



# Francophone immigration to minority communities:

TOWARDS A BOLD, STRONG AND  
COORDINATED APPROACH

MARCH 2023

Report of the Standing Senate Committee  
on Official Languages

The honourable René Cormier, Chair  
The honourable Rose-May Poirier, Deputy Chair



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## PREFACE

Francophone immigration has been the subject of heightened interest in the last two years. Our decision to study this topic was prompted by the approaching deadline of the target for francophone immigrants, set for 2023 by the federal government, as well as the release of various reports and the 2021 Census data.

As part of its study on modernizing the *Official Languages Act* (the Act), which concluded with a final report in 2019, the Senate Committee heard from numerous stakeholders. Our report recognized the important role of immigration in the development of official language minority communities, recommending that it be added to Part VII of the Act, as well as the priority areas of a future action plan for official languages. In the present study, we would like to propose ways to strengthen support for this sector and ensure that francophone immigration objectives are met.

Shortly after we received our mandate, the Minister of Official Languages introduced *Bill C-13, An Act to amend the Official Languages Act, to enact the Use of French in Federally Regulated Private Businesses Act and to make related amendments to other Acts*. It recognizes that, under Part VII of the Act, the federal government has a responsibility to contribute to maintaining or increasing the demographic weight of French linguistic minority communities. This involvement must include adopting a policy on francophone immigration with objectives, targets and indicators. The bill was still before the House of Commons at the time of writing.

The need to take action to slow and reverse the decline of the demographic weight of the francophone community in Canada is clear. Our report contains proposals to better adapt immigration measures and programs to the realities and needs of French linguistic minority communities. The commitment to implementing an ambitious national strategy could thereby lead to real action on the ground, strengthening the development and vitality of these communities.

We would like to thank all those who appeared and submitted briefs. We trust that our recommendations will be carefully considered by the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship and by the Minister of Official Languages, and that they will help inspire the long-promised, much-anticipated new francophone immigration policy.

The Hon. René Cormier  
*Chair*

The Hon. Rose-May Poirier  
*Deputy Chair*

## MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE



The Honourable  
René Cormier  
*Chair*

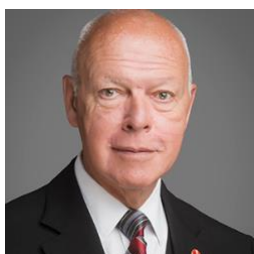


The Honourable  
Rose-May Poirier  
*Deputy Chair*

### The Honourable Senators



Bernadette Clement



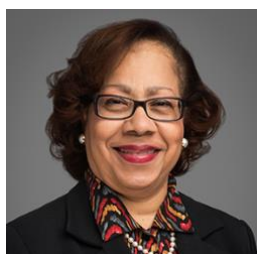
Jean-Guy Dagenais



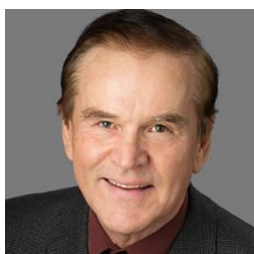
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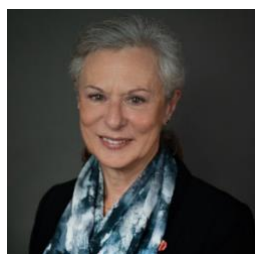
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## ORDER OF REFERENCE

Extract from the *Journals of the Senate* of Thursday, February 10, 2022:

The Honourable Senator Cormier moved, seconded by the Honourable Senator Pate:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages be authorized to examine and report on Francophone immigration to minority communities;

That, given that the federal government plans to develop an ambitious national Francophone immigration strategy, the committee be authorized to:

- (a) review the progress on the target for French-speaking immigrants settling outside of Quebec;
- (b) study the factors that support or undermine the ability of French-speaking immigrants to settle in Francophone minority communities;
- (c) study the factors that support or undermine the ability of Canada's current immigration programs and measures to maintain the demographic weight of the French-speaking population;
- (d) study the measures and programs implemented by the Government of Canada to recruit, welcome and integrate French-speaking immigrants, refugees and foreign students;
- (e) study the impact of these measures and programs on the development and vitality of English-speaking communities in Quebec; and
- (f) identify ways to increase support for this sector and to ensure that the Government of Canada's objectives can be met; and

That the committee submit its final report to the Senate no later than March 31, 2023, and that the committee retain all powers necessary to publicize its findings for 180 days after the tabling of the final report.

The question being put on the motion, it was adopted.

*Interim Clerk of the Senate,*  
Gérald Lafrenière



## HIGHLIGHTS

The demographic weight of the Canadian Francophonie is declining, due in part to the shortfall of francophone newcomers and delays in meeting the federal target for francophone immigration. Other factors include an aging population, a declining birth rate or language transfers. The survival and vitality of francophone minority communities depends largely on immigration.

In this report, the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages provides an overview of the situation and stakeholders' concerns regarding francophone immigration to minority communities, which has been the focus of several federal commitments in recent years. The Senate Committee also makes 12 recommendations based on briefs and witness testimony received from more than 50 stakeholders from a variety of backgrounds.

This report is mainly addressed to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, who will need the support of the Minister of Official Languages, Global Affairs Canada and other immigration partners to maintain a strong, diverse and vibrant Canadian Francophonie.


The Senate Committee calls on the federal government to immediately adopt an ambitious, comprehensive and coordinated francophone immigration policy adapted to the needs of francophone minority communities that addresses all partners, covers the entire francophone integration pathway and sets out ambitious objectives and clear responsibilities.

The Senate Committee calls on the federal government to adopt a policy that focuses on the remedial character of language rights and the restoration of the demographic weight of francophone minority communities. This policy must set a new, ever-increasing target for French-speaking immigrants settling outside Quebec that is adapted to regional realities and based on reliable data.

The Senate Committee recognizes that the new approach to francophone immigration to minority communities must be supported by changes in the design of immigration measures and programs that are by and for communities and that respond to their specific labour force needs. To achieve the desired results, a separate economic immigration program, specific francophone streams in other programs, and targets for francophone candidates are required.

The new approach must also be supported by:

- (a) increased funding so that all partners along the francophone integration pathway can achieve the objectives;
- (b) a revised and strengthened Francophone Immigration Strategy that builds on successful practices and initiatives;



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- (c) recruitment activity in promising francophone pools;
- (d) activities to promote the realities of francophone minority communities, both abroad and within government itself;
- (e) greater awareness of equity, diversity, inclusion and gender equality issues;
- (f) an approach that is harmonized with those of access to housing, labour shortages and international education;
- (g) measures to recruit, receive and integrate francophone international students in the Francophone Immigration Strategy;
- (h) lasting solutions to foreign credential recognition that are responsive to the labour needs of francophone minority communities;
- (i) an improved and effective governance structure to help achieve better results, regardless of the government of the day; and
- (j) a francophone diplomatic strategy that will help achieve the new objectives.

For all these efforts to have an impact, barriers must be removed, for example by facilitating the transition of francophone immigrants to permanent residency and strengthening interdepartmental and intergovernmental cooperation.

Lastly, the Senate Committee calls for the creation of an assistant deputy minister position with exclusive responsibility for francophone immigration, who will support the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship in carrying out his mandate.

#### **Next steps**

The Senate Committee looks forward to Bill C-13 being referred to it and hopes that it can contribute to the achievement of francophone immigration objectives. The importance of this issue was brought to the attention of the Senate Committee during the pre-study of Bill C-13 in the fall of 2022. It will closely follow the tabling of the 2023–2028 Action Plan for Official Languages and the development of the future francophone immigration policy promised by the federal government. It will monitor progress and remain attentive to the challenges facing a strong, diverse and vibrant Canadian Francophonie.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Recommendation 1

That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, in collaboration with provincial and territorial governments and in consultation with municipalities, francophone minority communities, professional bodies and employers, adopt a francophone immigration policy without delay. The policy must:

- (a) address all partners, that is, the federal government, provincial and territorial governments, municipalities, community organizations, francophone immigration networks, French-language schools, French-language post-secondary institutions, professional bodies and employers;
- (b) cover the entire francophone integration pathway;
- (c) include ambitious francophone immigration objectives adapted to the needs of the various regions, including a new target for francophone immigrants settling outside Quebec;
- (d) recognize, in the specific case of New Brunswick, the equality of the two linguistic communities set out in section 16.1 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms;
- (e) ensure interdepartmental and intergovernmental coordination;
- (f) clearly state the responsibilities of all relevant federal departments; and
- (g) harmonize the approach to francophone immigration with those of access to housing, labour shortages and international education.

That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada monitor the implementation of the policy's objectives, targets and indicators and periodically report to Parliament and the public.

### Recommendation 2

That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, in collaboration with provincial and territorial governments and in consultation with francophone minority communities, set a new target for francophone immigrants settling outside Quebec. The target must:

- (a) focus on the remedial character of language rights and restoring the demographic weight of francophone minority communities;

- (b) be adapted to the needs of each province and territory and to the realities of the various regions; and**
- (c) be part of the francophone immigration policy, be monitored and reported on and be revised upwards periodically.**

### **Recommendation 3**

**That Statistics Canada be mandated by the federal government to update language projections based on 2021 Census data in order to inform the development, adoption, implementation and monitoring of measures and programs that will support the new target of francophone immigrants settling outside Quebec.**

### **Recommendation 4**

**That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, in collaboration with provincial and territorial governments and in consultation with francophone minority communities, adapt its measures and programs to the needs of the Canadian Francophonie and align them with the objectives of the francophone immigration policy. To this end, the department must:**

- (a) create a separate economic immigration program for francophone minority communities that addresses their labour force needs and that includes specific measures for the education, early childhood and health care sectors;**
- (b) create francophone streams in family sponsorship, refugee resettlement and provincial nominee programs;**
- (c) create an immigration pilot in rural francophone communities;**
- (d) tap the pool of francophone international students as part of the Francophone Immigration Strategy.**

### **Recommendation 5**

**That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, in collaboration with provincial and territorial governments and in consultation with municipalities and francophone minority communities, determine the proportion of francophone applicants to be recruited in each immigration category, clearly state its objectives in this regard in the current Immigration Levels Plan, and update the federal–provincial/territorial action plan to increase francophone immigration outside Quebec accordingly.**

### **Recommendation 6**

**That the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and the Minister of Official Languages increase funding for francophone immigration in the 2023–2028 Action Plan for Official Languages and update the Francophone Immigration Strategy. The new strategy must:**

- (a) strengthen the recruitment, reception and retention capacities of francophone minority communities and francophone immigration networks;**
- (b) enable French-language school boards and their schools, as well as French-language post-secondary institutions, to participate fully in its implementation;**
- (c) support employers in facilitating the recruitment of francophone or bilingual workers;**
- (d) have clear objectives for the entire francophone integration pathway and for all community development sectors;**
- (e) make the Welcoming Francophone Communities initiative permanent and expand it to other communities across the country;**
- (f) promote collaboration with partner organizations to make the communities in question aware about diversity issues so that immigrants are welcomed and integrated with respect; and**
- (g) encourage other communities to implement the reception model at Pearson International Airport in their communities.**

### **Recommendation 7**

**That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada review its recruitment and promotion activities for francophone immigration. To this end, the department must:**

- (a) increase the capacity of visa offices in sub-Saharan Africa and evaluate needs in member countries of the Francophonie;**
- (b) better promote the realities of francophone minority communities in all member countries of the Francophonie, including the existence of French-language post-secondary institutions capable of welcoming francophone international students; and**
- (c) facilitate the reception and resettlement of francophone refugees from member countries of the Francophonie.**

### **Recommendation 8**

**That Global Affairs Canada develop a francophone diplomatic strategy aligned with the Francophone Immigration Strategy and provide the necessary resources to institutions and organizations in francophone minority communities to participate in international recruitment and promotion activities.**


### **Recommendation 9**

**That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and Global Affairs Canada make their employees, partners and subcontractors aware of the existence and importance of institutions and organizations in francophone minority communities as factors in the success of the francophone integration pathway as well as equity, diversity, inclusion and gender equality issues.**

### **Recommendation 10**

**That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada review its practices in order to streamline processes and practices that have a direct impact on the achievement of the Francophone Immigration Strategy objectives. To this end, the department must:**

- (a) actively collaborate with Employment and Social Development Canada, provincial and territorial governments, French-language post-secondary institutions and professional bodies to find lasting solutions to foreign credential recognition that are responsive to the labour needs of francophone minority communities;**



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- (b) reduce barriers to study permits for francophone international students who choose to study at a French-language post-secondary institution, speed up the processing of applications and increase transparency around decisions; and**
- (c) reduce the administrative burden on institutions in francophone minority communities.**

**Recommendation 11**

**That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, in collaboration with provincial and territorial governments and in consultation with francophone minority communities, facilitate the transition of francophone candidates to permanent residence. To this end, the department must:**

- (a) facilitate access to work permits for francophone or bilingual temporary residents and access to post-graduation work permits for francophone international students;**
- (b) provide financial incentives to employers who wish to hire francophone or bilingual candidates;**
- (c) make French-language settlement services and language training available to temporary workers and francophone international students; and**
- (d) expand services under the Welcoming Francophone Communities initiative to temporary workers and francophone international students.**

**Recommendation 12**

**That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada create an assistant deputy minister position who will support the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship in reviewing the Francophone Immigration Strategy, adopting the francophone immigration policy, setting a new target for francophone immigrants settling outside Quebec, and assuming the resulting oversight and reporting responsibilities.**

## INTRODUCTION

In March 2022, the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages (the Senate Committee) began holding public meetings to study francophone immigration to minority communities. Several factors prompted this study. First, the federal government's promise to make changes to the *Official Languages Act* (the Act) to ensure that Canada's immigration policy contributes to the achievement of official languages objectives. This promise resulted in the tabling of an official languages reform document in February 2021, followed by the introduction of a first bill in Parliament in June 2021.<sup>1</sup> Second, the mandate given to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship to implement an ambitious national strategy to support francophone immigration across the country.<sup>2</sup> Third, reports questioning the achievement of the target of francophone immigrants that the federal government had set for itself, as well as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on francophone immigration.<sup>3</sup>

With long-awaited reform of the federal language regime on the horizon, it seemed appropriate for the Senate Committee to take stock of the current situation and the challenges ahead. In total, 56 witnesses and 5 briefs contributed to the Senate Committee's study and its recommendations to improve the measures and programs implemented by the Government of Canada to support francophone immigration to minority communities.

From March 2022 to February 2023, the Senate Committee examined francophone immigration to minority communities. It was authorized to:

- review the progress on the target for French-speaking immigrants settling outside of Quebec;
- study the factors that support or undermine the ability of French-speaking immigrants to settle in Francophone minority communities;

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<sup>1</sup> Government of Canada, *English and French: Towards a substantive equality of official languages in Canada*, 2021; [Bill C-32, An Act to amend the Official Languages Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts](#), 2nd Session, 43rd Parliament.

<sup>2</sup> Prime Minister of Canada, Justin Trudeau, *Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Mandate Letter*, December 16, 2021.

<sup>3</sup> Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages (OCOL), *Statistical analysis of the 4.4% immigration target for French-speaking immigrants in Francophone minority communities: Almost 20 years after setting the target, it is time to do more and do better*, Final Report, November 2021; OCOL, *Annual Report 2020–2021*, 2021, pp. 7–8.



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- study the factors that support or undermine the ability of Canada’s current immigration programs and measures to maintain the demographic weight of the French-speaking population;
- recruit, welcome and integrate French-speaking immigrants, refugees and foreign students;
- study the impact of these measures and programs on the development and vitality of English-speaking communities in Quebec; and
  - identify ways to increase support for this sector and to ensure that the Government of Canada’s objectives can be met.

Over the past year, two other parliamentary committees conducted studies on francophone immigration.<sup>4</sup> Other reports were also released.<sup>5</sup> The Minister of Official Languages introduced a second bill in Parliament on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022 containing additional provisions on the adoption of a francophone immigration policy.<sup>6</sup> [Bill C-13, An Act to amend the Official Languages Act, to enact the Use of French in Federally Regulated Private Businesses Act and to make related amendments to other Acts](#), is still before the House of Commons at the time of writing. Then, Statistics Canada released the most recent census data confirming the continued decline in the demographic weight of the Canadian Francophonie.<sup>7</sup>

The implementation period for the target of 4.4% of francophone immigrants settling outside Quebec is coming to its end. The federal government struggled to meet it, in 2022, in the implementation period’s second-last year. Although this is not the only factor affecting the demographic weight of francophone minority communities, the shortfall in francophone newcomers has undoubtedly contributed to its decline. By delaying the achievement of its target, the federal government has deprived francophone minority communities of a population that could have settled, integrated and contributed to their vitality. It has put their

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<sup>4</sup> House of Commons, Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration (CIMM), [Differential Treatment in Recruitment and Acceptance Rates of Foreign Students in Quebec and the Rest of Canada](#), Eighth Report, 1st Session, 44th Parliament, May 2022; House of Commons, Standing Committee on Official Languages (LANG), [Francophone Immigration to Canada and Quebec](#), 1st Session, 44th Parliament.

<sup>5</sup> Sociopol, [Faire le point sur la cible en immigration francophone : Bilan des enjeux et pistes d’action](#), Study commissioned by the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada (FCFA), March 2022 [AVAILABLE IN FRENCH ONLY]; OCOL, [Annual Report 2021–2022](#), 2022, pp. 14–15.

<sup>6</sup> [Bill C-13, An Act to amend the Official Languages Act, to enact the Use of French in Federally Regulated Private Businesses Act and to make related amendments to other Acts](#) (Bill C-13), 1st Session, 44th Parliament.

<sup>7</sup> Statistics Canada, [“While English and French are still the main languages spoken in Canada, the country’s linguistic diversity continues to grow.”](#) *The Daily*, August 17, 2022.



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survival and the sustainability of their services at risk, much of which depends on numbers and proportions. The desire to welcome more francophone immigrants is not enough; demand and critical mass are also needed to welcome them. For that, international promotion and outreach strategies must be effective.

During its pre-study of Bill C-13, the Senate Committee heard calls for future francophone immigration policy to restore the demographic weight of francophone minority communities.<sup>8</sup> The Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, the Honourable Sean Fraser, appears to be open to the idea. The Senate Committee wishes to acknowledge the positive attitude of the minister and his officials in the face of the challenges ahead and the changes that are needed. It remains to be seen how this will translate into Bill C-13 as it moves through the legislative process, as well as into the 2023–2028 Action Plan for Official Languages.

This report is divided into two parts. The first chapter provides a portrait of francophone immigration to minority communities and highlights the concerns of stakeholders based on the oral and written evidence. The second chapter presents the Senate Committee's recommendations. They call on the federal government to take action to preserve a strong, diverse and vibrant Canadian Francophonie. The Senate Committee hopes that they will serve to inspire future francophone immigration policy by emphasizing a bold, strong and coordinated approach.

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<sup>8</sup> Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages (OLLO), *Report on the Subject Matter of Bill C-13, An Act to amend the Official Languages Act, to enact the Use of French in Federally Regulated Private Businesses Act and to make related amendments to other Acts*, First Report, November 2022, p. 6.

## CHAPTER 1 – OVERVIEW AND STAKEHOLDER CONCERNS

This chapter provides an overview of francophone immigration to minority communities and highlights stakeholders' concerns based on the oral and written evidence.

### **The decline in the demographic weight of francophones**

The Senate Committee was authorized to study the factors that support or undermine the ability of Canada's current immigration programs and measures to maintain the demographic weight of the francophone population. This section provides an overview of the situation.

#### **A statistical portrait**

In Canada, immigration is the main driver of population growth. By 2030 it could become the sole factor.<sup>9</sup> In 2021, about one in four people were landed immigrants or permanent residents or had a mother tongue other than English or French.<sup>10</sup> Yet many newcomers have a knowledge of these languages or speak them at home or at work. However, the fact remains that a majority of the population with an "other" mother tongue tends to know, adopt and use English rather than French.<sup>11</sup>

The number of recent francophone immigrants who landed in Canada in the five years preceding the census gradually increased from 2001 to 2021. Outside Quebec, the number of recent francophone immigrants increased from 11,280 between 2001 and 2005, or 1.1% of landings, to 33,990 between 2016 and 2021, or 2.2% of landings. The following figure (Figure 1) is based on the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) definition of francophone immigrants. It shows that, outside Quebec, the proportion of recent francophone immigrants increased for all provinces and territories, except Prince Edward Island and Saskatchewan.

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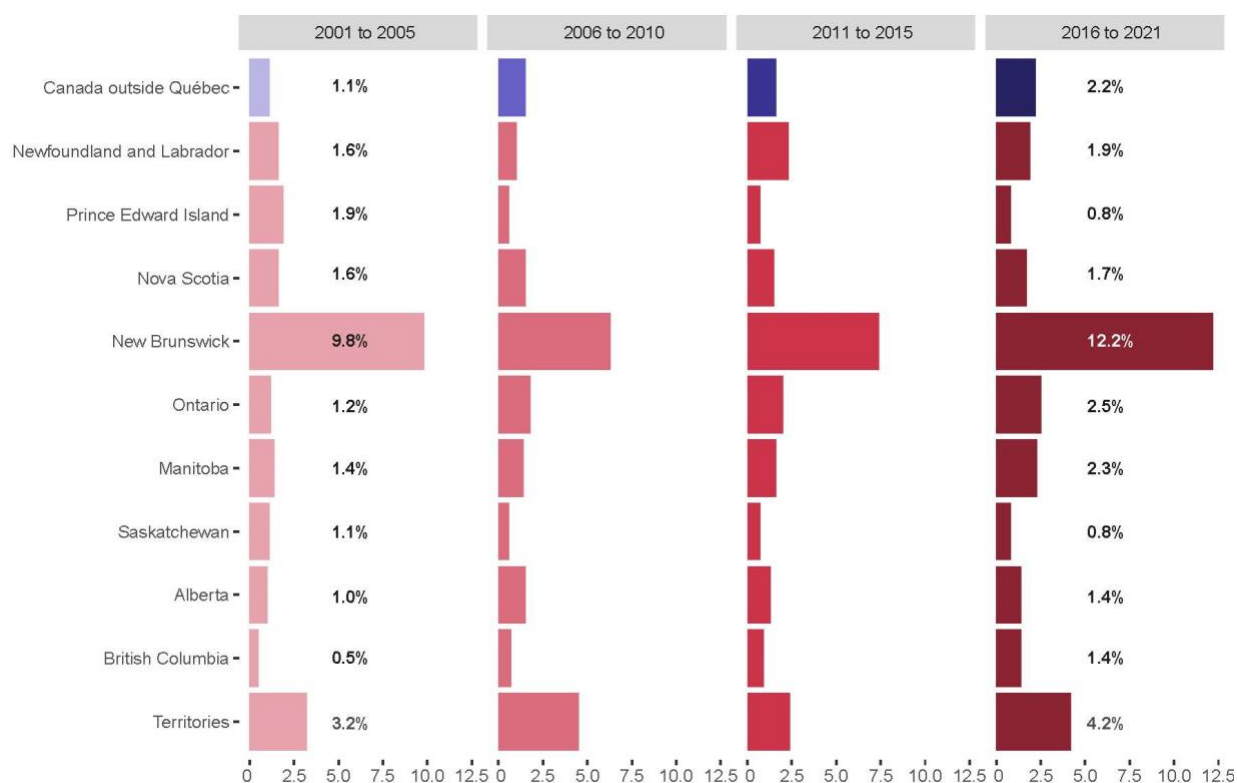
<sup>9</sup> Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), *2020 Annual Report to Parliament*, 2020, p. 5.

<sup>10</sup> Statistics Canada, "[Immigrants make up the largest share of the population in over 150 years and continue to shape who we are as Canadians](#)," *The Daily*, October 26, 2022; Statistics Canada (August 17, 2022).

<sup>11</sup> OCOL (November 2021), pp. 6 and 15.

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**FIGURE 1 – RECENT FRANCOPHONE IMMIGRANTS ACCORDING TO THE IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP CANADA DEFINITION, PROVINCES AND TERRITORIES, 2001 TO 2021**



**Note:** Before 2019, the definition of francophone immigrants used by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) included individuals whose mother tongue was French, or who had a mother tongue other than English or French and who reported a knowledge of “French only” at admission. After 2019, the IRCC definition included permanent residents who, at admission, declare knowledge of “French only” as their official language or those who declare knowledge of “French and English” as their official languages, as well as those who declare French as the language in which they are most at ease.

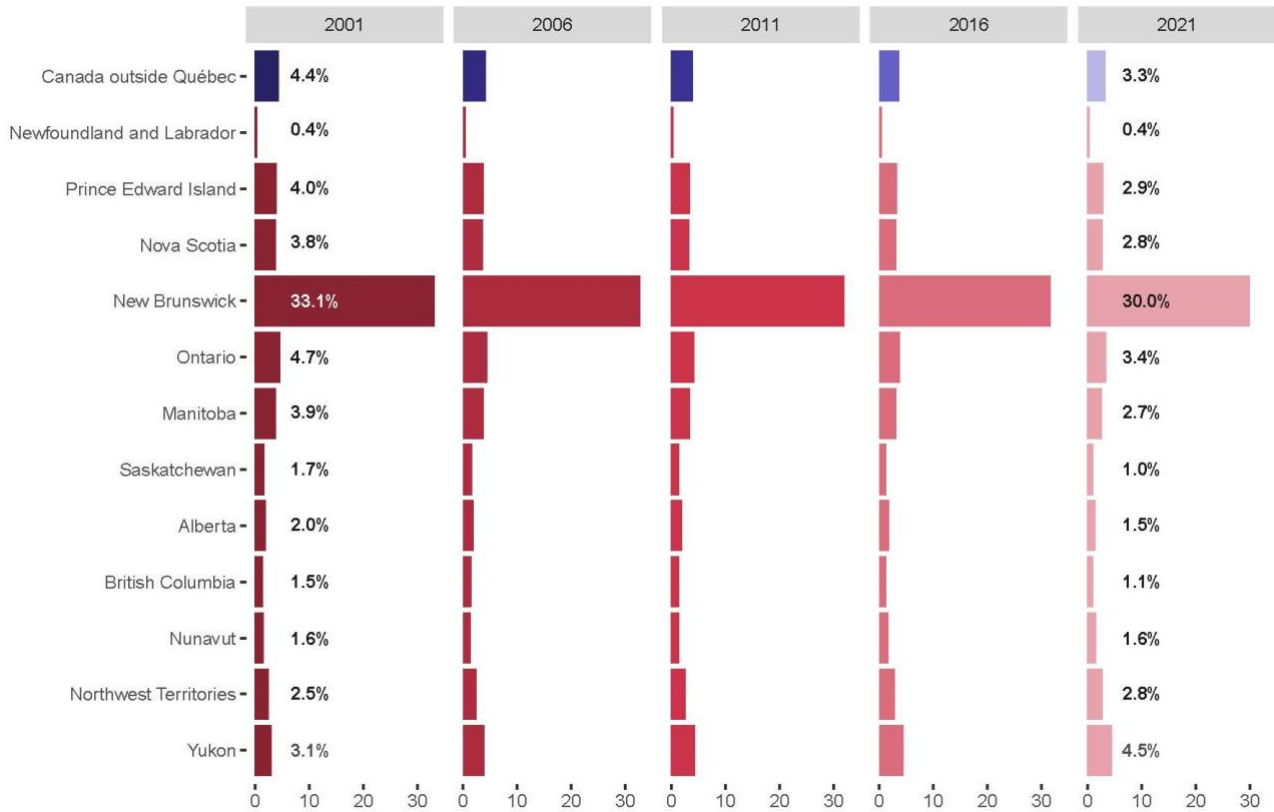
**Source:** Figure created using data obtained from Statistics Canada, Longitudinal Immigration Database.

Despite this increase, the demographic weight of the Canadian Francophonie has continued to fall. Outside Quebec, it dropped from 4.4% in 2001, to 4.2% in 2006, to 4.0% in 2011, to 3.6% in 2016, and to 3.3% in 2021. Statistics Canada has projected that the decline will continue through 2036 and could hit 3.0% if nothing is done to reverse the trend.<sup>12</sup> The situation varies by province and territory, as shown in the following figure (Figure 2). Yukon (+1.4%) and the Northwest Territories (+0.3%) are the only places where there has been an increase in the proportion of francophones over the last 20 years. New Brunswick (-3.1%), Ontario (-1.3%) and Manitoba (-1.2%) experienced the sharpest declines over this period, even though all three have a provincial francophone immigration target.

<sup>12</sup> Statistics Canada, *Language Projections for Canada, 2011 to 2036*, Catalogue no. 89-657-X2017001, January 25, 2017.

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**FIGURE 2 – DEMOGRAPHIC WEIGHT OF FRANCOPHONE MINORITY COMMUNITIES, BY FIRST OFFICIAL LANGUAGE SPOKEN (FRENCH ONLY), PROVINCES AND TERRITORIES, 2001 TO 2021**



Source: Figure created using data obtained from Statistics Canada, 2006, 2016 and 2021 censuses of population; and Statistics Canada, 2011 National Household Survey.

Researcher Mariève Forest finds the data clear.

*“Canada’s existing immigration system is contributing to the decline of the francophone population.”*

**Mariève Forest, April 4, 2022**

Not surprisingly, francophone minority communities have called for immediate, concrete action to slow or even reverse this decline.

**Factors supporting or undermining the ability to maintain the demographic weight of the francophone population outside Quebec**

Immigration is a key factor in maintaining strong, vibrant francophone minority communities. The practice in recent years of supporting immigration that is still predominantly English-

speaking has had a negative influence on maintaining the demographic weight of the francophone population. The oral and written evidence identified other factors that undermine its ability to maintain its demographic weight: a low birth rate, an aging population, the exodus of young people to urban centres, language transfers from one generation to the next, and assimilation.

Language policies have long been designed based on the logic of a francophone population being entitled to government services in its mother tongue. However, the linguistic portrait of the Canadian population is increasingly diverse, and this is especially true for francophone minority communities, which are struggling to survive and rely on immigration to ensure their development and maintain services. Immigration helps offset the effect of other undermining factors.

Francophone minority communities today are aware of the importance of immigration for their future and are investing their energies in it. The oral and written evidence shows that rural communities have a harder time attracting and retaining immigrants. They need additional support compared with urban communities, a reality that the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship has acknowledged.<sup>13</sup> In smaller urban centres, economic vitality and community vitality are important factors in integration.<sup>14</sup>

## **Interprovincial mobility**

Interprovincial mobility is another factor explaining the evolution of the demographic weight of the francophone population outside Quebec. Ontario has benefited the most from the arrival of francophone newcomers, while New Brunswick has largely suffered from interprovincial mobility, to the benefit of Quebec and Ontario, which appeal to francophones for economic reasons.

In New Brunswick, the situation is getting worse from one census to the next. This is what has led researchers to say that retention is intrinsically linked to mobility.<sup>15</sup> The Société Nationale de l'Acadie (SNA) and a researcher believe that it could also be linked to a lack of openness to diversity in host communities.<sup>16</sup> In general, large urban centres are more open to diversity than rural areas. The Government of New Brunswick, with its partners, is working hard to

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<sup>13</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 16, 2022 (The Hon. Sean Fraser, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship).

<sup>14</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), March 28, 2022 (Statistics Canada).

<sup>15</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), March 28, 2022 (Christophe Traisnel); OLLO, [Evidence](#), March 28, 2022 (Leyla Sall).

<sup>16</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 25, 2022 (Société Nationale de l'Acadie (SNA)); OLLO, [Evidence](#), March 28, 2022 (Christophe Traisnel).

meet its francophone immigration targets and face the challenges posed by interprovincial mobility.<sup>17</sup>

In recent years, the Government of Quebec has reached out to francophone minority communities in several areas. There is still a great deal of competition in the immigration sector, not only between Quebec and francophone minority communities but also amongst other provinces across Canada. Some witnesses expressed a need for better dialogue at the national level to protect and promote French.<sup>18</sup> This is even more important for foreign credential recognition. The criteria of professional bodies vary from province to province, which complicates interprovincial mobility.<sup>19</sup> According to the Association des collèges et universités de la francophonie canadienne (ACUFC), a student who leaves a province to ply their trade is unlikely to return.<sup>20</sup>

## Failure to meet francophone immigration targets

The Senate Committee was authorized to review the progress on the target for francophone immigrants settling outside Quebec. The federal government has set its own target, and some provincial and territorial governments have done the same. This section discusses the evolution of francophone immigration targets and the need for a new target to restore the demographic weight of francophone minority communities.

### The federal target

The federal target was set at 4.4%, which corresponds to the demographic weight of francophone minority communities in 2001. The federal government had until 2023 to reach it. If the goal was to compensate for the imbalance created by increasing immigration, the target failed to deliver. Combined with other factors, it has even contributed to the decline in the demographic weight of these communities.

The federal government set a target of 4.4% of francophone immigrants settling outside Quebec by 2023.



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<sup>17</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), June 6, 2022 (Association francophone des municipalités du Nouveau-Brunswick (AFMNB)); OLLO, [Evidence](#), December 5, 2022 (Opportunities New Brunswick).

<sup>18</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), March 28, 2022 (Jean-Pierre Corbeil); OLLO, [Evidence](#), March 28, 2022 (Christophe Traisnel).

<sup>19</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (FCFA); OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (Association des collèges et universités de la francophonie canadienne (ACUFC)).

<sup>20</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (ACUFC).



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It was not until the second-last year before the target date that the federal government reached its target of 4.4% of francophone immigrants outside Quebec. The following figure (Figure 3) shows the evolution of the target for Canada outside Quebec according to the admission of francophone permanent residents from 2006 to 2022. It was only from 2019 onwards that the proportion exceeded 2%. It is important to note that IRCC changed its definition of francophone immigrants that year.

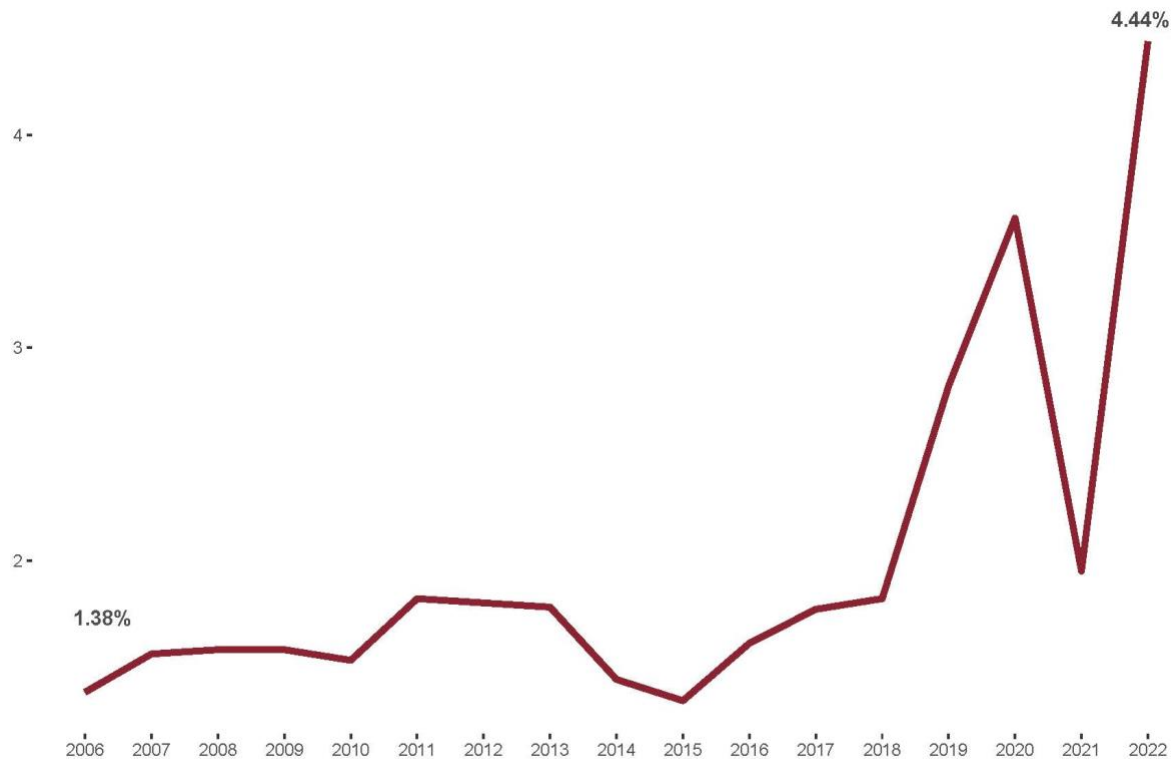
Before 2019, the definition of francophone immigrants used by IRCC included individuals whose mother tongue was French, or who had a mother tongue other than English or French and who reported a knowledge of “French only” at admission. After 2019, the IRCC definition included permanent residents who, at admission, declare knowledge of “French only” as their official language or those who declare knowledge of “French and English” as their official languages, as well as those who declare French as the language in which they are most at ease.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a negative impact on the admission of newcomers in 2021, given the border closures. In 2022, 4.44% of francophone permanent residents were admitted outside Quebec, compared with only 1.38% in 2006.



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**FIGURE 3 – EVOLUTION OF THE FRANCOPHONE IMMIGRATION TARGET ACCORDING TO THE ADMISSION OF FRENCH-SPEAKING PERMANENT RESIDENTS, CANADA OUTSIDE QUEBEC, 2006 TO 2022**



Note: According to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), the data are preliminary estimates and subject to revision.

Source: Figure created using data obtained from the document “Immigrants francophones,” provided by IRCC to the Library of Parliament, January 24, 2023 [AVAILABLE IN FRENCH ONLY].

The new definition adopted by IRCC in 2019 has certainly influenced the determination of whether the francophone immigration target was reached. Prior to 2019, the admission of francophone permanent residents was underestimated.<sup>21</sup> The Fédération nationale des conseils scolaires francophones (FNCSF) and a researcher recommended that a new definition include any immigrant who knows French without necessarily having it as their mother tongue.<sup>22</sup> Statistics Canada said that there is no official definition of “francophone immigrants.”<sup>23</sup> Moreover, the changing definition raises questions of comparability.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>21</sup> OCOL (November 2021), p. 35.

<sup>22</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, March 28, 2022 (Jean-Pierre Corbeil); OLLO, *Evidence*, April 4, 2022 (Fédération nationale des conseils scolaires francophones (FNCSF)).

<sup>23</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, March 28, 2022 (Statistics Canada).

<sup>24</sup> OCOL (November 2021), p. 36.



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The current deputy minister of IRCC attributed the achievement of the target in 2022 to three factors: assigning additional points to francophone and bilingual candidates under Express Entry, the addition of a temporary resident to permanent resident pathway, and improved promotional activities in Canada and abroad.<sup>25</sup>

In his study released in November 2021, the Commissioner of Official Languages estimated a shortfall of approximately 76,000 francophone permanent residents who were not admitted outside Quebec between 2008 and 2020.<sup>26</sup> He recommended that IRCC report on the shortfalls since the federal target was set,<sup>27</sup> but to date the department has not made anything public. One researcher noted that the 4.4% target was not based on reliable data and clear objectives.

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*“From the outset, there was therefore a disconnect between the target and the objectives.”*

**Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault, April 4, 2022**

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The Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada (FCFA) noted that this lost decade has had a tangible impact.<sup>28</sup>

### Provincial and territorial targets

Provinces and territories have set their own targets for francophone immigration and have struggled to meet them.

In Ontario, the target is 5%. In New Brunswick, the target is 33%. In Manitoba, the target is 7%. In the Northwest Territories and Newfoundland and Labrador, a 5% increase is targeted.

Manitoba was the first province to take action, in the early 2000s, with the goal of expanding the francophone space, which led to the launch of the organization Accueil francophone. In 2006, the province adopted a target of 7% of francophone immigrants. In 2016, it adopted a more inclusive definition of Manitoba’s Francophonie that includes anyone who has a special affinity for the French language and who uses it in their daily life.<sup>29</sup> The target, which is higher than the demographic weight of the province’s francophones, aimed to limit the effects of

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<sup>25</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, February 6, 2023 (IRCC).

<sup>26</sup> OCOL (November 2021), p. 70.

<sup>27</sup> OCOL (November 2021), p. 74.

<sup>28</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, May 2, 2022 (FCFA).

<sup>29</sup> *The Francophone Community Enhancement and Support Act*, C.C.S.M., c. F157, section 1(2).



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assimilation. Manitoba has always struggled to meet it. In late 2022, a news article suggested that the 7% target had been abandoned by the provincial government.<sup>30</sup> The Senate Committee sought to follow up with the minister responsible for the file, but has had no response at the time of writing. In 2022, 800 francophone permanent residents were admitted to Manitoba. This represents a proportion of 3.70%, barely half of the 7% target. In 2020, the proportion had climbed to 4.76%, but it was only 1.99% in 2021.

New Brunswick's target, which expires in 2024, was also never met. Given its obligations under section 16.1 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (the Charter), the province must protect the equality of its two linguistic communities. An annex to the *Canada-New Brunswick Immigration Agreement* on francophone immigrants recognizes the objectives of New Brunswick, which include "attracting French-Speaking Immigrants to New Brunswick to maintain the unique linguistic balance of the province."<sup>31</sup> It also mentions the provincial target. Witnesses from New Brunswick argued that the declining demographic weight of the Acadian community threatens its vitality and the linguistic balance between the two communities.<sup>32</sup> In 2022, 2,315 francophone permanent residents were admitted to the province, a proportion of 22.70%, well below the target of 33%. In 2020, the proportion was similar, at 22.58%, but then fell to 14.88% in 2021.

In Ontario, the results are more promising. The 5% target set in 2012 was reached for the first time in 2022, as 5.28% of permanent residents admitted to the province were francophone, or 9,760 people. In 2020, it reached 4.09%, but then fell to 1.96% in 2021. An annex to the *Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement* on francophone immigrants mentions the 5% target and provides for consultation with the Franco-Ontarian community.<sup>33</sup> The province also has legislation that highlights the goal of attracting immigrants to Franco-Ontarian communities.<sup>34</sup> During the Senate Committee's public meetings, Ontario was cited as a model example. The current deputy minister of IRCC praised the usefulness of annexes to federal-provincial/territorial agreements.

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<sup>30</sup> Thibault Jourdan, "[Le Manitoba n'a plus de cible pour l'immigration francophone](#)," *Radio-Canada*, December 14, 2022 [AVAILABLE IN FRENCH ONLY].

<sup>31</sup> Government of Canada, "[Annex B: French-Speaking Immigrants](#)," *Canada-New Brunswick Immigration Agreement*, 2017.

<sup>32</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, March 28, 2022 (Christophe Traisnel); OLLO, *Evidence*, April 25, 2022 (Société de l'Acadie du Nouveau-Brunswick (SANB)); OLLO, *Evidence*, June 6, 2022 (AFMNB); OLLO, *Evidence*, December 5, 2022 (Shirley MacLean, Commissioner of Official Languages for New Brunswick (NBOCOL)).

<sup>33</sup> Government of Canada, "[Annex C: French-Speaking Immigrants](#)," *Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement*, 2018.

<sup>34</sup> *Ontario Immigration Act, 2015*, S.O. 2015, c. 8.

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*“We are working closely with provinces who reached their own targets. Federal, provincial and territorial agreements are one way to reinforce everything between Canada and the provinces and territories. Furthermore, for New Brunswick and Ontario, we added an appendix to the agreement highlighting francophone immigration targets. It allowed us to work together.”*

IRCC, February 6, 2023

The following figure (Figure 4) shows the evolution over the past five years of the admission of francophone permanent residents to provinces and territories other than Quebec. In Canada outside Quebec, 4,141 francophones were admitted in 2017 (a proportion of 1.77%), compared with 16,371 in 2022 (a proportion of 4.44%). New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Ontario and the three territories had the highest rates in 2022, while Saskatchewan and British Columbia had the lowest.

**FIGURE 4 – EVOLUTION OF THE FRANCOPHONE IMMIGRATION TARGET BASED ON THE ADMISSION OF FRANCOPHONE PERMANENT RESIDENTS, PROVINCES AND TERRITORIES, 2017 TO 2022**



Note: According to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), the data are preliminary estimates and subject to revision.

Source: Figure created using data obtained from the document “Immigrants francophones,” provided by IRCC to the Library of Parliament, January 24, 2023 [AVAILABLE IN FRENCH ONLY].

Francophone minority communities are calling for the federal approach to be adapted to the needs of the provinces and territories. The FCFA believes that support for francophone immigrants must benefit all regions.<sup>35</sup> Researchers support the establishment of regional targets, in addition to the national target.<sup>36</sup> Statistics Canada officials advocated for an update of population projections based on 2021 Census data to better understand challenges and identify needs by region.<sup>37</sup>

## Restoring the demographic weight of francophones

The official languages reform document opened the door to a catch-up approach, stating that immigration policy must aim to “maintain the demographic weight of Francophones outside Quebec” at “4.4 percent of the country’s population.”<sup>38</sup> However, to maintain this demographic weight at 4.4%, a more ambitious francophone immigration target is needed. With the help of Statistics Canada and researchers, the FCFA has developed scenarios to restore the demographic weight to its 2001 level. The FCFA proposed increasing catch-up targets, ranging from 12% in 2024 to 20% in 2036, a proposal that received support from other francophone organizations.<sup>39</sup> For his part, the Commissioner of Official Languages recommended that IRCC adopt a higher target, clarify its objective, develop strategies to meet it and report on it.<sup>40</sup>

One researcher said that the target to be set will depend on the desired objective and that programs will have to be put in place to meet it.<sup>41</sup> Statistics Canada officials said that a higher target is needed to offset the negative effects of other factors related to the demographic decline of the Canadian Francophonie.<sup>42</sup> As two researchers pointed out, the target is not a panacea.

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<sup>35</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (FCFA).

<sup>36</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), March 28, 2022 (Jean-Pierre Corbeil); OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 4, 2022 (Mariève Forest).

<sup>37</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), March 28, 2022 (Statistics Canada).

<sup>38</sup> Government of Canada (2021).

<sup>39</sup> Sociopol (March 2022); OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 25, 2022 (Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario (AFO)); OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 25, 2022 (Société de la francophonie manitobaine (SFM)); OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 25, 2022 (SNA); OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (FCFA); OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (Réseau de développement économique et d'employabilité (RDÉE)); RDÉE, [Brief](#), April 29, 2022, p. 8; OLLO, [Evidence](#), June 6, 2022 (Association of Bilingual Municipalities of Manitoba (ABMM)); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 28, 2022 (Welcoming Francophone Community (WFC) of Moose Jaw and Gravelbourg).

<sup>40</sup> OCOL (November 2021), p. 74; OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 21, 2022 (Raymond Thériège, Commissioner of Official Languages).

<sup>41</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 4, 2022 (Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault).

<sup>42</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), March 28, 2022 (Statistics Canada).



## Francophone immigration to minority communities: towards a bold, strong and coordinated approach

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*“Without effective integration and clear thinking on mechanisms for integrating immigrants in those communities, I believe the whole enterprise may be bound to fail if we limit ourselves to thinking that a target will save francophone communities in the future.”*

**Jean-Pierre Corbeil, March 28, 2022**

*“You have to be consistent. If we were to truly adopt such an ambitious target, then we would have to provide the resources to meet it.”*

**Mariève Forest, April 4, 2022**

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The FCFA responded to the doubts raised by ambitious targets, as it took more than 15 years to reach the 4.4% target, by highlighting the importance of a renewed approach to francophone immigration.

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*“[M]any have asked how we can hope to meet a target of 12% when, over the years, the government has been incapable of meeting the present one. The answer is simple: by finally introducing the specific francophone immigration measures that we have been demanding for years ... we can’t achieve our objectives by merely making adjustments to general immigration programs such as Express Entry. You don’t do immigration to minority communities as you do in the majority. We need a francophone immigration policy that includes specific programs and measures designed to address specific realities.”*

**Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada, May 2, 2022**

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The Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship is open to the idea of increasing francophone immigration but did not directly comment on the remedial target proposed by francophone organizations.

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*“I want very much to be the minister who is responsible for increasing the number of francophones who move to Canada — not just to Quebec, but outside of Quebec. I am very confident I will be able to meet the goal of 4.4% at least by next year and maybe sooner. We’ll continue to see if we can grow that number year over year because it’s important, and I think it’s in our self-interest as a nation.”*

**The Hon. Sean Fraser, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, May 16, 2022**

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IRCC officials and the Minister of Official Languages recognized the need for an ambitious target but reiterated the importance of ensuring that it is achievable.<sup>43</sup> IRCC has formed a working group on the francophone immigration target and a board of experts on francophone immigration outside Quebec. A New Brunswick representative and a Quebec researcher

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<sup>43</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, May 16, 2022 (IRCC); OLLO, *Evidence*, February 6, 2023 (IRCC); OLLO, *Evidence*, February 6, 2023 (The Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor, Minister of Official Languages).

noted that a critical mass is needed to increase the proportion of francophone applicants selected.<sup>44</sup>

## The approaches according to various categories of immigrants

The Senate Committee was authorized to study the measures and programs implemented by the federal government to recruit, welcome and integrate francophone immigrants, refugees and international students. Following a report on this subject by the Senate Committee in 2014, the government made a number of changes to its practices, implemented the federal–provincial/territorial action plan in 2018, adopted the Francophone Immigration Strategy in 2019 and mandated the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship to adopt an even more ambitious strategy in 2021.<sup>45</sup> Other changes were made during the COVID-19 pandemic, often by adjusting existing practices without conceiving of a comprehensive system truly adapted to the needs of francophone minority communities. This section provides an overview of the situation according to the various categories of immigrants.

### Economic immigrants

The vast majority of francophone newcomers are economic immigrants. Express Entry is one of the main selection mechanisms for immigrants in this category and received additional funding between 2018 and 2023. It now awards more points to francophone or bilingual candidates. The Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship is confident that these changes will result in more teachers and health care professionals settling in francophone minority communities.<sup>46</sup> Going forward, IRCC sees Express Entry as a way to target francophone immigration and employment categories.<sup>47</sup> Some suggested introducing numerical quotas for francophone candidates.<sup>48</sup> These targets could be included in the Immigration Levels Plan.<sup>49</sup>

Other witnesses emphasized the importance of creating a separate economic immigration program for francophones, as adjustments to Express Entry are no longer enough to meet immigration targets. The FCFA envisions a program designed to meet the labour market

<sup>44</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, December 5, 2022 (Opportunities New Brunswick); OLLO, *Evidence*, January 30, 2023 (Jack Jedwab).

<sup>45</sup> OLLO, *Seizing the Opportunity: The Role of Communities in a Constantly Changing Immigration System*, Fourth Report, December 2014; IRCC, *FPT Action Plan for Increasing Francophone Immigration Outside Quebec*, 2018; IRCC, *Francophone Immigration Strategy: Meeting Our Objectives*, 2019; Prime Minister of Canada, Justin Trudeau (December 16, 2021).

<sup>46</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, May 16, 2022 (The Hon. Sean Fraser, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship).

<sup>47</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, February 6, 2023 (IRCC).

<sup>48</sup> Sociopol (March 2022), p. 44; OLLO, *Evidence*, April 4, 2022 (Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault).

<sup>49</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, April 4, 2022 (Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault).

needs of francophone minority communities.<sup>50</sup> This new program would align with the needs of communities and employers.<sup>51</sup>

One researcher noted that most immigrants arrive in Canada as adults and that learning the official languages is more difficult for them. Priority should therefore be given to candidates who are already proficient in both official languages, and they should be awarded additional points in the selection process.<sup>52</sup> In Atlantic Canada, fluency in English is essential for the economic integration of francophone immigrants.<sup>53</sup> Few jobs in French are available, French job opportunities are unknown, or immigrants face other barriers, such as foreign credential recognition. There is a need to raise awareness among employers and ensure that language training is available in both official languages.<sup>54</sup>

The Réseau de développement économique et d'employabilité (RDÉE) noted a lack of alignment between real labour needs and the profile of selected candidates.<sup>55</sup> This leads to negative consequences, such as underemployed or unemployed immigrants and dashed expectations. Employers have difficulty navigating the immigration system. Few of them invest in international promotion and recruitment missions because of the time, energy and resources required. The RDÉE added that many employers are heads of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).<sup>56</sup> Francophone immigrants must therefore be encouraged to explore entrepreneurship. Networking, financing and support are the three main challenges faced by immigrant entrepreneurs. Added to this is the lack of resources in French and racism in the workplace.

## Family sponsorship

Family sponsorship barely came up during the Senate Committee's public meetings, even though this category accounts for a significant portion of francophone newcomers. For this category, the FCFA suggested creating a francophone component within existing programs, a proposal that was supported by other witnesses.<sup>57</sup> One researcher believes that IRCC needs

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<sup>50</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (FCFA).

<sup>51</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 28, 2022 (WFC of Moose Jaw and Gravelbourg).

<sup>52</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), March 28, 2022 (Jean-Pierre Corbeil).

<sup>53</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 25, 2022 (SNA), SNA, [Brief](#), April 25, 2022, p. 3; OLLO, [Evidence](#), December 5, 2022 (Opportunities New Brunswick).

<sup>54</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 25, 2022 (SNA); SNA, [Brief](#), April 25, 2022, p. 6; OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 25, 2022 (SANB); OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (RDÉE); OLLO, [Evidence](#), December 5, 2022 (Opportunities New Brunswick).

<sup>55</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (RDÉE); RDÉE, [Brief](#), April 29, 2022, p. 5.

<sup>56</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (RDÉE); RDÉE, [Brief](#), April 29, 2022, pp. 6 and 9.

<sup>57</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (FCFA); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 28, 2022 (Francophone Immigration Network of Saskatchewan (FIN-SK)); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 28, 2022 (WFC of Moose Jaw and Gravelbourg).



to build the capacity to process family sponsorship applications in a timely manner and work more closely with the provinces and territories to encourage francophone applications.<sup>58</sup> IRCC is exploring ways to improve its approach.

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*“We need programs to allow a spouse to have access to a work permit [too]. If both members of the family have settled, and if their children go to school, it leads to a different kind of retention. We see it in New Brunswick. We work with six large employers, such as Groupe Savoie inc., Cooke Aquaculture and J.D. Irving to try and see how we can retain these populations in cities where francophones are often the minority community.”*

IRCC, February 6, 2023

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## Refugees

Crisis situations such as the ongoing crisis in Ukraine pose challenges and take up many of IRCC’s resources dedicated to welcoming and resettling refugees. In 2018, the Commissioner of Official Languages concluded that the impact of welcoming Syrian refugees on francophone minority communities was not assessed by IRCC, resulting in these communities benefitting little from this massive influx of newcomers.<sup>59</sup> Manitoba is adapting well to the situation. The organization Accueil francophone is a signatory to a private sponsorship agreement for refugees, and Manitoba has the highest concentration of people of Ukrainian origin. It is therefore expected that Accueil francophone will be in high demand in the current global crisis. In recent years, more than two-thirds of newcomers to Manitoba were refugees.<sup>60</sup>

According to the oral and written evidence, there is a great deal of interest from francophone minority communities in participating in refugee resettlement efforts, even though the language barrier poses additional challenges in terms of reception and integration. Witnesses suggested that IRCC set a quota for welcoming francophone refugees from African countries or create a francophone component in refugee resettlement programs.<sup>61</sup> Representatives of francophone immigration networks said that IRCC’s capacity in embassies is lacking.<sup>62</sup> One

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<sup>58</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 4, 2022 (Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault).

<sup>59</sup> OCOL, [Annual Report 2017–2018](#), 2018, p. 17.

<sup>60</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 25, 2022 (SFM); OLLO, [Evidence](#), February 6, 2023 (IRCC).

<sup>61</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 4, 2022 (Mariève Forest); OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 4, 2022 (Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault); OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 25, 2022 (SFM); OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (FCFA); Francophone Immigration Network of Nova Scotia (FIN-NS), [Brief](#), November 28, 2022, p. 1; OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 28, 2022 (FIN-SK); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 28, 2022 (WFC of Moose Jaw and Gravelbourg).

<sup>62</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 28, 2022 (Francophone Immigration Network of Eastern Ontario (FINEO)); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 28, 2022 (FIN-SK); FIN-NS, [Brief](#), November 28, 2022, p. 2.

researcher said that close collaboration with the provinces and territories is needed.<sup>63</sup> The Alliance des femmes de la francophonie canadienne (AFFC) recommended that settlement services be adapted to their needs.<sup>64</sup> The Société de la francophonie manitobaine (SFM) and the Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick stressed the importance of providing them with language training.<sup>65</sup> The FNCSF noted that French-language schools have solutions to put forward to welcome refugees in their schools.<sup>66</sup> IRCC has said that some refugees have job skills that need to be put to better use.<sup>67</sup>

## Provincial nominees

The Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) is an important mechanism through which provinces nominate individuals to immigrate to their jurisdiction. According to an evaluation released in 2017, the program had made only a limited contribution to francophone immigration.<sup>68</sup> Witnesses urged that governments work together to select nominees for the PNP. The FCFA believes that nomination certificates should be tied to francophone immigration objectives, an idea supported by other witnesses.<sup>69</sup> The Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship did not commit to this but acknowledged the need to build on provincial models that have demonstrated success.<sup>70</sup>

Ontario was cited as a model. Ontario has succeeded in meeting its target for francophone immigration through the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program, particularly because of the francophone skilled worker stream. Similar models could be created elsewhere to encourage the granting of nomination certificates to francophone candidates based on the national target and provincial or territorial targets.<sup>71</sup> The Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario (AFO) called for an increase in the number of immigrants the province can select through this program.<sup>72</sup> A study by Sociopol praised the program.

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<sup>63</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 4, 2022 (Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault).

<sup>64</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 4, 2022 (Alliance des femmes de la francophonie canadienne (AFFC)).

<sup>65</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 25, 2022 (SFM); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 21, 2022 (Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick (CCNB)).

<sup>66</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 4, 2022 (FNCSF).

<sup>67</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), February 6, 2023 (IRCC).

<sup>68</sup> IRCC, [Evaluation of the Provincial Nominee Program](#), Research and Evaluation Branch, November 2017.

<sup>69</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (FCFA); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 28, 2022 (FIN-SK); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 28, 2022 (WFC of Moose Jaw and Gravelbourg).

<sup>70</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 16, 2022 (The Hon. Sean Fraser, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship).

<sup>71</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 4, 2022 (Mariève Forest); OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 4, 2022 (Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault); OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (FCFA).

<sup>72</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 25, 2022 (AFO).

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*“The success of Ontario’s Francophone skilled worker stream shows that it’s possible to achieve higher proportions of Francophone applicants when nomination certificates are reserved for them.”*

Sociopol, March 2022, p. 59 [TRANSLATION]

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Manitoba’s experience was also cited as a model example. The Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program has a francophone component called “Manitoba Invitation” in which francophone organizations participate.<sup>73</sup> An annex to the *Canada-Manitoba Immigration Agreement* concerning provincial nominees provides for consultation with representatives of Manitoba’s francophone community.<sup>74</sup> However, it does not appear to have been sufficient to meet the province’s francophone immigration goals. Moreover, the provincial target is not mentioned in the federal-provincial agreement.

## International students

The student population at French-language postsecondary institutions outside Quebec is increasingly global and diverse. The high refusal rates of study permits for francophone international students, especially those from Africa, prompted many comments during the Senate Committee’s public meetings. French-language post-secondary institutions have felt the impact on enrolment and called on the federal government to take further action.<sup>75</sup> Some witnesses sought to understand the reasons for these refusals.<sup>76</sup> The ACUFC said that it has no data and is not aware of decisions made by IRCC officers.<sup>77</sup> One college and one university said that they are required to submit compliance reports to IRCC without knowing what the information is for.<sup>78</sup>

Witnesses brought up two administrative barriers: dual intent, where a foreign national entering Canada for a temporary period as a visitor, student or worker also applies for permanent residence, and financial ability. These criteria in the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* increase study permit refusal rates.<sup>79</sup> As a result, they reduce the potential to welcome and integrate this group that is highly promising for francophone minority

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<sup>73</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, June 6, 2022 (ABMM).

<sup>74</sup> Government of Canada, “[Annex B: Provincial Nominees](#),” *Canada-Manitoba Immigration Agreement*, June 2003.


<sup>75</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, May 2, 2022 (ACUFC); OLLO, *Evidence*, November 21, 2022 (CCNB); OLLO, *Evidence*, November 21, 2022 (Université Sainte-Anne); OLLO, *Evidence*, November 21, 2022 (Université de Hearst); OLLO, *Evidence*, November 21, 2022 (Université de Saint-Boniface).

<sup>76</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, April 25, 2022 (SNA), SNA, *Brief*, April 25, 2022, p. 4; OLLO, *Evidence*, November 21, 2022 (Université de Hearst).

<sup>77</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, May 2, 2022 (ACUFC).

<sup>78</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, November 21, 2022 (CCNB); OLLO, *Evidence*, November 21, 2022 (Université de Saint-Boniface).

<sup>79</sup> *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, S.C. 2001, c. 27, section 22(2) and section 39.



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communities and for the Canadian labour market.<sup>80</sup> Many witnesses called for the elimination of these barriers, which hinder the achievement of francophone immigration objectives.<sup>81</sup> IRCC officials said that the department needs to find a balance between immigrant categories and their target in the Immigration Levels Plan; the department is working to improve things for international students and looking at ways to improve their processes.<sup>82</sup> Researchers and communities can be part of the solution and can participate in the decision-making process.<sup>83</sup>

Francophone minority communities need a francophone and bilingual workforce, and French-language post-secondary institutions can contribute to these efforts. They need to be empowered to do so by supporting their participation in recruitment activities and by improving programs that allow international students to work during and after their studies.<sup>84</sup> The ACUFC has estimated that approximately 90% of international students want to find a job in Canada after their studies; two-thirds say that support from post-secondary institutions influences their decision to stay in Canada.<sup>85</sup> One college representative acknowledged that having graduate candidates in Canada reduces the burden of foreign credential recognition in regulated professions.<sup>86</sup> Post-secondary institutions act as a bridge and are willing to play that role despite their lack of resources, as Université de Hearst pointed out.

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*“Immigration is not part of our mandate, but it has become an important, if not unavoidable, part of our work, not only to meet our own needs, but also those of our communities. We walk with our students to graduation and integration into the labour market. Our francophone community partners take up the slack. For example, the caisse populaire, which hires many of our students, can attest to their outreach.”*

**Université de Hearst, November 21, 2022**

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In some communities, there are programs to help international students enter the local labour market, with the Université de Moncton, the Collège communautaire du Nouveau-

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<sup>80</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), March 28, 2022 (Christophe Traisnel).

<sup>81</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 25, 2022 (SFM); OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 25, 2022 (AFO); OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (FCFA); OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (ACUFC); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 21, 2022 (CCNB); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 21, 2022 (Université Sainte-Anne); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 21, 2022 (Université de Hearst); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 28, 2022 (FIN-SK); OLLO, [Evidence](#), December 5, 2022 (Opportunities New Brunswick).

<sup>82</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 16, 2022 (IRCC); OLLO, [Evidence](#), February 6, 2023 (IRCC).

<sup>83</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), March 28, 2022 (Christophe Traisnel).

<sup>84</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 25, 2022 (AFO); OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (ACUFC); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 21, 2022 (CCNB); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 21, 2022 (Université de Hearst).

<sup>85</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (ACUFC).

<sup>86</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 21, 2022 (CCNB).

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Brunswick and Université de Hearst as examples.<sup>87</sup> This eases the transition to permanent residence by supporting future graduates in their efforts. The AFO estimates that approximately 50% of international students attending Université de Hearst stay in Hearst and 100% stay in Ontario.<sup>88</sup> The AFO's testimony underscores the disconnect between stated objectives and reality.

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*"I was surprised to learn that young students were being refused permanent residence status after being trained here and completing internships here. Employers want to hire them and they are being told that they can't stay. The process is contradictory and there's a disconnect. We don't get it. When these young people come here for their education, our goal is to keep them here, because they were trained here."*

**Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario, April 25, 2022**

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That is why witnesses called for the harmonization of francophone immigration and international education policies.<sup>89</sup> IRCC admitted in September 2022 that it could do a better job of harmonizing its approach.<sup>90</sup> One researcher recommended lowering tuition fees for francophone international students and offering scholarships.<sup>91</sup> The Student Direct Stream, an expedited study permit processing program, could also be considered, provided that post-secondary institutions are equipped to support international students in this process.<sup>92</sup>

### Temporary workers

The topic of temporary workers was not often considered during the Senate Committee's public meetings. The FCFA pointed out that IRCC does not fund settlement services for temporary residents, which undermines the efforts of agencies and francophone immigration networks.<sup>93</sup> Instead, the provinces, French-language post-secondary institutions and employers take on the responsibility of providing these services, but their availability varies widely from community to community. In a study released in May 2022, the Commissioner of Official

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<sup>87</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), March 28, 2022 (Christophe Traisnel); OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 4, 2022 (Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault); OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 25, 2022 (AFO); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 21, 2022 (Université de Hearst); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 21, 2022 (CCNB).

<sup>88</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 25, 2022 (AFO).

<sup>89</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (FCFA); OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (ACUFC); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 21, 2022 (Université Sainte-Anne); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 21, 2022 (Université de Saint-Boniface).

<sup>90</sup> CIMM, [Government Response to the Eighth Report of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration](#), September 28, 2022, pp. 2–4.

<sup>91</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), March 28, 2022 (Leyla Sall).

<sup>92</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 4, 2022 (Mariève Forest); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 21, 2022 (Université de Hearst).

<sup>93</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (FCFA).

Languages recommended that IRCC expand funding under the Francophone Immigration Strategy to temporary residents.<sup>94</sup>

## Programs targeting specific regions

The oral and written evidence recommends that immigration programs be adapted to the needs of the various regions. The Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot was praised, and witnesses called for it to be tailored to the needs of francophone minority communities.<sup>95</sup> Université de Hearst benefits from this program and would like other regions to benefit from it as well.<sup>96</sup> One researcher suggested building on its success and developing a similar immigration pilot in francophone minority communities.<sup>97</sup> The Société de l'Acadie du Nouveau-Brunswick (SANB) stressed that immigration programs be tailored to the needs of rural areas, rather than being modeled on the needs of large urban centres.<sup>98</sup> A New Brunswick official and that province's Commissioner of Official Languages expressed positive sentiments about the Atlantic Immigration Program, which became permanent in 2022.<sup>99</sup>

## Foreign credential recognition

Canada is facing critical labour shortages and labour mobility challenges. Better cooperation between the federal government, the provinces and territories, municipalities, professional bodies and post-secondary institutions is needed. The issue goes beyond immigration and requires coordinated action.

In the education sector, organizations noted that foreign credential recognition is often done in English, except in Ontario, which is a barrier to foreign-trained teachers who wish to work in a French-language school.<sup>100</sup> In addition, professional bodies' criteria vary from province to province, creating inequities across the country.<sup>101</sup> The recognition process is cumbersome

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<sup>94</sup> OCOL, *Monitoring the Implementation of the Action Plan for Official Languages 2018–2023: Investing in Our Future – Analysis and Recommendations for the Next Five-Year Plan: Analysis and Recommendations for the Next Five-Year Plan*, May 2022, p. 10.

<sup>95</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, April 4, 2022 (Mariève Forest); OLLO, *Evidence*, April 4, 2022 (Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault); OLLO, *Evidence*, May 2, 2022 (FCFA); OLLO, *Evidence*, November 21, 2022 (Université de Hearst).

<sup>96</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, November 21, 2022 (Université de Hearst).

<sup>97</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, April 4, 2022 (Mariève Forest).

<sup>98</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, April 25, 2022 (SANB).

<sup>99</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, December 5, 2022 (Opportunities New Brunswick); OLLO, *Evidence*, December 5, 2022 (Shirley MacLean, NBOCOL).

<sup>100</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, April 4, 2022 (FNCSF).

<sup>101</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, April 4, 2022 (FNCSF); OLLO, *Evidence*, April 4, 2022 (AFFC).

and costly and discourages interprovincial mobility. Discussions have been ongoing for years, but no concrete solution has been found.

The Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship believes that working groups and round tables can help address challenges related to foreign credential recognition, for example in the health sector.<sup>102</sup> He added that other solutions include offering pre- or post-arrival training. Francophone post-secondary institutions can provide this training.<sup>103</sup> The Minister of Official Languages recognizes that the federal government has a role to play, along with its partners.<sup>104</sup> The official languages reform document promised the development of a framework for the recognition of teaching diplomas, but not for other areas. Francophone minority communities want to act as liaisons to facilitate the signing of bilateral agreements with foreign governments.<sup>105</sup> The RDÉE urged increasing partnerships with employers.<sup>106</sup> A New Brunswick representative acknowledged that the solution largely lies with the provinces.<sup>107</sup>

## **Pathways to permanent residence**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the federal government focused on new pathways to permanent residence to offset the effects of border closures. The Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship said that streams were reserved for francophone and bilingual candidates in the Temporary Resident to Permanent Resident Pathway, targeting essential workers and international students.<sup>108</sup> In November 2021, the Commissioner of Official Languages proposed exploring new solutions.<sup>109</sup> Many witnesses called for expanding pathways to permanent residence as a promising avenue for achieving francophone immigration targets.<sup>110</sup> The FCFA recommended making current pathways permanent and creating new ones.<sup>111</sup> French-language post-secondary institutions want to support

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<sup>102</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 16, 2022 (The Hon. Sean Fraser, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship).

<sup>103</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (ACUFC); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 21, 2022 (CCNB).

<sup>104</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), February 6, 2023 (The Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor, Minister of Official Languages).

<sup>105</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 25, 2022 (SNA).

<sup>106</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (RDÉE).

<sup>107</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), December 5, 2022 (Opportunities New Brunswick).

<sup>108</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 16, 2022 (The Hon. Sean Fraser, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship).

<sup>109</sup> OCOL (November 2021), p. 65.

<sup>110</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 4, 2022 (Mariève Forest); OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 25, 2022 (SFM); OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 25, 2022 (SNA); SNA, [Brief](#), April 25, 2022, p. 4; OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (FCFA); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 21, 2022 (Université de Hearst); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 28, 2022 (FIN-SK); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 28, 2022 (Francophone Immigration Network of the Northwest Territories (FIN-NWT)).

<sup>111</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (FCFA).

international students on the pathway to permanent residence, but there is still work to be done in cooperation with IRCC to facilitate the process and increase partnerships.

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*“Because students are considered temporary residents, they are not entitled to some community services. By improving networking between the institutions, the support services provided to international students, and the communities, we would be able to facilitate their integration, and convince them to remain in Canada’s francophone communities after graduating.”*

Association des collèges et universités de la francophonie canadienne, May 2, 2022

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## Successes and challenges of the francophone integration pathway

In the 2018–2023 Action Plan for Official Languages, the federal government has supported a consolidated francophone integration pathway, spanning from pre-arrival to citizenship.<sup>112</sup> The action plan has increased investments and has created new initiatives. This section provides an overview of the current situation, highlighting successes and remaining challenges.

### International promotion

Successful integration begins at the start of the pathway, at the international recruitment stage. Several witnesses called for the better coordination of efforts to promote the Canadian Francophonie, including in smaller communities.<sup>113</sup> The Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship said that the perception that it is only possible to live in French in Quebec must be challenged and that francophone minority communities must be better promoted internationally.<sup>114</sup> However, communities, employers and post-secondary institutions struggle to carve out a place for themselves in international missions, often due to a lack of resources.<sup>115</sup> The SFM called for Destination Canada’s activities to be expanded to Africa.<sup>116</sup> The SNA would like to receive support from IRCC to cover travel costs associated with its international promotion efforts and called for a robust francophone diplomacy strategy.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Government of Canada, *Action Plan for Official Languages – 2018–2023: Investing in Our Future*, 2018.

<sup>113</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, March 28, 2022 (Christophe Traisnel); OLLO, *Evidence*, April 4, 2022 (Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault); OLLO, *Evidence*, April 25, 2022 (SNA); OLLO, *Evidence*, April 25, 2022 (SFM); OLLO, *Evidence*, May 2, 2022 (FCFA); OLLO, *Evidence*, November 28, 2022 (FIN-SK); OLLO, *Evidence*, November 28, 2022 (WFC of Moose Jaw and Gravelbourg).

<sup>114</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, May 16, 2022 (The Hon. Sean Fraser, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship).

<sup>115</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, May 2, 2022 (RDÉE); OLLO, *Evidence*, May 2, 2022 (ACUFC); OLLO, *Evidence*, November 21, 2022 (Université de Saint-Boniface).

<sup>116</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, April 25, 2022 (SFM).

<sup>117</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, April 25, 2022 (SNA); SNA, *Brief*, April 25, 2022, pp. 5–6.



Other witnesses emphasized that promotion efforts need to be carried out by and for communities.<sup>118</sup>

### **The capacities of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and embassies in Africa and in other members of La Francophonie**

The oral and written evidence agreed on the need to target promising recruitment pools of francophone candidates. This obviously includes Africa, home to most of the world's French speakers, as well as other member countries of the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF). Recommendations were therefore made to increase IRCC's capacity abroad.<sup>119</sup>

Based on the OIF data, the following map (Figure 5) shows the location of visa offices and visa application centres (VACs) in Africa compared to the estimated number of French speakers as a percentage of the total population by country. Visa offices are managed by IRCC in embassies and high commissions. All offer services in both English and French. VACs are managed by a third party. Some offer services in English or French only, while others offer services in both languages. French speakers make up more than 25% of the population in many African countries, but not all those countries have visa offices. The visa offices in Algiers, Dakar, Rabat and Tunis offer full services, including study permits, but this is not the case for the office in Yaoundé, despite the high concentration of French speakers in the region. VACs are not full service and cannot make decisions concerning visa applications, as is the case for the office in Kinshasa, situated in one of the largest pools of French speakers in Africa.

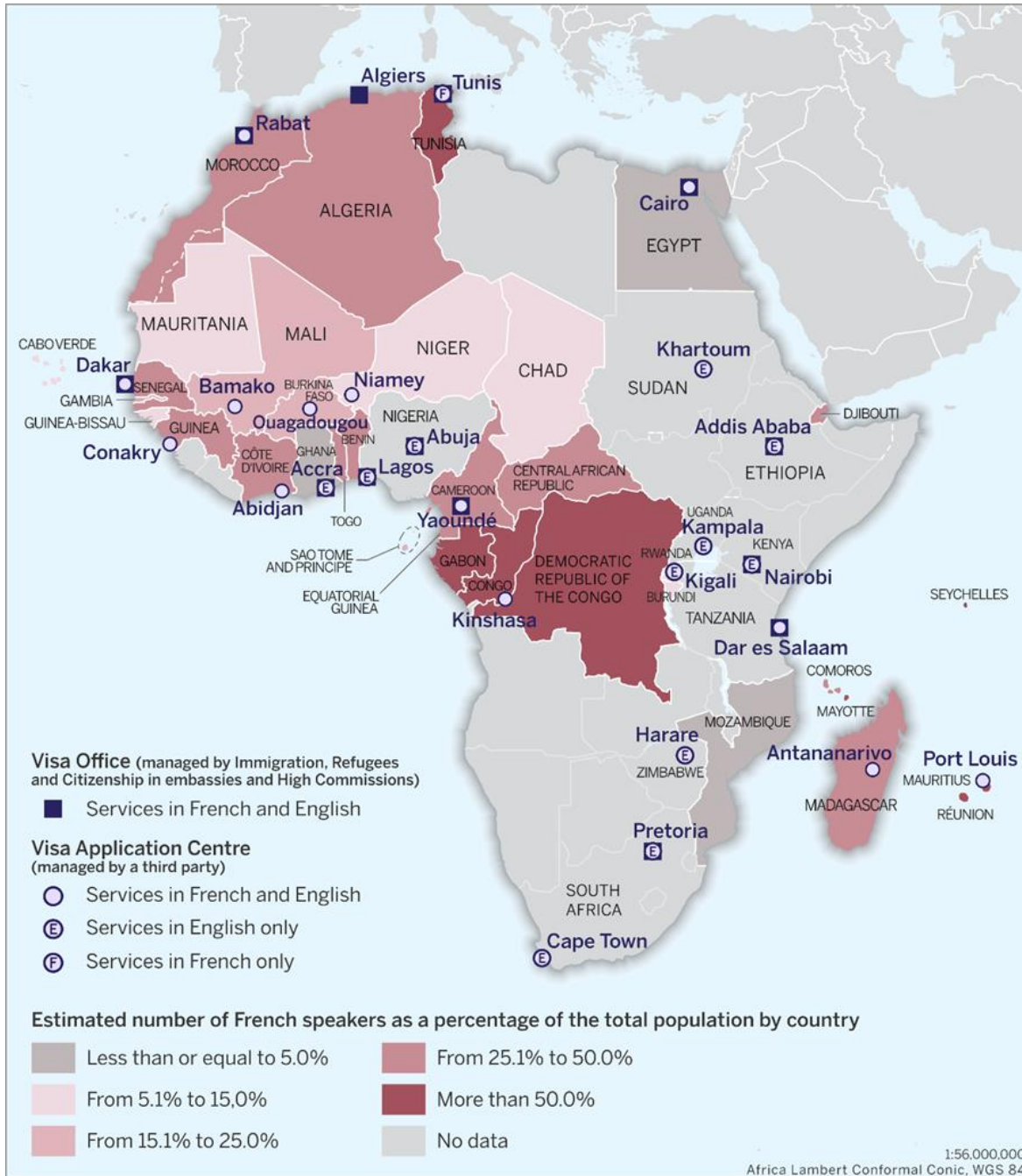
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<sup>118</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, April 4, 2022 (Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault); OLLO, *Evidence*, May 2, 2022 (FCFA).

<sup>119</sup> OCOL (November 2021), pp. 62–64; OLLO, *Evidence*, March 28, 2022 (Leyla Sall); OLLO, *Evidence*, April 4, 2022 (Mariève Forest); OLLO, *Evidence*, April 4, 2022 (Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault); OLLO, *Evidence*, April 25, 2022 (SFM); OLLO, *Evidence*, April 25, 2022 (AFO); OLLO, *Evidence*, May 2, 2022 (FCFA); OLLO, *Evidence*, November 21, 2022 (Raymond Théberge, Commissioner of Official Languages); OLLO, *Evidence*, November 21, 2022 (Université Sainte-Anne); OLLO, *Evidence*, November 28, 2022 (FINEO); OLLO, *Evidence*, November 28, 2022 (FIN-SK).

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**FIGURE 5 – VISA OFFICES AND VISA APPLICATION CENTRES, BY ESTIMATED NUMBER OF FRENCH SPEAKERS AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL POPULATION BY COUNTRY IN AFRICA**

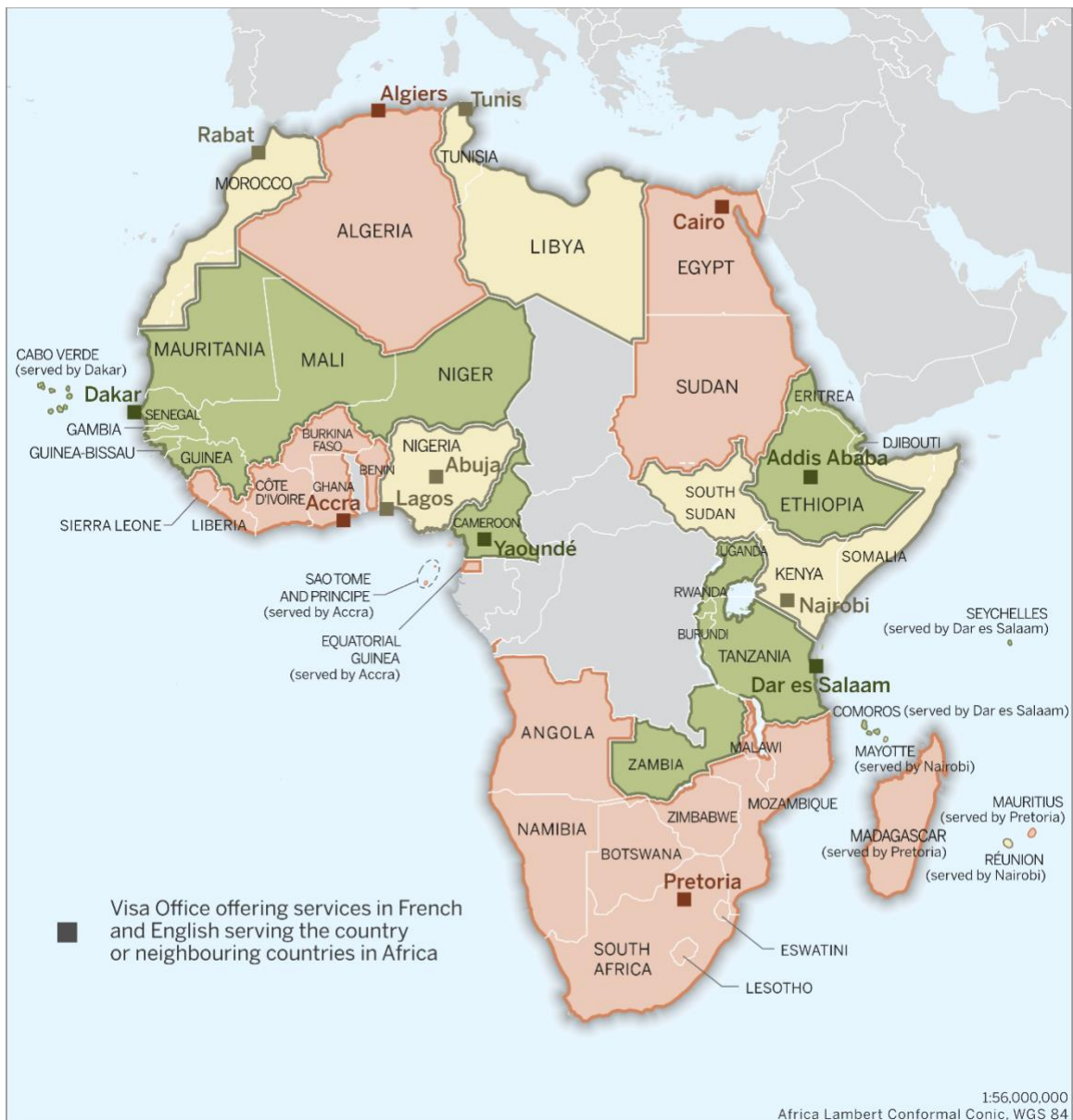


Source: Map created using data obtained from Natural Earth, *1:50m Cultural Vectors* and *1:50m Physical Vectors*, version 4.1.0; “Canadian Visa Offices and Visa Application Centres in Africa,” provided by IRCC to the Library of Parliament, October 20, 2022; and the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie, *Estimation du nombre de francophones dans le monde 2022* [AVAILABLE IN FRENCH ONLY]. The following software was used: Esri, ArcGIS Pro, version 3.0.2.

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Witnesses noted that the services of some visa offices in Africa cover several countries. The following map (Figure 6) shows the location of visa offices offering services in English and French serving the country or neighbouring countries in Africa. For example, the Dakar visa office serves eight countries: Cabo Verde, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal. The Tunis office serves two countries: Tunisia and Libya.

**FIGURE 6 – VISA OFFICES OFFERING SERVICES IN FRENCH AND ENGLISH SERVING THE COUNTRY OR NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES IN AFRICA**



Source: Map created using data obtained from Natural Earth, [1:50m Cultural Vectors](#) and [1:50m Physical Vectors](#), version 4.1.0; and “Canadian Visa Offices and Visa Application Centres in Africa,” provided by IRCC to the Library of Parliament, October 20, 2022. The following software was used: Esri, ArcGIS Pro, version 3.0.2.

In general, the location of recruitment offices abroad must be rethought.<sup>120</sup> The SANB reiterated the importance of ensuring quality French-language services in embassies, which are the first point of contact in the immigration process.<sup>121</sup> An official from New Brunswick said that there is a strong partnership with embassies and IRCC offices abroad.<sup>122</sup>

## **The reception capacity of communities and their networks**

Witnesses focused on building the reception capacity of communities, the organizations that support them, and francophone immigration networks. Although they receive funding from IRCC, they do not have sufficient resources to ensure a successful francophone integration pathway, especially as the federal government increases its immigration levels.

Immigrant women play an important role in the integration pathway, as they often bear the weight of their family responsibilities. They support their children's schooling, ensure access to basic services and take on administrative formalities for the entire family, while ensuring that their household runs smoothly.<sup>123</sup> Current early childhood, education, health and employability services do not meet their needs.<sup>124</sup> The AFFC believes that immigrant women have difficulty developing a sense of belonging to the host community and proposes that IRCC help women's organizations develop immigration programs and strategies adapted to their needs.<sup>125</sup> The AFFC also called for gender- and diversity-sensitive policies, strategies and programs to be implemented throughout the immigration ecosystem.<sup>126</sup>

The challenge of developing a sense of belonging is not limited to women, however, as this researcher points out.

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*“The main challenge of francophone immigration is to cause the individual experiences of the immigrants themselves, the political will of decision makers and the community-building hopes of minority francophone groups to converge around a common cause: to achieve a successful confluence of francophone newcomers and host societies.”*

**Christophe Traisnel, March 28, 2022**

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<sup>120</sup> OLLO, November 28, 2022 (FINEO).

<sup>121</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, 25 April 25, 2022 (SANB).

<sup>122</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, December 5, 2022 (Opportunities New Brunswick).

<sup>123</sup> AFFC, *Brief*, April 4, 2022, p. 3.

<sup>124</sup> AFFC, *Brief*, April 4, 2022, p. 4.

<sup>125</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, April 4, 2022 (AFFC); AFFC, *Brief*, April 4, 2022, p. 8.

<sup>126</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, April 4, 2022 (AFFC); AFFC, *Brief*, April 4, 2022, p. 8.

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Several organizations called for additional funding, especially for French-language settlement services.<sup>127</sup> In addition to funding, IRCC must ensure in its agreements with anglophone providers that francophone newcomers are referred to French-language settlement services.<sup>128</sup> The SANB stressed that French-language services be separate from English-language services, in the spirit of equivalence.<sup>129</sup> In a study released in May 2022, the Commissioner of Official Languages recommended that IRCC aim for equivalency by expanding the range of French-language services.<sup>130</sup>

There is uneven capacity across communities to attract and retain newcomers.<sup>131</sup> Francophone immigration networks contribute to their reception, settlement and retention, but institutional completeness is not assured everywhere.<sup>132</sup> The challenges in rural areas are greater.<sup>133</sup> French-language post-secondary institutions, which provide support without receiving IRCC funding, are asking that settlement services be adapted to their needs.<sup>134</sup> Francophone organizations provide settlement services as part of the services they offer to their communities, and therefore need more support.<sup>135</sup> Francophone immigration networks are calling for a reduced administrative burden.<sup>136</sup>

There are success stories, however. In Manitoba, Accueil francophone facilitates the reception and settlement of francophone newcomers by acting as a one-stop shop for services. It has a high success rate: around 80% of the immigrants who use its services stay in the province.<sup>137</sup> In the Atlantic region, the Atlantic Committee for Francophone Immigration and the Centre for Innovation in Francophone Immigration in Dieppe coordinate reception and integration initiatives and facilitate the transition to the labour market.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 25, 2022 (SFM); OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 25, 2022 (SANB); OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (FCFA); OLLO, [Evidence](#), June 6, 2022 (AFMNB); OLLO, [Evidence](#), June 6, 2022 (ABMM); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 28, 2022 (FIN-SK).

<sup>128</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 4, 2022 (Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault).

<sup>129</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 25, 2022 (SANB).

<sup>130</sup> OCOL (May 2022), p. 8.

<sup>131</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), March 28, 2022 (Jean-Pierre Corbeil); OLLO, [Evidence](#), March 28, 2022 (Christophe Traisnel); OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (FCFA).

<sup>132</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), March 28, 2022 (Christophe Traisnel); OLLO, [Evidence](#), March 28, 2022 (Leyla Sall); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 28, 2022 (FINEO).

<sup>133</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 4, 2022 (Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault); OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 25, 2022 (SNA).

<sup>134</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (ACUFC); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 21, 2022 (CCNB).

<sup>135</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (FCFA).

<sup>136</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 28, 2022 (FINEO); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 28, 2022 (FIN-NWT).

<sup>137</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 25, 2022 (SFM).

<sup>138</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), March 28, 2022 (Christophe Traisnel); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 21, 2022 (Raymond Théberge, Commissioner of Official Languages); FIN-NS, [Brief](#), November 28, 2022, p. 2; OLLO, [Evidence](#), December 5, 2022 (Shirley MacLean, NBOCOL); OLLO, [Evidence](#), February 6, 2023 (The Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor, Minister of Official Languages); OLLO, [Evidence](#), February 6, 2023 (IRCC).



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The importance of steering francophone newcomers in the right direction upon their arrival in Canada was repeatedly emphasized. Witnesses praised the reception services model at Pearson International Airport and recommended that it be replicated elsewhere in the country.<sup>139</sup> IRCC took a risk that paid off, as the following testimony from a francophone immigration network illustrates.

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*“At one point, IRCC took the risk, “Build it and they will come.” That’s when IRCC took the big step in 2020, and I take my hat off to them for that. IRCC established the francophone program and in the first year, that program was able to recruit over 2,000 francophones who stopped by their booth. Do you know how far IRCC has come today? I take my hat off to them in front of you; IRCC has handed the entire welcome service at Pearson airport to the Centre francophone du Grand Toronto (CFGT). That means that it welcomes francophones, anglophones and allophones. Now, that’s a successful project. We are also able to welcome anglophones and refer them to their people, but we need to stop always putting the anglophone world in the foreground. That’s an IRCC success story at Pearson.”*

**Francophone Immigration Network of Eastern Ontario, November 28, 2022**

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Accueil francophone also welcomes francophone newcomers at the airport in Manitoba, and enjoys a heightened retention rate.<sup>140</sup>

### Retention factors for francophone newcomers

Employment is often the primary retention factor. Governments need to establish effective partnerships with francophone minority communities and the host municipalities and make employers aware of the importance of recruiting francophone immigrants.<sup>141</sup> One researcher suggested using federally funded employer contracts so francophone immigrants can gain Canadian experience.<sup>142</sup>

Retention depends on having francophone spaces and quality public services. In other words, access to schools, post-secondary institutions, health care services and cultural activities in French help francophone immigrants integrate into their host community. When integration is successful, immigrants use services in the minority language and contribute to the vitality

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<sup>139</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 4, 2022 (FNCSF); OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 25, 2022 (AFO); OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 25, 2022 (SANB); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 28, 2022 (FINEO).

<sup>140</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 25, 2022 (SFM).

<sup>141</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), March 28, 2022 (Jean-Pierre Corbeil); OLLO, [Evidence](#), June 6, 2022 (AFMNB); OLLO, [Evidence](#), June 6, 2022 (ABMM); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 28, 2022 (FIN-NWT).

<sup>142</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), March 28, 2022 (Leyla Sall).

of said communities. Representatives from New Brunswick recognized the importance of this.<sup>143</sup>

Section 23 of the Charter gives Canadian parents the right to have their children educated in a minority-language elementary or secondary school. Outside Quebec, French-language schools face significant challenges. For the first time, the 2021 Census included mandatory questions to better identify Section 23 Charter rights holders.<sup>144</sup> The FNCSF said that francophone immigration contributes to more enrolment in French-language schools, but that there is no reliable data on the number of students with an immigrant background. The 2022 Survey on the Official Language Minority Population will provide more information on their academic path.<sup>145</sup>

French-language schools face four challenges. First, they must make their existence better known in Canada and abroad. Second, they must ensure the recruitment, reception and retention of immigrant students and their families.<sup>146</sup> Third, they must facilitate the hiring of qualified teachers trained here or abroad. Fourth, they must participate in the francization of newcomers. The FNCSF called for additional resources to welcome immigrants by ensuring remedial funding under the Official Languages in Education Program.<sup>147</sup> It would like to see better promotion of French-language schools internationally and newcomers put in direct contact with them upon arrival in Canada.<sup>148</sup> For example, Accueil francophone works with the Division scolaire franco-manitobaine and helps integrate newcomers.<sup>149</sup> The Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship recognizes the importance of promotion efforts.<sup>150</sup>

French-language post-secondary institutions are also recognized as an important factor in retaining newcomers.<sup>151</sup> They recommended that IRCC and Global Affairs Canada staff be made aware of the existence and importance of their role in achieving the federal

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<sup>143</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, December 5, 2022 (Opportunities New Brunswick); OLLO, *Evidence*, December 5, 2022 (Shirley MacLean, NBOCOL).

<sup>144</sup> According to the Commissioner of Official Languages, including these new questions in the census could provide “indicators of integration of French-speaking immigrant families within Francophone minority communities.” See OCOL (November 2021), p. 61; Statistics Canada, “[897,000 children are eligible for instruction](#),” *The Daily*, November 30, 2022.

<sup>145</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, March 28, 2022 (Statistics Canada).

<sup>146</sup> In some places in Canada, French-language school boards have adopted inclusive policies to admit students with an immigrant background. This gives francophone immigrants and refugees the right to enroll their children in French-language schools, but the authority to delegate to school boards does not exist everywhere.

<sup>147</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, April 4, 2022 (FNCSF).

<sup>148</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, April 4, 2022 (FNCSF).

<sup>149</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, April 25, 2022 (SFM).

<sup>150</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, May 16, 2022 (The Hon. Sean Fraser, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship).

<sup>151</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, March 28, 2022 (Leyla Sall); OLLO, *Evidence*, March 28, 2022 (Statistics Canada); OLLO, *Evidence*, April 25, 2022 (SFM); OLLO, *Evidence*, May 2, 2022 (ACUFC).



## Francophone immigration to minority communities: towards a bold, strong and coordinated approach

government's francophone immigration objectives.<sup>152</sup> According to Université de Saint-Boniface, awareness-raising efforts are never-ending:

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*“It should also not be forgotten that francophone institutions outside Quebec must constantly fight to exist in the eyes of immigration officers. It is very common for students to be asked why they chose one of these institutions instead of going to Quebec. This situation improves every year, because we make ourselves known through our presence at fairs in the Maghreb or in sub-Saharan Africa, but when there is a change of guard in the embassies, everything has to be redone.”*

**Université de Saint-Boniface, November 21, 2022**

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In some provinces, such as Ontario, access to post-secondary education in French is well developed and facilitates the work of francophone immigration networks.<sup>153</sup> In other provinces, access needs to be expanded. In Saskatchewan and the Northwest Territories, francophone immigrants cannot access university education in French, which makes it difficult to retain them.<sup>154</sup>

Knowledge of at least one of the two official languages is a prerequisite for successful integration. Yet language is one of the most significant barriers for immigrants who wish to find employment or integrate into a francophone minority community. Access to official language learning for immigrants must therefore be considered.

Furthermore, affordable housing facilitates the retention of newcomers, but this is now a major challenge in Canadian society as a whole. Francophone organizations such as Accueil francophone in Manitoba have launched initiatives to facilitate the search for housing.<sup>155</sup> However, most organizations are struggling to meet demand due to a lack of capacity or resources. Witnesses called for IRCC policies to be better aligned with measures to access housing.<sup>156</sup> Other witnesses raised the need to adapt strategies to the realities of rural communities.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (ACUFC); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 21, 2022 (Université Sainte-Anne); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 21, 2022 (Université de Saint-Boniface).

<sup>153</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 28, 2022 (FINEO).

<sup>154</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 28, 2022 (FIN-SK); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 28, 2022 (WFC of Yellowknife).

<sup>155</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 25, 2022 (SFM).

<sup>156</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 21, 2022 (CCNB); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 28, 2022 (FINEO); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 28, 2022 (FIN-SK); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 28, 2022 (FIN-NWT); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 28, 2022 (WFC of Yellowknife); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 28, 2022 (WFC of Moose Jaw and Gravelbourg); OLLO, [Evidence](#), December 5, 2022 (Shirley MacLean, NBOCOL).

<sup>157</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), June 6, 2022 (AFMNB); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 21, 2022 (CCNB); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 28, 2022 (WFC of Moose Jaw and Gravelbourg).



## Capacity building at all stages of the francophone integration pathway

The importance for francophone minority communities to be involved at all stages of the francophone integration pathway, from pre-arrival to citizenship, is no longer in question. However, it can be difficult for these communities to succeed in a system that largely favours English-language or third-language immigration. That is why they are working assiduously to develop a complete network of institutions.

Funding at all stages of the pathway remains a challenge; more is needed.<sup>158</sup> Partnerships with stakeholders from different sectors whose main language of work is not French or who have a different vision of the integration pathway are another challenge. The Commissioner of Official Languages noted that all stages of the immigration continuum must be considered when thinking about possible improvements to francophone immigration.<sup>159</sup> The Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship recognizes that his department's support extends from recruitment abroad to integration in Canada.<sup>160</sup> In this spirit, the francophone integration pathway was created based on an approach that is by and for communities.

## The success of Welcoming Francophone Communities

The Welcoming Francophone Communities initiative, established under the 2018–2023 Action Plan for Official Languages, was praised as a model program. This initiative, designed as a pilot, has enabled significant gains in small, remote communities, strengthened newcomers' sense of belonging to francophone minority communities and helped some candidates transition to permanent residence.<sup>161</sup> The following testimony underscores the importance of promoting and equipping these communities.

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*"[W]e believe that francophone immigration directed to remote areas has the potential to meet the aspirations of many individuals seeking to settle in Canada. Directing some newcomers to smaller towns can provide enriching opportunities for many. The challenge will be for us to rethink how these settings are promoted and how we prepare host communities."*

**Welcoming Francophone Community of Moose Jaw and Gravelbourg,  
November 28, 2022**

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<sup>158</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (FCFA); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 28, 2022 (FIN-SK).

<sup>159</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 21, 2022 (Raymond Théberge, Commissioner of Official Languages).

<sup>160</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 16, 2022 (The Hon. Sean Fraser, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship).

<sup>161</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 4, 2022 (Mariève Forest); OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 25, 2022 (AFO); OLLO, [Evidence](#), June 6, 2022 (AFMNB); OLLO, [Evidence](#), June 6, 2022 (ABMM); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 21, 2022 (Université Sainte-Anne); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 28, 2022 (WFC of Yellowknife); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 28, 2022 (WFC of Moose Jaw and Gravelbourg).

The Welcoming Francophone Communities initiative helps francophone organizations welcome and integrate francophone newcomers in 14 communities across the country. It expires next year. Witnesses recommended that the pilot be made permanent and expanded to other communities.<sup>162</sup> A representative from the Northwest Territories believes the criteria should be expanded to provide services to temporary residents and adapted to the needs of smaller communities.<sup>163</sup> In a study released in May 2022, the Commissioner of Official Languages recommended that IRCC expand the number of communities participating in this initiative.<sup>164</sup> The Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship and the Minister of Official Languages both consider the initiative a success and want lessons learned to be applied elsewhere, taking into account the realities on the ground in the various regions.<sup>165</sup> For now, the initiative's future is unclear.

## **The francophone immigration corridor**

In the official languages reform document, the federal government committed to setting up a francophone immigration corridor to address the shortage of francophone and French-language teachers across the country. Francophone minority communities are facing labour shortages in many other sectors where targeted approaches would be useful, for example in early childhood and health care. Witnesses want to use the francophone immigration corridor model to address labour issues in sectors other than education.<sup>166</sup> The ACUFC wants to be involved in setting up this corridor.<sup>167</sup>

French-language schools have faced teacher shortages for years, forcing them to recruit elsewhere. In addition to the francophone immigration corridor, organizations called for the IRCC's Settlement Workers in Schools initiative to be adapted to the needs of French-language schools.<sup>168</sup> At the same time, the FNCSF wants to speed up the process of foreign credential recognition and facilitate interprovincial mobility.<sup>169</sup> One researcher proposed adapting the Live-in Caregiver Program to the needs of francophone minority communities to

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<sup>162</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (FCFA); FIN-NS, [Brief](#), November 28, 2022, p. 2; OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 28, 2022 (FINEO); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 28, 2022 (WFC of Yellowknife).

<sup>163</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 28, 2022 (WFC of Yellowknife).

<sup>164</sup> OCOL (May 2022), pp. 8–9.

<sup>165</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 16, 2022 (The Hon. Sean Fraser, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship); OLLO, [Evidence](#), February 6, 2023 (The Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor, Minister of Official Languages).

<sup>166</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (FCFA); OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (RDÉE); OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (ACUFC); OLLO, [Evidence](#), December 5, 2022 (Opportunities New Brunswick).

<sup>167</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (ACUFC).

<sup>168</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 4, 2022 (FNCSF); OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (FCFA).

<sup>169</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 4, 2022 (FNCSF).

meet their labour force needs.<sup>170</sup> Another researcher believes that, in the education and health care sectors, more needs to be done to better integrate and retain qualified francophone workers.<sup>171</sup> Francophone organizations have a role to play in helping retain immigrants in the francophone labour market. The SNA estimates that more than one-third of francophone immigrants are not working in their field of expertise.<sup>172</sup> A feasibility study has been conducted to facilitate the recognition of foreign credentials in education and accounting.<sup>173</sup> The study's findings could potentially be applied to the early childhood sector.<sup>174</sup>

## **Partnerships among the various actors in the immigration system**

Successful initiatives depend on the many players all along the francophone integration pathway. The oral and written evidence was practically unanimous on the essential aspect of collaboration among these partners. It is critical to ensuring the success of the Francophone Immigration Strategy. The FCFA recommended that the 2018 federal–provincial/territorial action plan be revised to include new objectives.<sup>175</sup> The FNCSF recommended including language clauses in contracts and agreements.<sup>176</sup>

Several witnesses focused on the important role of municipalities, which play an active role in the francophone immigration networks and the Welcoming Francophone Communities initiative. Municipalities are aware of the challenges of immigration to francophone minority communities and are contributing to the integration of newcomers and the development of communities, as the following evidence shows.

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*“The municipality is the number one agent of retention.”*

**Leyla Sall, March 28, 2022**

*“Municipalities are often closest to the migration experience and thus have a crucial role to play.”*

**Christophe Traisnel, March 28, 2022**

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<sup>170</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, April 4, 2022 (Mariève Forest).

<sup>171</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, March 28, 2022 (Leyla Sall).


<sup>172</sup> SNA, *Brief*, April 25, 2022, p. 4.

<sup>173</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, April 25, 2022 (SNA).

<sup>174</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, May 2, 2022 (FCFA).

<sup>175</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, May 2, 2022 (FCFA).

<sup>176</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, April 4, 2022 (FNCSF).



## Francophone immigration to minority communities: towards a bold, strong and coordinated approach

*“The issues related to welcoming, settling, including and retaining immigrants take on their full importance in our communities and require specific and sustainable solutions. Which is why it is supremely important to offer the efforts and resources of the three orders of government, to combine those efforts and to ensure that all parties come out winners, starting with the immigrants who choose us as their new home*

**Association of Bilingual Municipalities of Manitoba, June 6, 2022**

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The Francophone Immigration Strategy does not address the role of municipalities. The 2018 federal–provincial/territorial action plan addresses it only very briefly. The Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship has a mandate to move forward on the Municipal Nominee Program,<sup>177</sup> but the Senate Committee’s public meetings did not shed light on what is to come. Expectations for this program are high. Municipality associations expect that francophone minority communities will be able to sponsor immigration applicants directly to help them meet their regions’ specific needs.<sup>178</sup> They stand ready to play this role, as this statement demonstrates.

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*“I believe that if the municipalities were included, with a well regulated framework and the resources needed, they could play a support role in the IRCC’s preselection process and do a better job of identifying candidates for our communities*

**Association francophone des municipalités du Nouveau-Brunswick, June 6, 2022**

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The Commissioner of Official Languages recommended that funding be increased so that municipality associations can effectively play their role in welcoming newcomers.<sup>179</sup> The Minister of Official Languages also recognized the important role of municipalities, but did not touch on funding.<sup>180</sup> IRCC is ready to work more closely with them.<sup>181</sup>

## **Governance and interdepartmental coordination**

A well-functioning immigration system depends on good governance mechanisms and effective interdepartmental coordination. This section covers expectations that were shared with the Senate Committee in both respects.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, IRCC faced many challenges related to border closures and processing delays that affected the recruitment, reception and integration of immigrants,

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<sup>177</sup> Prime Minister of Canada, Justin Trudeau, *Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Mandate Letter*, December 16, 2021.

<sup>178</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, June 6, 2022 (AFMNB); OLLO, *Evidence*, June 6, 2022 (ABMM).

<sup>179</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, November 21, 2022 (Raymond Thériault, Commissioner of Official Languages).

<sup>180</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, February 6, 2023 (The Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor, Minister of Official Languages).

<sup>181</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, February 6, 2023 (IRCC).

refugees and international students. This slowed the achievement of francophone immigration objectives. The Commissioner of Official Languages encouraged IRCC to consider the negative impact the pandemic had on the vitality of francophone minority communities.<sup>182</sup>

The Commissioner of Official Languages also urged the department to increase awareness among its employees to avoid systemic racism.<sup>183</sup> Racism is a factor in the selection of francophone immigrants, according to a New Brunswick representative.<sup>184</sup> IRCC is aware of the problem and is committed to taking action.<sup>185</sup>

For many witnesses, the success of the Francophone Immigration Strategy depends on better interdepartmental coordination.<sup>186</sup> IRCC is not the only department involved. Success depends on effectively aligned strategies, programs and actions. Employment and Social Development Canada, Global Affairs Canada, the Canada Border Services Agency and the Privy Council Office were also cited as having a role to play. A representative from a francophone immigration network in Ontario suggested that every federal department should have a francophone immigration champion and that this objective should be part of the mandate letter for all ministers.<sup>187</sup>

The FCFA said that, while IRCC does not lack for goodwill, francophone immigration is handled solely by a directorate responsible for settlement, whereas it should be handled in a cross-cutting manner.<sup>188</sup> The 2018–2023 Action Plan for Official Languages has created a hub for francophone immigration to implement the new Francophone Immigration Strategy, but calls were made for further changes to departmental governance. One researcher recommended establishing an office responsible for an in-depth review of francophone immigration promotion, recruitment, reception and integration strategies.<sup>189</sup> The FCFA and the Commissioner of Official Languages recommended appointing an assistant deputy minister to be exclusively responsible for francophone immigration.<sup>190</sup> The Minister of

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<sup>182</sup> OCOL (2021), p. 8.

<sup>183</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 21, 2022 (Raymond Thériège, Commissioner of Official Languages).

<sup>184</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), December 5, 2022 (Opportunities New Brunswick).

<sup>185</sup> CIMM (September 28, 2022), pp. 7–9; OLLO, [Evidence](#), February 6, 2023 (IRCC).

<sup>186</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), March 28, 2022 (Jean-Pierre Corbeil); OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (FCFA); OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (ACUFC); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 21, 2022 (Université de Saint-Boniface).

<sup>187</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 28, 2022 (FINEO).

<sup>188</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (FCFA).

<sup>189</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 4, 2022 (Mariève Forest).

<sup>190</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (FCFA); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 21, 2022 (Raymond Thériège, Commissioner of Official Languages).



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Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship did not comment directly on the proposal but recognized the importance of a good governance structure.

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*“[I]t is really important that we have the right governance structure if we are going to have the right decision-making process to yield the right results.”*

**The Hon. Sean Fraser, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, May 16, 2022**

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In November 2022, the Senate Committee received a letter from IRCC deputy ministers, and invited them to appear. The testimony of the current deputy minister was reassuring.

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*“Within our department, when we have a strategy and objectives, our teams work together to try and reach them, not only in the sector responsible for francophone immigration, but also in the operations and policy sectors.”*

**IRCC, February 6, 2023**

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Some witnesses envision separate immigration powers for their province and want to establish agreements with the federal government that include targeted strategies for the reception, settlement and integration of francophone newcomers.<sup>191</sup> The Commissioner of Official Languages proposed a dual approach to immigration, consistent with the principle of linguistic duality.<sup>192</sup> This is a long-standing demand of the Acadian community.<sup>193</sup> The SANB wants a made-to-measure approach adapted to New Brunswick that respects the constitutional obligations of that province.<sup>194</sup>

## Expectations regarding the content of a future francophone immigration policy

In 2001, the federal government amended the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, adding an objective to “support and assist the development of minority official languages communities in Canada.”<sup>195</sup> Some twenty years later, it is in the *Official Languages Act* that a recognition of “the importance of the contribution of francophone immigration to enhancing the vitality of French linguistic minority communities and that immigration is one of the factors that contributes to maintaining or increasing the demographic weight of those

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<sup>191</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, April 25, 2022 (SANB); OLLO, *Evidence*, April 25, 2022 (SFM); OLLO, *Evidence*, June 6, 2022 (AFMNB).

<sup>192</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, November 21, 2022 (Raymond Th  berge, Commissioner of Official Languages).

<sup>193</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, March 28, 2022 (Leyla Sall).

<sup>194</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, April 25, 2022 (SANB).

<sup>195</sup> *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, S.C. 2001, c. 27, section 3(1)(b.1).

communities” has been proposed.<sup>196</sup> This recognition would be achieved through the adoption of a francophone immigration policy that will include objectives, targets and indicators. This section covers expectations regarding the content of the policy, which will be developed after the adoption of Bill C-13.

## A comprehensive policy

The oral and written evidence emphasized the need for a comprehensive policy that addresses all challenges and sectors concerned. The strategies to be set out in the policy must be specific.<sup>197</sup> They must also align with a strategy for francophone diplomacy, as proposed by an Atlantic organization.

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*“Diplomatic and immigration activities must interconnect.”*

**Société Nationale de l’Acadie, April 25, 2022, p. 5**

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Francophone organizations said that immigration must be seen as a societal issue.<sup>198</sup> The policy must therefore be harmonized with other approaches, in terms of access to housing, labour shortages and international education, for example. It must uphold the principles of diversity, inclusion, equity and gender equality, which will help with retention.<sup>199</sup> It must target the entire francophone integration pathway and cover all categories of immigrants.<sup>200</sup>

The FCFA and the Commissioner of Official Languages believe that the policy should target francophone immigration in the Immigration Levels Plan.<sup>201</sup> The current plan sets out the number of admissions of francophone immigrants required to meet the 4.4% target set out in the Francophone Immigration Strategy, but does not specify targets by immigrant category.<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> Bill C-13, clause 2(3) and clause 23 (first reading version, March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022).

<sup>197</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 25, 2022 (SFM).

<sup>198</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (FCFA); OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (ACUFC); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 28, 2022 (FINEO).

<sup>199</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), March 28, 2022 (Leyla Sall); OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 4, 2022 (AFFC); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 21, 2022 (Raymond Théberge, Commissioner of Official Languages).

<sup>200</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (FCFA); OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (RDÉE); OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (ACUFC); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 21, 2022 (Raymond Théberge, Commissioner of Official Languages).

<sup>201</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (FCFA); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 21, 2022 (Raymond Théberge, Commissioner of Official Languages).

<sup>202</sup> Government of Canada, [Notice – Supplementary Information for the 2023–2025 Immigration Levels Plan](#), November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022.

The policy should also target immigrants who speak neither English nor French and ensure language training to facilitate their integration into a minority setting.<sup>203</sup>

## A coordinated policy

Witnesses called for a policy that ensures effective coordination among all players. The FCFA argued the policy needs to address all stakeholders in the immigration system and cover all federal departments responsible for immigration as well as other levels of government.<sup>204</sup>

We do not know whether the future francophone immigration policy will target only francophone minority communities or whether it will take into account the reality and objectives of Quebec. One researcher noted that there doesn't seem to be an openness to harmonizing the Quebec government's objectives with those of francophones outside Quebec, but believes that francophone minority communities stand to benefit if a serious dialogue were held.<sup>205</sup> A second researcher also argued for better dialogue to take advantage of the situation.<sup>206</sup> A third researcher found the idea unrealistic, given that the provinces are competing to attract newcomers.<sup>207</sup> A fourth researcher recognized that there is little reliable data but that a need for better partnerships between Quebec and francophone minority communities exists, especially for recruitment and international promotion.<sup>208</sup>

## An ambitious policy

Francophone organizations recommended that the policy set out an objective to restore and increase the demographic weight of francophones.<sup>209</sup> However, the objective should not simply be that of hitting a target.<sup>210</sup> It must help francophone minority communities become more welcoming, more inclusive and more open to diversity.<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (FCFA); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 21, 2022 (Raymond Th  berge, Commissioner of Official Languages).

<sup>204</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (FCFA).

<sup>205</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), March 28, 2022 (Jean-Pierre Corbeil).

<sup>206</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), March 28, 2022 (Christophe Traisnel).

<sup>207</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), March 28, 2022 (Leyla Sall).


<sup>208</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 4, 2022 (Guillaume Desch  nes-Th  riault).

<sup>209</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (FCFA).

<sup>210</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), March 28, 2022 (Jean-Pierre Corbeil).

<sup>211</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), March 28, 2022 (Christophe Traisnel).





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Dedicated funding for IRCC was announced in the December 2021 Economic and Fiscal Update to support the implementation of Bill C-13 upon Royal Assent.<sup>212</sup> The Senate Committee was unable to get an overview of the funding, despite its request to the Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer to estimate the implementation costs.<sup>213</sup> The oral and written evidence suggests that needs will grow. The 2022 budget provided additional funding for immigration but did not specify whether any of that funding would be earmarked for francophone immigration.<sup>214</sup> The FCFA has called for increased funding for the future francophone immigration policy.<sup>215</sup> Expectations for the 2023–2028 Action Plan for Official Languages are high, but for now there is no indication that this initiative will be enhanced.<sup>216</sup> The Minister for Official Languages did not want to comment on funding but did commit to a more ambitious strategy.

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*“I think we should be ambitious. If we consider the entirety of demographic decline in this country, year after year, it’s important to have an ambitious strategy. We’ve all seen the census data for last August. Again, we see French declining. To compensate for this demographic decline, francophone immigration must be a key aspect.”*

**The Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor, Minister of Official Languages, February 6, 2023**

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### **A policy adapted to the needs of francophone minority communities**

The FCFA argues that the policy must be driven by and for francophone minority communities and that they must be consulted.<sup>217</sup> The FCFA recommends that all government measures on immigration be examined through a linguistic lens. Recognizing the diversity of situations across the country, most witnesses called for the approach to be adapted to the needs of the various regions. This could mean taking into account the constitutional specificity of New Brunswick and adapting the approach to that province.<sup>218</sup> The Commissioner of Official Languages raised the possibility of a separate immigration program specifically for francophones.<sup>219</sup> As to the proposal to create separate programs or streams for francophone

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<sup>212</sup> Department of Finance Canada, [2021 Economic and Fiscal Update](#), 2021, p. 69.

<sup>213</sup>

<sup>214</sup> Department of Finance Canada, [2022 Budget – A Plan to Grow Our Economy](#), 2022, pp. 117–119.

<sup>215</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (FCFA).

<sup>216</sup> Government of Canada, [Report on the consultations – Cross-Canada Official Languages Consultations 2022](#), 2022.

<sup>217</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (FCFA).

<sup>218</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 25, 2022 (SANB); OLLO, [Evidence](#), December 5, 2022 (Shirley MacLean, NBOCOL).

<sup>219</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 21, 2022 (Raymond Th  berge, Commissioner of Official Languages).



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minority communities, the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship expressed openness without making a specific commitment.

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*“I am always considering whether we need to hive off something separate for particular communities to treat them as a priority. I have not made an official decision on the creation of a new stream right now, in part because we have certain initiatives coming down that I think will show very real, tangible progress. We are launching at some point in the near future a consultation process for the national strategy on francophone immigration. I don’t want to say, on the basis of a particular stakeholder or a particular person saying, “Hey, minister, this is a good idea,” that we must do it right away. I want to make sure I have the opportunity to engage with francophone communities across Canada, to assure myself that this is something that is both wanted and that will be effective, before I make a final decision. But to your question, I’m actually very open to this idea.”*

**The Hon. Sean Fraser, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, May 16, 2022**

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The oral and written evidence highlighted the need for access to reliable data to develop a francophone immigration policy that works. The AFFC called for IRCC to work with other federal departments and agencies to produce more detailed information on the profile of francophone immigrants that can be used to develop gender and diversity sensitive programs and services.<sup>220</sup> The AFFC recommended applying the Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) to the Francophone Immigration Strategy and to the future francophone immigration policy, in part to address the needs of immigrant women. The RDÉE would like to access language data on economic issues.<sup>221</sup>

The policy should address issues related to francophone international students and their contribution to the achievement of francophone immigration objectives.<sup>222</sup> It must also take into account the role of municipalities in welcoming and integrating newcomers.<sup>223</sup> Its success will depend on building up the capacity of community organizations and francophone immigration networks, which are ready to do their part.<sup>224</sup> It will also depend on efforts to establish new pools of francophone immigrants, which will depend on the increased capacity of IRCC in some source countries.

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<sup>220</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), April 4, 2022 (AFFC); AFFC, [Brief](#), April 4, 2022, p. 8.

<sup>221</sup> RDÉE, [Brief](#), April 29, 2022, p. 9.

<sup>222</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (ACUFC); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 21, 2022 (CCNB); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 21, 2022 (Université de Hearst); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 21, 2022 (Université de Saint-Boniface).

<sup>223</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), June 6, 2022 (AFMNB).

<sup>224</sup> OLLO, [Evidence](#), May 2, 2022 (FCFA); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 28, 2022 (FINEO); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 28, 2022 (FIN-SK); OLLO, [Evidence](#), November 28, 2022 (FIN-NWT).

## The needs of Quebec’s English-speaking communities and their potential contribution to francophone immigration policy

The Senate Committee was authorized to study the impact of immigration measures and programs on the development and vitality of English-speaking communities in Quebec. It therefore heard testimony from an English-language organization in Quebec and from researchers to help it understand the situation.

For many years, the federal government has deliberately focused on supporting francophone immigration to minority communities. It has done so in its action plans, in its official languages reform document, in the mandate letter to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, and in Bill C-13.<sup>225</sup> Yet Part VII of the Act recognizes the federal government’s commitment to enhancing the vitality and supporting the development of both English and French linguistic minority communities and requires federal institutions to take positive measures in this regard.

The *Canada-Québec Accord Relating to Immigration and Temporary Admission of Aliens* provides Quebec a means to preserve its demographic importance in Canada in a way that respects the distinct identity of Quebec.<sup>226</sup> It gives the Quebec government powers over the selection, reception and integration of immigrants. While mindful of the agreement and practices in place in Quebec, there is reason to examine the impact of the Francophone Immigration Strategy on all official language minority communities and the potential contribution of English-speaking communities in Quebec to achieving its objectives. The Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN) supports the current strategy.

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*“English-speaking Quebec understands the need for a national Francophone immigration strategy – especially one that supports Canada’s French linguistic minority communities.”*

**Quebec Community Groups Network, January 2023, p. 4.**

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The challenge for English-speaking communities is to determine how to attract newcomers without undermining the aspirations of the francophone majority in Quebec and francophone minority communities outside Quebec. They want to be able to attract, integrate and retain immigrants while encouraging the promotion and learning of French.<sup>227</sup> The QCGN argues that English-language post-secondary institutions could play a role in helping newcomers

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<sup>225</sup> Government of Canada (2018); IRCC (2018); Government of Canada (2021); Prime Minister of Canada, Justin Trudeau (December 16, 2021); Bill C-13, clause 21 (first reading version, March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022).

<sup>226</sup> Government of Canada, *Canada-Québec Accord relating to Immigration and Temporary Admission of Aliens*, February 5, 1991.

<sup>227</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, January 30, 2023 (Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN)); OLLO, *Evidence*, January 30, 2023 (Richard Bourhis).

learn French.<sup>228</sup> Quebec's English-speaking minority could also play a role in helping Canada's English-speaking majority understand and support the need for the demographic renewal of francophone minority communities.<sup>229</sup> One researcher suggested that best practices on the francophone side, such as the Welcoming Francophone Communities initiative, could inspire English-speaking communities in Quebec in their approach to immigration.<sup>230</sup>

The Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship recognized that Quebec could select and welcome more immigrants, but he did not say whether the future francophone immigration policy would take into account Quebec's objectives nor whether it would build on the possible contribution of English-speaking communities in Quebec in reaching these objectives.<sup>231</sup>

There is no indication that IRCC conducted any studies on the impact of its programs and policies or of the Francophone Immigration Strategy on the vitality of English-speaking communities in Quebec. The QCGN recommends that IRCC consult with them to identify concrete measures that will enhance their vitality as part of an overall immigration strategy that will target all official language minority communities.<sup>232</sup> It argues that IRCC has an obligation to support this vitality, which is more than just demographic renewal, and states that all research activities previously supported by the department in this regard have ceased.<sup>233</sup> Researchers recognized the need to do more research and to engage English-speaking communities in Quebec in initiatives that affect francophone minority communities.<sup>234</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, January 30, 2023 (QCGN); QCGN, *Brief*, January 2023, p. 1.

<sup>229</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, January 30, 2023 (QCGN); QCGN, *Brief*, January 2023, pp. 1 and 14.

<sup>230</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, January 30, 2023 (Chedly Belkhodja).

<sup>231</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, May 16, 2022 (The Hon. Sean Fraser, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship).

<sup>232</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, January 30, 2023 (QCGN); QCGN, *Brief*, January 2023, pp. 6 and 14.

<sup>233</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, January 30, 2023 (QCGN); QCGN, *Brief*, January 2023, p. 11.

<sup>234</sup> OLLO, *Evidence*, January 30, 2023 (Chedly Belkhodja); OLLO, *Evidence*, January 30, 2023 (Jack Jedwab).

## CHAPTER 2 – FOR A STRONG, DIVERSE AND VIBRANT CANADIAN FRANCOFONIE

This chapter presents the Senate Committee’s recommendations. They call on the federal government to take action to preserve a strong, diverse and vibrant Canadian Francophonie.

### **Adopt a comprehensive, coordinated, ambitious francophone immigration policy adapted to the needs of communities**

Bill C-13 requires that the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship adopt a francophone immigration policy that includes objectives, targets and indicators. The Senate Committee’s public meetings showed that expectations for this policy are high. The Senate Committee expects that an order-in-council requiring its adoption will be made soon after passage of Bill C-13.

The Senate Committee recognizes the need for a bolder vision, one that is focused on the remedial character of language rights and that builds on a strong, diverse and vibrant Francophonie. The federal government must therefore adopt a comprehensive, coordinated and ambitious policy that is adapted to the needs of francophone minority communities and developed in consultation with them.

The policy must cover all partners in the immigration sector as well as the entire francophone integration pathway. It must include ambitious targets adapted to the needs of the various regions, including a new remedial and growth target. It must take into account the constitutional specificity of New Brunswick, including the obligation to ensure the equality of both linguistic communities in that province. It must ensure coordination among all relevant federal departments as well as other levels of government and clearly set out the responsibilities of each. It must harmonize the approach to francophone immigration with those addressing access to housing, labour shortages and international education. The Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship must monitor and report on the implementation of the policy’s objectives, targets and indicators.

Therefore, the Senate Committee recommends:

## Recommendation 1

That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, in collaboration with provincial and territorial governments and in consultation with municipalities, francophone minority communities, professional bodies and employers, adopt a francophone immigration policy without delay. The policy must:


- (a) address all partners, that is, the federal government, provincial and territorial governments, municipalities, community organizations, francophone immigration networks, French-language schools, French-language post-secondary institutions, professional bodies and employers;
- (b) cover the entire francophone integration pathway;
- (c) include ambitious francophone immigration objectives adapted to the needs of the various regions, including a new target for francophone immigrants settling outside Quebec;
- (d) recognize, in the specific case of New Brunswick, the equality of the two linguistic communities set out in section 16.1 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*;
- (e) ensure interdepartmental and intergovernmental coordination;
- (f) clearly state the responsibilities of all relevant federal departments; and
- (g) harmonize the approach to francophone immigration with those of access to housing, labour shortages and international education.

That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada monitor the implementation of the policy's objectives, targets and indicators and periodically report to Parliament and the public.

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## Set a remedial and growth target adapted to the needs of the various regions

The Canadian Francophonie face a bleak future if nothing is done to ensure its long-term survival. The solution lies largely in immigration. The Senate Committee's public meetings confirmed that it is essential to set a new target for francophone immigration that is more ambitious and adapted to regional realities. This target must be both a remedial and a growth target. Slowing the decline in the demographic weight of francophone minority communities is not enough. It must be reversed.



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At the time of writing, the preamble to Bill C-13 was amended at committee stage in the House of Commons to recognize the importance of remedying the decline in the demographic weight of French linguistic minority communities, including by restoring and increasing their demographic weight, and the role of francophone immigration in this regard. This is a first step in the right direction: the importance of taking action would be recognized in the Act. The second step is to set a national target that works and that is adapted to the needs of the provinces, territories and communities.

The Senate Committee supports a multi-year target that increases each year, but does not take a position on the target(s) to be set. Access to reliable and up-to-date data is essential to proposing sustainable solutions. Updating language projections based on 2021 Census data should therefore be considered. The Senate Committee recommends that IRCC set a new target based on reliable data and include it in its francophone immigration policy. In addition, it is important that IRCC monitor and periodically report on results achieved in order to adjust its approach as necessary.

Therefore, the Senate Committee recommends:

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**Recommendation 2**

**That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, in collaboration with provincial and territorial governments and in consultation with francophone minority communities, set a new target for francophone immigrants settling outside Quebec. The target must:**

- (a) focus on the remedial character of language rights and restoring the demographic weight of francophone minority communities;**
- (b) be adapted to the needs of each province and territory and to the realities of the various regions; and**
- (c) be part of the francophone immigration policy, be monitored and reported on and be revised upwards periodically.**

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The Senate Committee also recommends:

### Recommendation 3

**That Statistics Canada be mandated by the federal government to update language projections based on 2021 Census data in order to inform the development, adoption, implementation and monitoring of measures and programs that will support the new target of francophone immigrants settling outside Quebec.**

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### **Adapt the design of measures and programs to the needs of the Canadian Francophonie**

Part VII of the Act calls for positive measures and consultation with official language minority communities at all stages, from the development to the implementation of measures and programs. The Senate Committee's public meetings showed that the federal government must do more to meet this objective and that it must do things differently. The challenges of francophone immigration differ from region to region, and the capacities of host communities differ. It is therefore important to adapt the approach to real needs, in a spirit of substantive equality. Despite their good intentions, the measures and programs in place do not fully or equally meet the needs of communities across the country.

The Senate Committee believes that the Francophone Immigration Strategy is a strategy in its own right that must go beyond simply copying regular immigration programs. It stands with francophone minority communities in calling for a by and for approach that is adapted to their needs and that promotes their realities. Programs under the francophone immigration policy need to be re-thought.

First, the Senate Committee calls for the creation of a separate economic immigration program for francophone minority communities. This program must be developed by and for francophone minority communities according to their specific labour needs. While Express Entry has shown some success, the Senate Committee supports the substantive equality approach advocated in *DesRochers v. Canada (Industry)*, whereby minority communities can expect to access programs that are separate from those of the majority. Specific measures could target the education, early childhood and health care sectors. The francophone immigration corridor could be expanded to sectors other than education.

Second, the Senate Committee calls on IRCC to create francophone streams in programs that target other immigration categories such as family sponsorship, refugee resettlement and provincial nominees. The success of the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program could inspire similar programs elsewhere in Canada.



In addition, the Senate Committee recommends that IRCC build on the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot to create an immigration pilot specifically for rural francophone communities. Lastly, the Senate Committee recognizes that the federal government will have an easier time achieving its francophone immigration objectives if it taps the large pool of francophone international students. This Canadian-trained pool will be able to meet the labour needs of communities once they graduate.

Therefore, the Senate Committee recommends:

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#### **Recommendation 4**

**That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, in collaboration with provincial and territorial governments and in consultation with francophone minority communities, adapt its measures and programs to the needs of the Canadian Francophonie and align them with the objectives of the francophone immigration policy. To this end, the department must:**

- (a) create a separate economic immigration program for francophone minority communities that addresses their labour force needs and that includes specific measures for the education, early childhood and health care sectors;**
- (b) create francophone streams in family sponsorship, refugee resettlement and provincial nominee programs;**
- (c) create an immigration pilot in rural francophone communities;**
- d) tap the pool of francophone international students as part of the Francophone Immigration Strategy.**

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#### **Target francophone immigration in the Immigration Levels Plan**

The federal government recognizes the importance of supporting the vitality of official language minority communities through immigration, and so it seems appropriate to target francophone immigration in the Immigration Levels Plan. As the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship himself has recognized, everything must be done to protect the Canadian Francophonie as the population grows and to keep our linguistic duality intact. The federal government has just announced new objectives to welcome up to 500,000 newcomers by 2025. Without proper planning and measures that target francophone applicants, the principle of linguistic duality could be considerably compromised.



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The Senate Committee believes it is important for the federal government to determine the proportion of francophone immigrants to be recruited in each immigration category. This must be done in collaboration with the provinces and territories, which have an important role to play in recruiting francophone applicants, including through the Provincial Nominee Program. This will also be true for municipalities once the Municipal Nominee Program is up and running. The Senate Committee also recognizes the importance of updating the federal–provincial/territorial action plan in light of these new objectives.

Therefore, the Senate Committee recommends:

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### Recommendation 5

**That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, in collaboration with provincial and territorial governments and in consultation with municipalities and francophone minority communities, determine the proportion of francophone applicants to be recruited in each immigration category, clearly state its objectives in this regard in the current Immigration Levels Plan, and update the federal–provincial/territorial action plan to increase francophone immigration outside Quebec accordingly.**

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### Increase support for the entire francophone integration pathway

It is impossible to achieve desired objectives without the necessary resources. Francophone immigration networks and organizations are calling for increased funding for francophone immigration to meet needs on the ground. In recent years, the federal government has made great strides thanks to its funding of the francophone integration pathway. However, the Senate Committee’s public meetings revealed pressing and growing needs, especially as immigration becomes the main driver of population growth.

The Senate Committee expects that the 2023–2028 Action Plan for Official Languages will announce improvements in the way francophone minority communities and their networks can participate in the recruitment, reception and retention of newcomers. The same is true of French-language school boards and their schools, as well as of French-language post-secondary institutions, which must have adequate funding to fully participate in the implementation of the Francophone Immigration Strategy. The Senate Committee recognizes that support for employers is also needed to facilitate the recruitment of more francophone or bilingual workers. In general, it expects the federal government to adopt clear objectives for the entire francophone integration pathway and for all community development sectors.

The Senate Committee was pleased to hear that the Welcoming Francophone Communities initiative, from the perspective of service providers, has been a complete success and notes that there are high expectations for its future. By making the initiative permanent and expanding it to other communities across the country, further significant gains in francophone immigration are clearly possible. That said, given persistent issues related to racism, the Senate Committee stresses the need for collaboration with partner organizations to make the communities in question aware about diversity issues so that immigrants are welcomed and integrated with respect. Furthermore, the Senate Committee supports having the reception model at Pearson International Airport possibly inspire similar projects elsewhere in the country.

Therefore, the Senate Committee recommends:

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### **Recommendation 6**

**That the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and the Minister of Official Languages increase funding for francophone immigration in the 2023–2028 Action Plan for Official Languages and update the Francophone Immigration Strategy. The new strategy must:**

- (a) strengthen the recruitment, reception and retention capacities of francophone minority communities and francophone immigration networks;**
  - (b) enable French-language school boards and their schools, as well as French-language post-secondary institutions, to participate fully in its implementation;**
  - (c) support employers in facilitating the recruitment of francophone or bilingual workers;**
  - (d) have clear objectives for the entire francophone integration pathway and for all community development sectors;**
  - (e) make the Welcoming Francophone Communities initiative permanent and expand it to other communities across the country;**
  - (f) promote collaboration with partner organizations to make the communities in question aware about diversity issues so that immigrants are welcomed and integrated with respect; and**
  - (g) encourage other communities to implement the reception model at Pearson International Airport in their communities.**
-

## Tap francophone pools

Access to a critical mass of francophone candidates to increase the number selected is essential. The Senate Committee's public meetings drew attention to the need to recruit from promising francophone pools. To achieve the desired results, recruitment activities must be combined with international promotion activities.

The Senate Committee agrees that IRCC's capacity in sub-Saharan Africa is insufficient. Capacity must be increased to take advantage of this francophone pool. The federal government must better promote the realities of francophone minority communities in Africa and in the other member countries of the Francophonie. This includes the existence of French-language post-secondary institutions capable of welcoming francophone international students. Additional efforts are also needed to facilitate the reception and resettlement of francophone refugees.

Therefore, the Senate Committee recommends:

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### Recommendation 7

**That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada review its recruitment and promotion activities for francophone immigration. To this end, the department must:**

- (a) increase the capacity of visa offices in sub-Saharan Africa and evaluate needs in member countries of the Francophonie;**
- (b) better promote the realities of francophone minority communities in all member countries of the Francophonie, including the existence of French-language post-secondary institutions capable of welcoming francophone international students; and**
- (c) facilitate the reception and resettlement of francophone refugees from member countries of the Francophonie.**

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The Senate Committee also recommends that Global Affairs Canada develop a francophone diplomatic strategy that aligns with the Francophone Immigration Strategy and that promotes, through funding, the participation of institutions and organizations in francophone minority communities in international recruitment and promotion activities.

Therefore, the Senate Committee recommends:

### **Recommendation 8**

**That Global Affairs Canada develop a francophone diplomatic strategy aligned with the Francophone Immigration Strategy and provide the necessary resources to institutions and organizations in francophone minority communities to participate in international recruitment and promotion activities.**

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The Senate Committee's public meetings noted that a lack of sensitivity on the part of immigration officers or embassy staff can stand in the way of achieving results in francophone immigration. The Senate Committee believes that IRCC and Global Affairs Canada employees need to be made aware of the existence and importance of institutions and organizations in francophone minority communities as factors in the success of the francophone integration pathway. Both departments must also make the third parties working on their behalf, in other words their partners and subcontractors, aware of these same realities. In the same vein, there is a need for greater awareness of equity, diversity, inclusion and gender equality issues.

Therefore, the Senate Committee recommends:

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### **Recommendation 9**

**That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and Global Affairs Canada make their employees, partners and subcontractors aware of the existence and importance of institutions and organizations in francophone minority communities as factors in the success of the francophone integration pathway as well as equity, diversity, inclusion and gender equality issues.**

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### **Remove barriers, reduce red tape and increase transparency**

The Senate Committee's public meetings highlighted practices, both internal and external, that impede progress on francophone immigration or that unnecessarily complicate the process. The Senate Committee calls for removing barriers, reducing red tape and increasing IRCC's transparency in decision-making and the achievement of results.

We hear it time and time again: lasting solutions are needed to improve foreign credential recognition, both provincially and nationally. This is a huge barrier to both the integration of francophone newcomers and interprovincial mobility. In the current environment of labour

shortages, it is important that solutions be adapted to the needs of francophone minority communities. The Senate Committee calls on IRCC to continue seeking solutions by fostering greater collaboration with Employment and Social Development Canada, provincial and territorial governments, French-language post-secondary institutions and professional bodies.

The high rate of refusal of study permits for francophone international students adds to these challenges. The Senate Committee also calls for solutions that do not penalize French-language post-secondary institutions in their desire to contribute to the achievement of francophone immigration objectives. The Senate Committee's public meetings revealed a lack of understanding about existing barriers, delays in processing applications and a lack of explanatory information. Administrative barriers must be reduced. This means removing barriers to study permits for francophone international students who choose to study at a French-language post-secondary institution, speeding up the processing of applications and increasing transparency around decisions.

Lastly, community organizations, francophone immigration networks and francophone post-secondary institutions face red tape in meeting IRCC's requirements. They already lack the capacity needed to respond to all the challenges of francophone immigration. They are understaffed, like all other sectors of the economy, and do not have the resources to take on this administrative burden. The Senate Committee recommends that this administrative burden be reduced so that energies are invested in the right place to ensure that the Francophone Immigration Strategy is achieved.

Therefore, the Senate Committee recommends:

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### **Recommendation 10**

**That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada review its practices in order to streamline processes and practices that have a direct impact on the achievement of the Francophone Immigration Strategy objectives. To this end, the department must:**

- (a) actively collaborate with Employment and Social Development Canada, provincial and territorial governments, French-language post-secondary institutions and professional bodies to find lasting solutions to foreign credential recognition that are responsive to the labour needs of francophone minority communities;**
- (b) reduce barriers to study permits for francophone international students who choose to study at a French-language post-secondary institution, speed up the processing of applications and increase transparency around decisions; and**

- (c) **reduce the administrative burden on institutions in francophone minority communities.**
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### **Facilitate the transition to permanent residence**

One of the key recommendations made during the Senate Committee's public meetings was to support and expand pathways to permanent residence for francophone newcomers. This strategy worked well during the COVID-19 pandemic, and it should continue to work well in the future. Francophone international students are obvious choices for francophone minority communities, but pathways for temporary workers and refugees should also be made easier. This will help achieve the new target.

Canadian experience greatly facilitates access to permanent residence. The Senate Committee proposes making more work opportunities available for francophone international students during their studies. Once their studies are completed, access to post-graduation work permits also needs to be increased, which will encourage them to stay in their host community and contribute to its development. The federal government can also fund employment contracts for employers who wish to hire francophone or bilingual candidates.

Furthermore, given the potential contribution of temporary residents to achieving the Francophone Immigration Strategy objectives, the Senate Committee believes that barriers facing temporary residents need to be removed. A long-standing demand from community organizations and francophone immigration networks is to make French-language settlement services and language training available to temporary workers and francophone international students, who can make a significant contribution to governments' francophone immigration objectives. The Senate Committee also supports the idea of expanding access to services under the Welcoming Francophone Communities initiative to temporary workers and francophone international students.

Therefore, the Senate Committee recommends:

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#### **Recommendation 11**

**That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, in collaboration with provincial and territorial governments and in consultation with francophone minority communities, facilitate the transition of francophone candidates to permanent residence. To this end, the department must:**



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- (a) facilitate access to work permits for francophone or bilingual temporary residents and access to post-graduation work permits for francophone international students;**
  - (b) provide financial incentives to employers who wish to hire francophone or bilingual candidates;**
  - (c) make French-language settlement services and language training available to temporary workers and francophone international students; and**
  - (d) expand services under the Welcoming Francophone Communities initiative to temporary workers and francophone international students.**
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### **Build on effective governance**

The Senate Committee's public meetings were a reminder that success in francophone immigration depends on leadership, political will and effective governance. While progress has been made, the Senate Committee believes that having someone in a key position at IRCC would lead to better results, regardless of the government of the day. The Senate Committee therefore proposes the creation of an assistant deputy minister position responsible exclusively for francophone immigration. The incumbent would support the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship in reviewing the Francophone Immigration Strategy, adopting the francophone immigration policy and setting a new target for francophone immigrants settling outside Quebec. The incumbent would also assume the resulting oversight and reporting responsibilities.

Therefore, the Senate Committee recommends:

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### **Recommendation 12**

**That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada create an assistant deputy minister position who will support the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship in reviewing the Francophone Immigration Strategy, adopting the francophone immigration policy, setting a new target for francophone immigrants settling outside Quebec, and assuming the resulting oversight and reporting responsibilities.**

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## CONCLUSION

The Senate Committee notes that significant progress has been made on francophone immigration since its 2014 and 2019 reports. But repeated difficulties in meeting the target of 4.4% of French-speaking immigrants outside Quebec have raised questions about the way forward. The Senate Committee is pleased that this target was met in 2022, but is alarmed about the impact that the inadequate intake of francophone newcomers may have had on the development and vitality of francophone minority communities. The 2021 Census data underscores the urgency of taking action to address the declining demographic weight of francophones.

Achieving and exceeding the federal government's objectives requires both political will and changes in the design of immigration policies and programs and in governance. The oral and written evidence stresses the importance of reviewing the approach. Adopting a comprehensive, coordinated and ambitious francophone immigration policy that meets the needs of Canada's francophone minority communities will be an opportunity to do it.

The Senate Committee hopes that the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship fulfills his mandate by continuing to implement an ambitious national strategy to support francophone immigration across the country, with the support of the Minister of Official Languages. Immigration can be a real asset for the future, development and vitality of francophone minority communities.

The Senate Committee notes that IRCC has responsibilities for the development and vitality of both official language minority communities. Part VII of the Act is clear on this. Furthermore, Bill C-13, if passed, would strengthen the idea that immigration is one of the sectors essential to enhancing the vitality of English and French linguistic minority communities. Evidence from the Senate Committee's public meetings suggests that the impact of the Francophone Immigration Strategy on English-speaking communities in Quebec has not been adequately assessed. Consultation and further research seem necessary. The Senate Committee encourages IRCC to explore this matter.

The Senate Committee is aware of the crucial importance of immigration practices on the future of the Canadian Francophonie and Canada's linguistic duality. It is no longer enough to slow the decline in the demographic weight of francophone minority communities; it must be reversed. An approach that focuses on positive measures, consultation, harmonized strategies and collaboration among all partners is essential. Part VII of the Act requires this. The 2023–2028 Action Plan for Official Languages will be an opportunity to reaffirm and strengthen the duties of federal institutions in immigration.

## **APPENDIX A – Witnesses**

### **Monday, March 28, 2022**

Jean-Pierre Corbeil, Adjunct Professor, Department of Sociology, Laval University, as an individual

Eric Caron Malenfant, Assistant Director, Centre for Demography, Statistics Canada

Laurent Martel, Director, Centre for Demography, Statistics Canada

Leyla Sall, Professor of Sociology, Department of Sociology and Criminology, Université de Moncton, as an individual

Christophe Traisnel, Professor of Political Science, Arts and Social Sciences Faculty, Université de Moncton, as an individual

### **Monday, April 4, 2022**

Soukaina Boutiyeb, Executive Director, Alliance des femmes de la francophonie canadienne

Denis M. Chartrand, President, Fédération nationale des conseils scolaires francophones

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault, doctoral student in political science, University of Ottawa, as an individual

Mariève Forest, Visiting Professor, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ottawa, as an individual

Nour Enayeh, President, Alliance des femmes de la francophonie canadienne

Valérie Morand, Executive Director, Fédération nationale des conseils scolaires francophones

### **Monday, April 25, 2022**

Ali Chaisson, Executive Director, Société de l'Acadie du Nouveau-Brunswick



**Francophone immigration to minority communities:  
towards a bold, strong and coordinated approach**

Alexandre Cédric Doucet, President, Société de l'Acadie du Nouveau-Brunswick

Peter Hominuk, Executive Director, Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario

Carol Jolin, President, Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario

Véronique Mallet, Executive Director, Société Nationale de l'Acadie

Bintou Sacko, Director, Accueil francophone, Société de la francophonie manitobaine

Martin Théberge, President, Société Nationale de l'Acadie

**Monday, May 2, 2022**

Roukya Abdi Aden, Manager, National Consultation on Economic Development and Employability, Réseau de développement économique et d'employabilité

Alain Dupuis, Executive Director, Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada

Martin Normand, Director, Strategic Research and International Relations, Association des collèges et universités de la francophonie canadienne

Liane Roy, President, Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada

**Monday, May 16, 2022**

The Honourable Sean Fraser, P.C., M.P, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship

Marie-Josée Dorion, Acting Director General, Operations Planning and Performance, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

Catherine Scott, Assistant Deputy Minister, Settlement and Integration, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship

Caroline Xavier, Acting Deputy Minister, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship

**Monday, June 6, 2022**

Michelle Barclay, Director of Policy, Association francophone des municipalités du Nouveau-Brunswick

Kassim Dombia, 2nd Vice President of the Board of Directors, Association francophone des municipalités du Nouveau-Brunswick

Annie Girard, Associate, Municipal immigration file, Association of Bilingual Municipalities of Manitoba

**Monday, November 21, 2022**

Pascale Giguère, General Counsel, Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages

Martin Labelle, Director of Investigations, Compliance Assurance Branch, Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages

Pierre Leduc, Assistant Commissioner, Policy and Communications Branch, Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages

Samantha Losier, International Office Advisor, Université de Hearst

Christian Perron, Director, Recruitment and Student Services, Université de Saint-Boniface


Luc Tardif, Director of International Recruitment and Immersion Schools, Recruitment Office, Université Sainte-Anne

Raymond Théberge, Commissioner of Official Languages, Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages

Juan Manuel Toro Lara, Director, Enrolment Management, Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick

**Monday, November 28, 2022**

Ferdinand Bararuzunza, Program Coordinator, Francophone Immigration Network of Saskatchewan



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Lisa Boisneault, Coordinator, Welcoming Francophone Community of Yellowknife

Brigitte Duguay Langlais, Coordinator, Francophone Immigration Network of Eastern Ontario

Audrey Fournier, Executive Director, Fédération franco-ténoise, Francophone Immigration Network of the Northwest Territories

Sandrine Lebon, Project Officer, Welcoming Francophone Community of Moose Jaw and Gravelbourg

Jean-Marie Mariez, Supervisor of Instruction, French Programs Welcoming Francophone Community of Yellowknife

Chantal Morin, Coordinator, Welcoming Francophone Community of Moose Jaw and Gravelbourg

**Monday, December 5, 2022**

Marie-Josée Groulx, Director, Workforce Attraction and Integration, Population Growth Team, Opportunities Nouveau-Brunswick

Shirley MacLean, Commissioner of Official Languages for New Brunswick, Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages for New Brunswick

**Monday, January 30, 2023**

Chedly Belkhodja, Full Professor at the School of Community Public Affairs and Director of the Centre for Policy and Immigration Studies, Concordia University, as an individual

Richard Bourhis, Emeritus Professor, Department of Psychology, Université du Québec à Montréal, as an individual

Jack Jedwab, President and Chief Executive Officer, Association for Canadian Studies

Sylvia Martin-Laforge, Director General, Quebec Community Groups Network

Stephen Thompson, Director of Government Relations, Policy and Research, Quebec Community Groups Network



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**Monday, February 6, 2023**

The Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor P.C., M.P., Minister of Official Languages

Julie Boyer, Assistant Deputy Minister, Official Languages, Canadian Heritage

Christiane Fox, Deputy Minister, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

Isabelle Mondou, Deputy Minister, Canadian Heritage

Jean-François Roussy, Senior Director, Policy and Research, Official Languages Branch,  
Canadian Heritage

Catherine Scott, Assistant Deputy Minister, Settlement and Integration, Immigration,  
Refugees and Citizenship Canada

## APPENDIX B – Briefs and other documents

Alliance des femmes de la francophonie canadienne, *Considering the needs of immigrant women for successful integration into francophone minority communities*, Brief to the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages, April 4, 2022.

Francophone Immigration Network of Nova Scotia, *Brief*, November 28, 2022.

Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, *Statistical analysis of the 4.4% immigration target for French-speaking immigrants in Francophone minority communities: Almost 20 years after setting the target, it is time to do more and better*, Final Report, November 2021.

Quebec Community Groups Network, *Study matters relating to Francophone immigration to minority communities*, Brief to the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages, January 2023.

Réseau de développement économique et d'employabilité, *Overview of Challenges and Priorities Related to Francophone Immigration to Minority Communities*, Brief to the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages, April 29, 2022.

Société Nationale de l'Acadie, *Francophone Immigration to Atlantic Canada*, Brief to the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages, April 25, 2022.

Sociopol, *Faire le point sur la cible en immigration francophone : Bilan, enjeux et pistes d'action*, Study commissioned by the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada, March 2022 [AVAILABLE IN FRENCH ONLY].



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