

QCGN Brief to the Senate Standing Committee on Official Languages
Study matters relating to Francophone immigration to minority communities
January 2023

Summary

The Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN) is always pleased to be invited to participate in studies conducted by Parliamentary Committees. Part of our mandate is to help Parliamentarians understand the priorities and concerns of Canada's English linguistic minority community – the English-speaking Community of Quebec – in the formulation of legislation and national policies.

We are happy for the opportunity to contribute to this study on the development of “an ambitious national Francophone immigration strategy” to support Canada's French linguistic minority communities. English-speaking Quebec is an authentic and natural ally for Francophone official language minority communities (OLMC). Within a national Francophone immigration strategy for example, our community could play a role in helping the English-speaking majority understand and support the need for demographic renewal of Francophone OLMCs. We could also continue to support research activities and forums addressing official language minority immigration and community adhesion.

The post-secondary institutions of English-speaking Quebec are an important vector of immigration. Here one could envision the Governments of Canada and Quebec leveraging the attraction of these institutions to include more French immersion and second-language French programs that lead to government-recognized French language competencies. They could also be used to assist in teaching French to newcomers, and providing tailored, job-specific French-language training. This in turn could be an important source of demographic renewal for Francophone OLMCs.

Unfortunately, English-speaking Quebec is not a factor in federal immigration policies for two reasons. First, the policy vision is too narrow, focusing on demographic renewal; immigration as a tool to halt and reverse numerical and proportional decline. The population of English-speaking Quebec is growing. The population of Francophone communities outside of Quebec is declining. This brief argues that a national immigration policy should include both OLMCs; there is a place within it for English-speaking Quebec.

The second reason is the Government of Canada's risk adverse approach to the implementation of *the Canada-Québec Accord relating to Immigration and Temporary Admission of Aliens* (the Accord). We believe that Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) is failing to meet its legal obligations to our community for fear of

offending the Accord. Although we go into some detail on this in the brief, the time available and the Committee's focus precludes an exhaustive study. We recommend this legal analysis should be done by government and Parliament and made public.

Demographic renewal is one of six vitality indicators. Immigration to an official language minority community means more than increasing population numbers. This study's order of reference asks the Committee to study the impact of a national Francophone immigration strategy on the development and vitality of the English-speaking communities of Quebec. We are grateful for the opportunity. This brief discusses why English-speaking Quebec has a place in Canada's immigration policy, explains why we feel IRCC is not fulfilling their duty to enhance the vitality of our community, and makes recommendations on a way forward.

Introduction

The Senate, by an order of reference dated February 10, 2022 has authorized the Senate Standing Committee on Official Languages to examine and report on Francophone immigration to minority communities. This study stems from the federal government’s plan “to develop an ambitious national Francophone immigration strategy”.

The same order of reference authorizes the Committee to “study the impact of these measures and programs on the development and vitality of the English-speaking communities of Quebec.”

This brief argues in support of a national Francophone immigration strategy, which is meant to enhance the vitality of Canada’s French linguistic minority communities. It also explores the Government of Canada’s general duty to enhance the vitality of Canada’s English and French linguistic minority communities, and details how the federal government - through the actions of IRCC – is not meeting its duty with respect to English-speaking Quebec. Finally, it argues that federal immigration policy should include English-speaking Quebec, and how our community can be supported within a national OLMC immigration strategy, by reconsidering our community as an ally to achieve related policy objectives.

What are the Indicators of Community Vitality?

This brief refers frequently to the concept of community vitality. We will therefore begin by listing the six factors used by the Department of Canadian Heritage to measure community vitality:

1. Individuals who have a sense of belonging to the language community, who have linguistic aspirations and relevant practices.
2. A community that has a collective leadership and an ability to mobilize its people and its community organizations.
3. An environment that: offers the possibility of receiving an education in your own language; provides recreational and cultural activities in your own language; includes the presence of institutions and a provision of services; allows for the possibility of participating in the economic and social expansion of the community; and encourages the visibility of language.
4. Relationships with the majority that lead to support and cooperation between the two linguistic groups, recognition and respect of language rights, and influence and authority within the majority institutions.
5. Demographic and demolinguistic renewal through natural population growth, immigration, and language practices that ensure the retention and transmission of the language.

6. Lastly, the communities' ability to participate in a wider linguistic environment.¹

Note that only one of the six factors involves demographic size. It is tempting to think that immigration only applies to this factor, but in fact, the effects of immigration are far reaching. If a minority school is cut off from immigrants for example, its student population will decline much faster than that of the majority, which is the case in Quebec.² Quebec – through Bill 96 - cuts off government services in the minority language after six months and has banned a class of immigrants on the basis of language, effecting the possibility of participating in the economic and social expansion of the minority community.

The Need for Targeted Francophone Immigration

English-speaking Quebec understand the need for a national Francophone immigration strategy – especially one that supports Canada's French linguistic minority communities. Canada's English and French OLMCs permit the realization of the core national value of linguistic duality. Without them, a Canadian identity rooted in our two official languages cannot be realized from sea to sea to sea. Francophone OLMCs are particularly vulnerable to demographic degradation, a key component of community vitality.

There is no evidence to suggest that English-speaking Quebec requires a targeted immigration strategy focused on demographic renewal. In terms of absolute and proportional numbers, our community is growing; growth that is projected to continue until at least 2036. Nor is there evidence to suggest that the use of English is in decline, in Canada generally, nor in Quebec. English-speaking Quebec's challenges lie elsewhere within the vitality spectrum.³

There are two interconnected dimensions of language policy in Canada. The first dimension relates to cultural identity, with language being a critical marker. This link

¹ See *Framework for the Vitality of Official-Language Minority Communities* (OLMC), Department of Canadian Heritage (Official Languages Branch) 2021. https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/pch/documents/services/official-languages-bilingualism/publications/vitality-minority-communities/Cadrevitalite_eng.pdf accessed January 17, 2023.

² There has been a 67% decline in English-school enrolment in Quebec since 1971, compared to a 34% decrease in the French system. *Indicateurs Linguistiques, Seceur de l'éducation* Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, 2013. http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/site_web/documents/PSG/statistiques_info_decisionnelle/PSG_indicateurs_linguistiques_2013.pdf accessed January 25, 2023. Quebec has not acceded to s.23(1)(a) of the Charter; children of immigrants whose parents did not receive their primary school instruction in Canada in English are not eligible to attend English schools.

³ *Framework for the Vitality of Official-Language Minority Communities*, supra. See particularly *Working Together for a More Vital Community; The 2022-2017 Community Development Plan for English-speaking Quebec*, Quebec Community Groups Network. <https://qcg.ca/community-priorities/#development> accessed January 25, 2023.

between language, culture and identity is well understood, and is perhaps most clearly reflected in the preamble to the Charter of the French Language,

“WHEREAS the French language, the distinctive language of a people that is in the majority French-speaking, is the instrument by which that people has articulated its identity.”

The second dimension of language policy is language use, or put another way, knowledge of a language.

Reflections of both dimensions are reflected in Canada’s constitution, federal law, and the Government of Canada’s regulations, policies, and programs. Think here about Canada’s commitment to the vitality of the English and French OLMCs, which are constitutionally and legal defined along provincial lines. An example of the second dimension is the federal government’s support of second-language learning.

Immigration is a tool to assist OLMCs maintain and grow their relative absolute and relative demographic size, an important element of community vitality. Canada has long had policies and programs in place related to Francophone immigration. The current Action Plan for Official Languages – 2018-2023: Investing in Our Future for example commits a total of just over \$70 million over five years to immigration to Francophone official-language minority communities and the Francophone integration pathway. And the preamble to the Canada-Québec Accord relating to Immigration and Temporary Admission of Aliens outlines that agreement’s purpose, “to provide Québec with new means to preserve its demographic importance in Canada, and to ensure the integration of immigrants in Québec in a manner that respects the distinct identity of Québec.”

There are slight declines in recent Francophone populations of Canada. For example, the French First Official Language Spoken (FOLS) population of Canada in 2011 was 7.7 million people, or 23.2 per cent of the population. In 2021, it was 8 million, or 22.0 per cent of the population, a 1.2 per cent decline over 10 years.

Francophone OLMC Population (FOLS)⁴

- 2011 – 1,012,083, (3.1% of the Canadian population)
- 2021 – 992, 305 (2.7% of the Canadian population)

English OLMC and French FOLS Quebec 1971 – 2021

- 1971 English 15.9% French 81.9%
- 2001 English 11.6% French 85.0%

⁴ First Official Language Spoken (FOLS)...FOLS FR + (.5*FOLS EN/FR). All data from Stats Can census profiles unless otherwise noted.

- 2011 English 13.5% French 85.5%
- 2021 English 14.9% French 84.1%⁵

Although there has been a slight proportional decline of Francophones within Quebec over the past decade, this population has increased over the past 50 years. Statistics Canada projects the proportional weight of Francophone OLMCs to remain stable out to 2036 at 3 per cent, and the number of Francophones in Quebec to drop to 81.8 per cent of that province's population.⁶ The English-speaking Community of Quebec is regaining its historic relative weight in Quebec and is projected to continue to grow to just over 17 per cent by 2036.⁷

The picture is similar in terms of language use. In 2011, 9.9 million Canadians (30.1%) could speak French; in 2021, the figure was 10,669,575 (29.1%).⁸ Although immigration plays a role in boosting this number (having a French environment available to speak and hear French is critical), real growth is a function of second-language learning. Gains may be made by teaching non-Francophone immigrants outside of Quebec French (and there it is certainly worthwhile to integrate a proportion of these people into the French OLMCs), however, the potential number here is small compared to the integration of immigrants in French in Quebec and encouraging English-speaking Canadians to learn and use French.

Summary

- Targeted immigration programs to attract Francophone immigrants to Canada is vital to supporting the core national value of linguistic duality.
- From a strategic perspective, there is no apparent need for a corresponding program for the English-speaking minority that targets demographic and demolingistic renewal. However, since immigration has a positive effect on other measures of community vitality, the federal government should include English-speaking Quebec in an OLMC national immigration policy.

⁵ Corbeil, Jean-Pierre et al. *Portrait of Official-Language Minorities in Canada – Anglophones in Quebec*, Statistics Canada, September 2010. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/89-642-x/89-642-x2010002-eng.pdf?st=98NmJWR8> accessed January 17, 2023. Also, Statistics Canada 2021 Census Profile.

⁶Houle, René, and Corbeil, Jean-Pierre, *Language Projections for Canada, 2011 to 2036*. Statistics Canada, January 25, 2017. Table 3.4, p.56 <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/89-657-x/89-657-x2017001-eng.pdf?st=hG8cEUB> accessed January 17, 2023.

⁷ Houle and Corbeil, supra. With few exceptions, English populations are growing across Quebec's economic regions

⁸ Knowledge of Official Languages...French + EN/FR

The Government of Canada's Duties and Responsibilities Related to Immigration within the Framework of its Official Languages

Jurisdiction

Immigration is designated as a class of subject in the *Constitution Act, 1867* but it is not attributed exclusively to either the federal or the provincial legislature. Section 95 of the *Constitution Act, 1867*⁹ confers concurrent jurisdiction in on the federal and provincial governments, which can both legislate on these matters. Section 95 establishes federal paramountcy, in that any laws that the provinces pass must not be “repugnant to any Act of the Parliament of Canada.”¹⁰

This makes legal and historical sense.

Immigration involves engaging with foreign countries, and international legal instruments, and the conduct of foreign relations falls within the prerogative powers of the Crown (*Canada (Prime Minister) v. Khadr*, 2010 SCC 3, [2010] 1 S.C.R. 44 at para 33-34). Moreover, Article 2 of the *Convention on Rights and Duties of States adopted by the Seventh International Conference of American States* (Montevideo Convention) clarifies that, “The federal state shall constitute a sole person in the eyes of international law.”

Historically, we note that the division of powers – including here areas of concurrent jurisdiction – had a practical purpose. This mechanism addressed the “diversity within a single nation by granting significant powers to provincial governments (*Reference re Secession of Quebec* [1998] 2 SCR 217 at para 43). It also reflected underlying constitutional principles; of relevance here the principle of the protection of minorities, specifically guarantees to protect the French language and culture (*re Secession of Quebec*, supra at para 38). Corresponding protections were afforded the English-speaking (and Protestant) minority in Quebec.¹¹

⁹ Section 95, *Constitution Act, 1867*. “In each Province the Legislature may make Laws in relation to Agriculture in the Province, and to Immigration into the Province; and it is hereby declared that the Parliament of Canada may from Time to Time make Laws in relation to Agriculture in all or any of the Provinces, and to Immigration into all or any of the Provinces; and any Law of the Legislature of a Province relative to Agriculture or to Immigration shall have effect in and for the Province as long and as far only as it is not repugnant to any Act of the Parliament of Canada.”

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Reflected in s. 133 of the *Constitution Act, 1867* for example. See also the distribution of seats in the Senate explained by Professor Gil Rémillard quoted by The Honourable Judith Seidman in her speech to the Senate, *The Role in the Protection of Regional and Minority Representation* of May 18, 2016.

<https://sencanada.ca/en/speeches/speech-by-senator-judith-g-seidman-on-the-role-in-the-protection-of-regional-and-minority-representation-inquiry-debate-adjourned/> accessed January 17, 2023.

Since 1971, Canada and Quebec have operated under agreements that manage their concurrent immigration jurisdictions. The current agreement is the *Canada-Québec Accord relating to Immigration and Temporary Admission of Aliens* of 1991.

The Accord

Subject to the approval of the Governor in Council [GIC], the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (IRPA) confers on the responsible Minister the power to enter into federal-provincial agreements with respect to matters under federal authority. This legislative authority provides the legal basis for CIC to enter into the Accord.¹²

The 1991 Accord creates reciprocal rights and obligations between the federal government and the government of Quebec. The Accord must be based on lawful authority. There is a technical aspect to this, namely the lawful authority to enter into the Accord. Second, there is a substantive element, namely its compliance with the Constitution, the Charter, the OLA, and the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*. The Accord should not be repugnant to or violate valid federal law.

The opening recitations make specific reference to the integration of immigrants in Quebec, “in a manner that respects the distinct identity of Quebec” and to federal immigration legislation that is designed to “take into account the federal and bilingual character” of Canada.”

Section 2 of the Accord states that an objective of the Accord is to preserve Quebec’s demographic importance within Canada, and to ensure the integration to that province in a manner that respects the distinct identity of Quebec.

Section 24 of the Accord deals with the withdrawal of services by Canada with respect to the reception and integration of permanent residents.

24. Canada undertakes to withdraw from the services to be provided by Quebec for the reception and the linguistic and cultural integration of permanent residence in Quebec.

Section 25 deals with the withdrawal of specialized economic integration services that are to be provided by Quebec to permanent residents in Quebec (s. 25 of the Accord). However, this section does not apply to economic integration services that are provided on an equal basis to all residents *of Canada* (s. 27). Thus, the withdrawn services are the reception and integration services, and specialized economic integration services, but not economic integration services that are provided on an equal basis across Canada.

¹²*Ibid.*

The federal government retains the right to provide services to Canadian citizens relating to multiculturalism and to promote the maintenance and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians (s. 29). Its obligations to refugees are not affected by the Accord.

Annex “A” to the Accord provides for the modalities of reception and integration of permanent residents to Quebec, pursuant to section 25. Annex “B” of the Accord sets out a comprehensive list of the programs from which the federal government will withdraw, including adjustment assistance, settlement and adaptation, refugee hosting, settlement language training, integration, counseling, and placement.

Compensation for the withdrawn services is subject to important conditions that underscore the intent of the parties to ensure that comparable (“corresponding”) services continue to be offered in Quebec to permanent residents and that there be no discrimination in the provision of such services:

26. Canada shall provide reasonable compensation for the services referred to in sections 24 and 25 provided by Quebec, if:

- (a) those services, when considered in their entirety, *correspond* to the services offered by Canada in the rest of the country;
- (b) the services provided by Quebec are offered without discrimination to any permanent resident of Quebec, whether or not the permanent resident has been selected by Quebec. [Emphasis added].

Even though the *Official Languages Act* (OLA) is not mentioned in the Accord, s. 25(a) signals the intent of the parties to the Accord to incorporate the principle of comparable services, and 25(b) coupled with the opening recitations, signals the intent to ensure the right of non-discrimination in the Accord.

The Official Languages Act (OLA)

This Committee is well versed in the OLA and the surrounding jurisprudence. For the purposes of this brief, we will specifically note that IRCC obligations under Parts IV (Communications with and Services to the Public) and VII (Advancement of English and French) of the Act. Part IV flows from section 20 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (Charter), and Part VII from Section 16(3).

Part IV of the OLA sets out requirements with respect to communications with and services to the public. The Supreme Court of Canada has affirmed in a case called *Lavigne* that the rights in the OLA implement constitutional language rights, namely, the right of any member of the public to communicate with and receive available services from the government of Canada in the official language of choice.¹³ The *Desrochers* case further specifies that the constitutional

¹³*Lavigne v. Canada (Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages)*, 2002 SCC 53, [2002] 2SCR 773.

duty under s. 20(1) of the Charter as implemented in the OLA is a duty to make services “of equal quality in both official languages” available to the public.¹⁴

Canada (Commissioner of Official Languages) v Canada (Employment and Social Development) 2022 FCA 14 provided much needed clarification regarding Part VII of the OLA. Amongst other things, the Federal Court of Appeal (FCA) established a legal test to determine if a federal institution was undertaking its duties towards English and French linguistic minority communities:

Federal institutions must first be sensitive to the particular circumstances of the country’s various official language minority communities and determine the impact that the decisions and initiatives that they are called upon to take may have on those communities. Second, federal institutions must, when implementing their decisions and initiatives, act, to the extent possible, to enhance the vitality of these communities; or where these decisions and initiatives are susceptible of having a negative impact, act, to the extent possible, to counter or mitigate these negative repercussions (*Canada (Commissioner of Official Languages) v Canada (Employment and Social Development)*, 2022 FCA 14 at para 163).

It is worth noting that the FCA ordered an intergovernmental agreement between Canada and British Columbia terminated in this case, because it had not been concluded in compliance with Part VII of the Act.

ICRR and English-speaking Quebec

The Minister of Immigration and officials from IRCC have appeared many times before this Committee and your colleagues on the House Standing Committee on Official Languages on matters pertaining to immigration.

Parliamentary committees have consistently noted IRCC’s equal obligations towards Canada’s English OLMCs.¹⁵ And IRCC has consistently acknowledged these responsibilities, while at the same time explaining that the Accord limits what they are able to do. This is obviously problematic for several reasons.

First, demographic and demolinguistic renewal through immigration is but one of six vitality indicators for community health. IRCC’s role in enhancing the other five indicators must be considered and addressed by this institution, and is a possible subject for

¹⁴ *Desrochers, supra* note 23 at para 4. Section 21 of Part IV of the OLA provides that: “Any member of the public in Canada has the right to communicate with and to receive available services from federal institutions in accordance with this Part.”

¹⁵ See for example *Toward a new Action plan for Official Languages and Building New Momentum for Immigration in Francophone Minority Communities*, Report of the House Standing Committee on Official Languages 42nd Parliament, 1st Session, p.7.

Parliamentary study, since this is clearly an area requiring further research and consultation.

Although IRCC for a time did support research activities within English-speaking Quebec, these activities were not sustained and were plagued by operational challenges stemming from their risk-adverse approach to dealing with our community. There are no IRCC programs within the current Action Plan.

Second, the fact that IRCC recognizes its obligations and has a) not determined the impact of their decision and initiative, b) made any sustained effort to mitigate those impacts would on its face seem to fail to meet the legal test established in *Canada (Commissioner of Official Languages) v Canada (Employment and Social Development)*.

Finally, the Accord itself, which contains no linguistic clause for the enhancement of the English-speaking Community of Quebec may now be vulnerable in light of *Canada (Commissioner of Official Languages) v Canada (Employment and Social Development)*. We note that the Accord does not imply or indicate that there is an obligation to provide comparable services to English-speaking communities in Quebec as compared to French-speaking communities in Quebec. And whereas a degree of asymmetry is acknowledged as necessary in this case to ensure substantive equality between English and French, the fact that IRCC made no provision within the Accord regarding English-speaking Quebec is problematic. It must be noted here that the Accord itself is subject to federal obligations with respect to Charter language rights and the OLA. It is not – as one senior IRCC called it – a quasi-constitutional agreement; there is no such thing. The Accord is subject to the law, it does not replace it. And it cannot limit the legal obligations imposed on federal institutions by the OLA or other federal laws.

We will not belabour this point much further at the risk of spilling outside of the Committee's order or reference. IRCC's position that its obligation under Part VII of the OLA has been extinguished or at least substantially diminished by the Accord however is untenable. And there is nothing in the Accord preclude IRCC from consulting with English-speaking communities to determine their needs; consultations that would serve as a factual basis for the comparability of services under Part IV and Part VII, as well as under s. 26 of the Accord, and hopefully lead to the inclusion of our community in national immigration policy.

What can be done in light of the Accord?

Although there is not a specific linguistic clause referring to English-speaking Quebec, it appears that the drafters of the Accord may have intended that the constitutional rights of English-speaking minorities be protected as least as regards services of a corresponding quality to those offered elsewhere in Canada. The Accord specifies that a failure by Quebec to offer services comparable to those offered elsewhere in Canada would entitle the federal government to

withdraw from its obligation to compensate Quebec under the Accord. If and how IRCC monitors this requirement is unknown. This is an area requiring further research.

The objectives of the Accord as set out in the recitations are, first, that Quebec preserves its demographic importance in Canada and second, that the integration of immigrants “respects the distinct identity of Quebec.” One of the fundamental characteristics of the distinct identity of Quebec is the French language.¹⁶ However, the Accord also refers to federal immigration legislation and the federal and bilingual character of Canada. Nothing here prevents the delivery of equal, comparable services to English-speaking minority linguistic communities by the Quebec government and, indeed, the Accord appears to impose on Quebec the obligation of providing the services in a manner that corresponds to the rest of Canada. And yet Quebec continues to refuse to fund newcomer programs offered by English-speaking Quebec’s community sector, programs which this Committee has repeatedly heard focus on francization. Obviously, if the Quebec government were offering the services or their equivalent to English-speaking minorities in Quebec, the question of IRCC’s obligations would not even arise. The *Charter of the French Language* as amended by Bill 96 – especially sections dealing with the language of communication with newcomers – makes this a significant challenge. Given the Government of Canada’s political support to the amended *Charter of the French Language* and the political sensitivity of the immigration file within the Canada-Quebec relationship, further action by Parliament or the federal government is unlikely.

If Quebec delivers services in a discriminatory manner, this will raise issues as regards the validity of the Accord. Discrimination would likely have to be established on a basis other than language, since language rights are treated differently in the *Charter*. Thus, monitoring compliance would require a section 15 (or analogous grounds) analysis, which may in turn run politically foul of either the *Charter of the French Language* or *An Act respecting the laicity of the State*. Quebec’s reaction to this type of analysis is predictable.¹⁷

Finally, there is nothing in the Accord that prevents IRCC from conducting meaningful consultations with English-speaking Quebec and determine positive actions to enhance our community’s vitality. Section 95 of the *Constitution Act, 1867* does not permit provincial laws that are contrary to valid federal legislation, in this case, the OLA. Moreover, the primacy of the *Charter* and the OLA operate to subordinate the Accord to the principles of constitutionalism and the rule of law and not the other way around. The explicit constitutional protections contained in both the *Charter* and the quasi-

¹⁶*Charter of the French language*, RSQ c C-11.

¹⁷ This is an area for further research. Equality and non-discrimination is a “cross-cutting human rights principle” in international migration policy (*International standards governing migration policy*, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/migration/international-standards-governing-migration-policy> accessed January 25, 2023). Does the effect of targeting immigrants who already speak French for example discriminate on the basis of prohibitive or analogous grounds contained within international human rights instruments?

constitutional protections in the OLA should operate in order to ensure, as a minimum, that the Accord conforms with both of these legal documents.

English-speaking Quebec as a Partner

There is a great deal of research that demonstrates English-speaking Quebec's important role in the attraction and retention of immigrants to Quebec. This is not just a Montreal story. English communities in the regions are a critical part of the social economy that brings newcomers to Quebec. Research from 2010, done by Professor Michèle Laaroussi demonstrates that the English-speaking community of Quebec City wants to be an equal partner in the immigration conversation.¹⁸ This Committee has heard success stories in previous studies on immigration in this matter from English-speaking Quebec, particularly from the Voice of English Quebec's newcomer program run in the Quebec City region. You have also heard that these programs are not funded by the Government of Quebec (or by the federal partner).

This is an opportunity lost. Newcomers need help integrating into our society. If they cannot get the services they need from government, they will seek them elsewhere like the community sector, or communities of faith. Best practice is for governments to work with civil society towards newcomer integration. In fact, in 2016, a report produced by the House Standing Committee for Official Languages writes "Furthermore, it does not seem to take into account the fact that anglophone communities are among the most multicultural in the country and have high rates of English-French bilingualism. In fact, these communities support integration into Quebec society."¹⁹

Cutting English-speaking Quebec out of this process is bad public policy. It is IRCC's role to further study what role English-speaking Quebec plays (formally and informally) in the integration of newcomers to Quebec, and then work with our community to convince the Government of Quebec that we are part of the solution, not the problem.

English-speaking Quebec is the most diverse of Canada's official language minority communities. The historical reasons for this lie in where the children of non-Catholic non-Francophone families were sent to school before Bill 101. The contemporary reasons have to do with the prevalence of English as an international *lingua franca*. We are Canada's most bilingual English-speaking cohort (nearly 70% overall, 80% of 15-24 year

¹⁸ See generally the work of Professor Michèle Laaroussi, Professeure associée, Faculté des lettres et sciences humaines, Université de Sherbrooke. A good place to start is Vatz Laaroussi M. et Liboy G. (2010). *Les communautés anglophones peuvent elles constituer une part du capital d'attraction et de rétention des immigrants dans les régions du Québec?*. Canadian Diversity/Diversité Canadienne 8 (2), 37-47

¹⁹ See *Toward a new Action plan for Official Languages and Building New Momentum for Immigration in Francophone Minority Communities*, Report of the House Standing Committee on Official Languages 42nd Parliament, 1st Session, p.46

olds).²⁰ The idea that English-speaking Quebecers are a threat to French is simply not supported by the data, which clearly demonstrates a community-wide commitment to the protection and promotion of French. We are therefore superbly placed to support the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act's* (IRPPA) objective of enriching and strengthening “the social and cultural fabric of Canadian society, while respecting the federal, bilingual and multicultural character of Canada (s.3(1)(b)).” This should be contrasted with Quebec’s interculturalism policy that reject bilingualism in favour of integration in French only.

Conclusion

English-speaking Quebec could play an important role in supporting a federal national Francophone immigration strategy. English-speaking Quebecers have always been at the forefront of Canadian bilingualism, and are living proof that multiculturalism does not threaten, but enhances the French-speaking nation of Quebec. We can play a role in championing immigration to French OLMCs with the English majority.

The protection and promotion of French is dear to the hearts of English-speaking Quebecers. But the way forward embraces the Canadian values of bilingualism (as a minimum) and multiculturalism; values reflected in English-speaking Quebec.

IRCC has been risk adverse with regards to the Canada–Québec Accord relating to Immigration and Temporary Admission of Aliens. It has misunderstood the Accord’s relationship with and the effects on the Government of Canada’s legal and constitutional official language obligations, especially with regard to their relationship with English-speaking Quebec. This situation has been allowed to continue because of Ottawa’s policy focus on Francophone immigration as it relates to demographic and demolinguistic renewal rather than a more holistic view that encompasses all vitality indicators.

Recommendations

1. That IRCC undertake a consultation with English-speaking Quebec to:
 - a. identify concrete measures that enhance our community’s vitality within a national OLMC immigration strategy; and,
 - b. report to Parliament on their progress in this regard within 12 months.
2. That the Senate undertake a study on Canada and Quebec’s policy approaches to immigration that would include an assessment of the Canada-Québec Accord relating to Immigration and Temporary Admission of Aliens and its impacts on federal policy and administration.

²⁰ Statistics Canada. [Table 98-10-0173-01 Mother tongue by knowledge of official languages: Canada, provinces and territories, census divisions and census subdivisions](#)