANG, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 41st Parliament, 13 June 2013, 1540 (Jason Kenney, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism).

10 LANG, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 31 March 2015, 1535 (Chris Alexander, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Canada).

11 LANG, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 31 March 2015, 1605 (Chris Alexander, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Canada).

3.1.2. Express Entry Program

On 1 January 2015, CIC launched the Express Entry system to recruit economic immigrants. Minister Alexander described the new system for managing applications for permanent residence in the various economic integration programs as being able “to contribute to the economic vitality of francophone minority communities outside Quebec.”¹²

The Minister also said that Express Entry is a system designed to help achieve targets for francophone immigration into FMC thanks to its various benefits: “It’s faster and it’s on line. That is one way to recruit people.”¹³

According to Minister Alexander, the Express Entry system is remarkably efficient. It can process applications in under six months, and some candidates who applied in early February 2015 have already received visas.¹⁴ However, several witnesses said that it is still too early to tell what the system’s benefits are in terms of francophone immigration since it is a new program.

That said, several other witnesses believe that the system will foster francophone immigration into FMC only if the federal government includes measures specifically targeting francophones. That is why the Fédération des francophones de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador (FFTNL) suggested “that the government integrate a francophone lens into the express entry system to help us at least partially compensate for a disadvantage in attracting newcomers.”¹⁵ Given the greater difficulties with francophone immigration, the Conseil économique du Nouveau-Brunswick (CENB) said that “special steps must be taken to facilitate, encourage and stimulate francophone immigration.”¹⁶

That is why the City Manager for the City of Moncton said that “[i]n regard to the Express Entry system, it would be advantageous if additional points were given to francophone immigrants who wish to immigrate to minority language communities in Canada.”¹⁷ Similarly, the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne (FCFA) said they would like “a significant number of additional points to be given to francophones who settle in a community”¹⁸ under the Express Entry system.

12 LANG, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 31 March 2015, 1540 (Chris Alexander, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Canada).

13 LANG, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 31 March 2015, 1555 (Chris Alexander, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Canada).

14 Ibid.

15 LANG, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 24 March 2015, 1540 (Gaël Corbineau, Director General, Fédération des francophones de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador).

16 LANG, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 24 March 2015, 1530 (Anne Hébert, Director General, Conseil économique du Nouveau-Brunswick).

17 LANG, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 26 March 2015, 1600 (Jacques Dubé, City Manager, City of Moncton).

18 LANG, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 26 March 2015, 1650 (Marie-France Kenny, President, Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada).

Witnesses also raised concerns about how much importance the system places on knowledge of the French language. The system works as follows: a profile is created in the Express Entry system and applicants are placed in a pool. Individuals are ranked based on a point system that considers language skills, education, job skills and age. Then invitations to apply for permanent resident status are sent to candidates with the highest number of points.¹⁹ Candidates are given a score out of 1,200 points.²⁰ Candidates proficient in their first official language may be awarded up to 136 points and “[p]eople who know the second language, either English or French, can get another 24 points.”²¹

The Minister of CIC provided data on francophones who qualified under the Express Entry system. The first pool of Express Entry system candidates included 22,398 individuals. Of those, 200 passed a French-language test. Francophones made up 2.5% of the second pool. According to the Minister, the second round included more francophones because:

[t]he first rounds mainly invited those who already had labour market assessments, who were working mainly out west and were transitioning from temporary worker status to permanent resident status. For the last round, it was 2.5%, which did not include the people who had labour market assessments. It’s a good number and we plan to keep it up.²²

Despite that, it was pointed out that identifying francophones in the Express Entry system is a problem and that CIC is working to address it. The Minister said the following:

I must also admit, ladies and gentlemen, that we are not satisfied with our immigration system’s capacity to determine the French-language skills of newcomers who complete their applications in English. Bilingual people do not always report their language abilities. We invite them and encourage them to do so, but not all of them do it.

The number of francophones arriving in Canada could be higher than we realize. We are going to do what it takes to find out the proficiency of all of our newcomers in both official languages so that we know where we stand in terms of reaching our goal of 4% for French-speaking economic immigrants by 2018.²³

19 LANG, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 31 March 2015, 1555 (Chris Alexander, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Canada).

20 Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Entry criteria and the Comprehensive Ranking System.

21 LANG, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 31 March 2015, 1600 (Chris Alexander, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Canada).

22 LANG, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 31 March 2015, 1620 (Chris Alexander, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Canada).

23 LANG, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 31 March 2015, 1535 (Chris Alexander, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Canada).

3.1.3. The Destination Canada Program

Destination Canada is an international job fair organized by CIC in order to connect prospective francophone immigrants with employers and other representatives from the various FMC.

In 2012, the Government of Canada eliminated travel grants for provincial, municipal and non-governmental organizations. According to Minister Kenney, this was a reduction of about \$400,000.

3.2. The need for a collaborative (federal, provincial/territorial, municipal and community) strategy

The FCFA said that if they were to make only one suggestion to the federal government, it would be to implement a strategic plan for francophone immigration to Canada:

In terms of immigration, as we have said, we need a coordinated strategy, a federal strategy developed in consultation with the communities, municipalities and provinces. We think all stakeholders need to participate, but we don't need a Band-Aid here and a Band-Aid there to cover up any cuts or scrapes. We really need a strategy, but it has to be coordinated.²⁴

Professor LeVasseur made the following comments:

[T]he different levels of government need to integrate immigration policies and methods to better support and integrate newcomers in official-language minority communities. Once newcomers have been selected, the Government of Canada must work with the provinces so that newcomers can be integrated into official-language communities as soon as they arrive in Canada. Too often, newcomers are left on their own and have to make choices without understanding the Canadian issues and the importance of Canada's duality. The Government of Canada must help newcomers in their steps toward integrating into Canadian society.²⁵

Consequently, with respect to immigration management, the witnesses identified two priorities: developing and implementing a strategic plan for francophone immigration, and adding a francophone lens to the Express Entry system so that it can help increase the number of immigrants in FMC.

24 LANG, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 26 March 2015, 1645 (Marie-France Kenny, President, Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada).

25 LANG, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 12 March 2015, 1545 (Gilles LeVasseur, Professor, Telfer School of Management, University of Ottawa, as an Individual).

4. Recruiting francophone immigrants to francophone minority communities

4.1. Promoting francophone minority communities to prospective immigrants

Several witnesses told the Committee that one of the fundamental issues FMC are facing is the lack of visibility in Government of Canada programs. As explained by Gilles LeVasseur, “[n]ewcomers must also be made aware of official-language minority communities so that they can make language and identity choices that are in the interest of Canada’s public immigration policies.”²⁶ Failing that, the “lack of promotion of these official-language minority communities among newcomers ... develops their desire to join the majority group, mainly for economic reasons.”²⁷

Mr. LeVasseur also said that Canadian identity is sometimes complicated for newcomers to understand and they cannot be expected to understand the concept of OLMC.²⁸

As explained by the French Language Services Commissioner of Ontario, immigrants need to be made aware of the opportunity to live in French and in a bilingual environment:

... [I]t 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. We need to make the newcomers aware of those services and opportunities.²⁹

4.2. Economic prosperity: a vital prerequisite for promoting immigration

4.2.1. The role of employers

Under the current immigration system, employers play an important role in recruiting immigrants. However, as the official from the CENB explained, “[b]usinessmen have positions to fill. When they are looking for workers, they are not concerned with the relative weight of their linguistic communities. They are looking for the skills they need.”³⁰

26 LANG, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 12 March 2015, 1540 (Gilles LeVasseur, Professor, Telfer School of Management, University of Ottawa, as an Individual).

27 LANG, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 12 March 2015, 1545 (Gilles LeVasseur, Professor, Telfer School of Management, University of Ottawa, as an Individual).

28 LANG, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 12 March 2015, 1605 (Gilles LeVasseur, Professor, Telfer School of Management, University of Ottawa, as an Individual).

29 LANG, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 24 March 2015, 1550 (François Boileau, Commissioner, Office of the French Language Services Commissioner of Ontario).

30 LANG, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 24 March 2015, 1530 (Anne Hébert, Director General, Conseil économique du Nouveau-Brunswick).

According to the Réseau de développement économique et d'employabilité (RDÉE) Canada, the Express Entry system “seeks to directly connect the labour needs of Canadian employers with the selection of skilled immigrants.”³¹

The City Manager for the City of Moncton, New Brunswick, confirmed that promoting linguistic duality is a key factor in recruiting and integrating immigrants, particularly those in the economic class.³² As he explained to the Committee:

Greater Moncton has also witnessed an increase in the number of francophone immigrants. Before 2006, the percentage of all immigrants to the community with French as their mother tongue was only 9%. Between 2006 and 2011, francophone immigrants increased to 18% of the total population of immigrants.³³

Increasing employers' awareness of the economic benefits of linguistic duality seems to be a sound strategy for increasing the recruitment of French-speaking immigrants and stimulating the local economy while contributing to the vitality of Canada's linguistic duality.

4.3. Opening up and adapting the labour market to foster immigration to francophone minority communities

Like all Canadian communities, the ability of FMC to recruit immigrants depends on the local and regional economies.

If finding a good job and building a better life are the main reasons people immigrate to Canada, and if economic prosperity is an essential prerequisite to encouraging immigration, something must be done to open up the labour market to immigrants, especially francophone immigrants.

Some parts of the country are struggling more than others to employ and retain immigrants. This is particularly true of regions that are undergoing an economic slowdown or whose economy is in transition. New Brunswick, for example, is facing labour shortages in its primary and secondary sectors of forestry, agriculture, fishing and transportation.³⁴ According to the CENB, one way to promote and facilitate francophone immigration while stimulating the local or regional economy is to provide support to businesses in sectors where the need is most urgent.³⁵

31 LANG, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 26 March 2015, 1530 (Roukya Abdi Aden, Administrator, National Cooperation, Réseau de développement économique et d'employabilité Canada).

32 LANG, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 26 March 2015, 1555 (Jacques Dubé, City Manager, City of Moncton).

33 Ibid.

34 LANG, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 24 March 2015, 1530 (Anne Hébert, Director General, Conseil économique du Nouveau-Brunswick).

35 Ibid.

4.3.1. Recognizing foreign credentials

Problems with the recognition of foreign credentials are making it difficult for skilled economic immigrants to come to Canada and obtain employment right away. As the RDÉE Canada explained, this issue affects employers as well as francophone service providers who work with employers and immigrants:

Sometimes we tell the employer that we are able to find the ideal candidate, but when we start the process, we realize that the candidate, although skilled, has not yet had his or her credentials recognized. That is a major challenge for us.³⁶

Credential recognition is a multi-dimensional problem, but one issue in particular was raised during the Committee's hearings. It is the shared jurisdiction between the federal and provincial governments: the federal government is responsible for recognizing foreign credentials, while professional associations, which are under provincial jurisdiction, decide whether immigrants can exercise a regulated profession.

Committee members were informed that CIC offers "pre-arrival services abroad, which provide a type of path for each regulated profession. Newcomers who take the orientation sessions provided by Colleges and Institutes Canada through the Classification of Instructional Programs, are told what steps to follow from abroad, in the accreditation and credential recognition process. That is one of the mechanisms available."³⁷

5. Welcoming and integrating francophone immigrants into francophone minority communities

5.1 Interprovincial migration of francophone immigrants

Several witnesses spoke about the interprovincial–territorial migration of francophone immigrants. Just as the departure of students and young workers weakens FMC, the migration of francophone immigrants represents a loss for communities that depend on immigrant integration to guarantee their linguistic, cultural and economic vitality.

5.1.1. The socio-economic context: a critical factor

The interprovincial–territorial migration of francophone immigrants depends essentially on the socio-economic conditions in the region where they have settled. The regional economy is the main factor determining whether immigrants will settle for the long term or whether they will migrate to another part of the province, territory or country. It appears that a deteriorating economy and a weak job market do not encourage the retention of francophone immigrants any more than the local population.

36 LANG, Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 26 March 2015, 1530 (Roukya Abdi Aden, Administrator, National Cooperation, Réseau de développement économique et d'employabilité Canada).

37 LANG, Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 31 March 2015, 1640 (Yves Saint-Germain, Director, Language Program Policy, Planning and Accountability, Citizenship and Immigration Canada).

Some provinces that are experiencing an economic downturn are struggling to retain immigrants. In contrast, provinces with a thriving economy benefit from what they term “secondary immigration”. It is notably the case in Alberta, which has seen “an influx of secondary immigration, mostly from Quebec.”³⁸

Immigrants are mobile and can choose to migrate from one province or territory to another. However, some witnesses raised issues concerning the interprovincial–territorial migration of francophone immigrants that merit attention.

The AFO told the Committee that better support for secondary immigration is needed. Specifically, federal funding for immigrant reception and settlement services must follow immigrants to the province or territory that is their secondary destination.³⁹

5.2. Out-migration to the majority community

5.2.1. Promoting francophone minority communities to newly arrived francophone immigrants

Informing francophone immigrants of the existence of FMC and the benefits of living and working in a bilingual environment is an important part of recruiting francophone immigrants and helping them settle in minority communities. It is also a key factor in their integration into FMC. It appears that if immigrants are recruited through francophone immigration networks, they find it easier to connect with the francophone community, since they already have the information they need to register their children in a French-language school, find resources in French and access the network of minority-language institutions and associations.⁴⁰

5.2.2. Economic integration

Throughout the report, the Committee has emphasized that economic prosperity is a prerequisite to recruiting and integrating immigrants. It is therefore critical for FMC to be able to assist newcomers in their economic integration. As the CCS pointed out, economic integration takes place in two ways – by entering the labour market or by starting a business.⁴¹

38 LANG, Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 10 March 2015, 1555 (Ida Kamariza, Coordinator, Réseau en immigration francophone de l'Alberta, Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta).

39 LANG, Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 24 March 2015, 1545 (Peter Hominuk, Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario).

40 LANG, Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 24 March 2015, 1610 (Gaël Corbineau, Director General, Fédération des francophones de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador).

41 LANG, Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 12 March 2015, 1535 (Robert Therrien, Executive Director, Conseil de la coopération de la Saskatchewan).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the recruitment and integration of immigrants depends on the local economy, the capacity of settlement networks to accommodate them and the information they receive about living and working in FMC. Like the rest of Canada, francophone minority communities need immigrants in order to maintain and enhance their vitality, and it is important that the federal government and all its agencies take positive measures to achieve its target of having 4% of the total number of francophone economic immigrants settling outside Quebec by 2018.

Recommendations

That Citizenship and Immigration Canada promote the opportunity to live and work in French in francophone minority communities.

That Citizenship and Immigration Canada consider options to increase the number of francophone immigrants who settle in a francophone minority community in Canada through its Express Entry program.

APPENDIX A LIST OF WITNESSES

| Organizations and Individuals | Date | Meeting |
|---|------------|---------|
| <p>Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta Ida Kamariza, Coordinator, Réseau en immigration Francophone de l'Alberta</p> | 2015/03/10 | 40 |
| <p>Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse Marie-Claude Rioux, Director General</p> | | |
| <p>Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages for New Brunswick Katherine d'Entremont, Commissioner of Official Languages for New Brunswick</p> | | |
| <p>As individual Gilles LeVasseur, Professor, Telfer School of Management, University of Ottawa</p> | 2015/03/12 | 41 |
| <p>Conseil de la coopération de la Saskatchewan Robert Therrien, Executive Director</p> | | |
| <p>Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario Peter Hominuk Ferdinand Kashama, Vice-President</p> | 2015/03/24 | 42 |
| <p>Conseil économique du Nouveau-Brunswick Anne Hébert, Director General</p> | | |
| <p>Fédération des francophones de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador Gaël Corbineau, Director General</p> | | |
| <p>Office of the French Language Services Commissioner François Boileau, Commissioner Mohamed Ghaleb, Project Manager, Investigations, Research and Monitoring</p> | | |
| <p>Association des juristes d'expression française de l'Ontario Andrée-Anne Martel, Executive Director Sonia Ouellet, Secretary</p> | 2015/03/26 | 43 |
| <p>City of Moncton Jacques Dubé, City Manager</p> | | |

| Organizations and Individuals | Date | Meeting |
|--|-------------|----------------|
| Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada Suzanne Bossé, Executive Director Marie-France Kenny, President | 2015/03/26 | 43 |
| Réseau de développement économique et d'employabilité (RDÉE) Canada Roukya Abdi Aden, Administrator, National Cooperation | | |
| Réseau de développement économique et d'employabilité (RDÉE) Ontario Daniel Sigouin, Director General | | |
| Department of Citizenship and Immigration Hon. Chris Alexander, Minister Stephanie Beck, Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services Yves Saint-Germain, Director, Language Program Policy, Planning and Accountability Maia Welbourne, Director General, Strategic Policy and Planning | 2015/03/31 | 44 |

APPENDIX B LIST OF BRIEFS

Organizations and Individuals

Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse

Fédération des francophones de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador

REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the Committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this Report.

A copy of the relevant *Minutes of Proceedings* ([Meetings Nos. 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45 and 47](#)) is tabled.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Michael D. Chong

Chair

FRANCOPHONE IMMIGRATION: ACTING NOW FOR THE FUTURE OF FRANCOPHONE MINORITY COMMUNITIES

The New Democratic Party (NDP) believes it is important to accurately reflect the diversity and wealth of the evidence heard from the witnesses who appeared before the Committee. Consequently, we wish to present aspects of the evidence that have been overlooked or are absent from the official report despite their unquestionable relevance to francophone immigration.

The NDP believes that immigration is a key tool for enhancing the vitality and supporting the development of francophone minority communities. The Official Opposition is disappointed with how little interest the Conservative government shows in francophone immigration to Canada. The statistics on francophone immigration speak for themselves. In 2011, francophone immigrants made up only 1.3% of recent immigrants outside Quebec, while the target was simply to maintain the demographic weight of francophones outside Quebec at 4.4%.ⁱ According to the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne (FCFA), Canada is headed for demographic disaster for francophonesⁱⁱ if nothing is done to increase the percentage of francophone immigrants. The same dire warning has been issued by the Commissioner of Official Languages, who stressed the importance of acting now on immigration to ensure the future of francophone communities.ⁱⁱⁱ

Despite these alarming statistics, there is no sign that the government is prepared to actually get involved to redress the situation. The new Express Entry system is a good illustration of the Conservative government's laissez-faire attitude to francophone immigration. With the Express Entry system, we see the government once again walking away from its official languages responsibilities by leaving immigrant selection mainly up to employers, who are not subject to the same linguistic obligations as is the government. This situation is alarming to many stakeholders, including the Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta (ACFA), which fears that federal commitments to francophone communities are being diluted.^{iv} The initial figures from the Express Entry system provided to the Committee by the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration are indeed alarming: less than 1% of francophone immigrants in the first pool and only 2.5% in the second.^v These results fall far short of the government's target of 4.4%. It is also worth noting that the Express Entry system was developed without consulting francophone minority communities. It is particularly worrisome to see that the funding promised under the *Roadmap* for immigration was not used for that purpose.

Many immigration and official languages stakeholders have criticized the lack of consultation regarding immigration decisions that affect them directly. Instead of consulting stakeholders on the ground, the government made its decisions behind closed doors, decisions that may have a significant impact such as the 2012 cancellation of funding to help francophone minority communities attract francophone immigrants by taking part in Destination Canada.

The federal government has a duty to act on francophone immigration under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* and the *Official Languages Act*. As well, the government must apply the principle of substantive equality when it develops, implements, changes or wishes to abolish immigration programs or policies. According to Treasury Board, the government must take into account the “differences in characteristics and circumstances of minority communities and provides services with distinct content or using a different method of delivery to ensure that the minority receives services of the same quality as the majority.”^{vi}

Lastly, according to recommendations from the FCFA^{vii} and the Commissioner of Official Languages,^{viii} the federal government must immediately implement a strategic plan to foster immigration to Canada’s francophone communities, and this plan must be developed in consultation with the various levels of government, the communities and immigration and official languages stakeholders.

The NDP recommends that the government implement the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1

That the Government of Canada develop a strategic plan to foster francophone immigration and that this plan be developed in partnership with the provinces and territories, municipalities and francophone minority communities. This plan is to be tailored to the needs of the various regions and communities.

Recommendation 2

That Citizenship and Immigration Canada ensure that its immigrant services programs respect the principle of substantive equality so that immigration service providers in francophone minority communities can provide services of equal quality to those available from anglophone majority immigration service providers.

Recommendation 3

That the Government of Canada recognize the urgent need to act and make francophone immigration a priority. This requires the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to ensure that his department applies a francophone lens and the principle of substantive equality at each stage of policy and program development. As such, the Express Entry system must be immediately assessed based on these principles in order to address deficiencies.

ⁱ CIC, *Strategic Framework to Foster Immigration to Francophone Minority Communities*, 2003.

ⁱⁱ FCFA, *Rapport annuel du commissaire aux langues officielles : En matière d’immigration francophone, la balle est dans le camp du gouvernement fédéral*, Thursday, 7 May 2015 [in French only].

ⁱⁱⁱ Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages and the Office of the French Language Services Commissioner of Ontario, *Time to Act for the Future of Francophone Communities: Redressing the Immigration Imbalance*, Joint Report, Ottawa, November 2014.

^{iv} Standing Committee on Official Languages (LANG), *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 40th meeting, 10 March 2015, (Ida Kamariza, Coordinator, Réseau en immigration francophone de l’Alberta, Association canadienne-française de l’Alberta).

^v LANG, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 44th meeting, 31 March 2015, (Hon. Chris Alexander, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration).

^{vi} Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, [Analytical Grid \(Substantive Equality\)](#).

^{vii} LANG, *Evidence*, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 43rd meeting, 26 March 2015, (Marie-France Kenny, President, Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada).

^{viii} Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages and the Office of the French Language Services Commissioner of Ontario, *Time to Act for the Future of Francophone Communities: Redressing the Immigration Imbalance*, Joint Report, Ottawa, November 2014.

Dissenting Recommendations: Report by the Official Languages Committee on Immigration to Minority Communities

Preamble

We hereby present to the Standing Committee on Official Languages our concerns with the conclusions of the most recent report on immigration to minority communities.

This report should reflect the many difficulties faced by immigrants in Canada's minority communities. However, it is obvious to us that the report has been sanitized and that its conclusions do not reflect the realities of francophone communities in terms of the measures, legislation and regulations governing immigration to their communities.

Over the years, the legal, education and social rights of francophones in all provinces across this country have been eroding. In most provinces they have seen their numbers and demographic weight dwindle to dangerous levels, and like the witnesses who appeared before the Standing Committee on Official Languages, we firmly believe in an immigration policy that reflects not only the contemporary, but also the historical reality of francophone communities.

We are no longer able to extol the virtues of institutional bilingualism in international forums and deny the reality of how linguistic duality is experienced on a daily basis in our communities.

We need to come up with regulations and programs able to build viable social infrastructure for francophone communities.

Francophone immigration to minority communities will remain simply an illusion if the government does not agree to specific measures for recruiting francophones from Europe and/or Africa.

We cannot help develop a bicultural democracy without agreeing to develop a comprehensive policy on francophone immigration.

Endorsing the Standing Committee on Official Languages' report in its current form would be admitting that francophone immigration to minority communities is doomed to failure in the short term.

Introduction to the recommendations

Dozens of community representatives, economists and legal practitioners have stressed the importance of immigration to French-language minority communities.

The urgent need to act with respect to francophone immigrants emerged as an essential condition for the proposals from the witnesses who appeared before the Committee.

All francophone communities have become vulnerable in the face of the new world economic order. For many communities around the world, immigration has become a lifeline, and Canada has been greatly affected economically and socially. We need to welcome immigrants not only to our communities, but also into our institutions and our strong democratic tradition. The co-existence of Canada's anglophone

and francophone communities lies in the origins of our legal system and political institutions. We therefore need to encourage immigration and the inclusion of immigrants into our two official languages to ensure the survival of our democracy and our sense of equality and justice.

1. The federal government is responsible for developing immigration policy and must come up with specific immigration policies for francophone minority communities;
2. The federal government must reach agreements with the provinces on francophone immigration to ensure that regional realities are reflected in settlement programs for francophone immigrants;
3. Federal targets on francophone immigration are not achievable given the little support provided to host communities in terms of logistics and efforts to integrate these immigrants. Consequently, the federal government must invest in community infrastructure to the same extent as it invests in promoting francophone immigration;
4. Investments in language training and immigrant settlement need to be increased given the disparity of host communities and the weak community structures currently in place;
5. The federal government must intensify its investments in language training for all immigrants, all categories combined;
6. The *Express Entry* program must now specifically consider francophone immigrants to minority communities by creating a separate category of criteria for issuing the relevant visas;
7. The federal government is obligated to promote Canada's linguistic duality in its missions, embassies and consulates abroad as well as facilitate advertising for francophone immigration to minority communities;
8. In the short and medium terms, the federal government must develop a strategy for francophone immigration to minority communities that considers the regional nature of communities spread out across Canada; and
9. The promotion of French must be adapted to all minority employers in order to support the hiring of francophone immigrants.

Lise St-Denis, Member of the Standing Committee on Official Languages and the MP for St-Maurice-Champlain

27 May 2015