

FORUM ON FRANCOPHONE IMMIGRATION
FMRI-MCCF JOINT NEWS RELEASE

March 31, 2017

NEWS RELEASE
For immediate release

**HISTORIC DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR
IMMIGRATION AND THE CANADIAN FRANCOPHONIE**

March 31, 2017 – Moncton, New Brunswick – Forum on Francophone Immigration

The federal, provincial and territorial ministers responsible for Immigration and their colleagues responsible for the Canadian Francophonie concluded a historic meeting today, focusing specifically on Francophone immigration. New Brunswick ministers responsible for Immigration and La Francophonie, Donald Arseneault and Francine Landry, co-chaired the meeting.

The first pan-Canadian Forum on Francophone Immigration, organized jointly by the Ministerial Conference on the Canadian Francophonie and the Forum of Ministers Responsible for Immigration, allowed for a fruitful dialogue between the ministers present.

“By having this common discussion, we sought to gain a better understanding of the Francophone immigration continuum in Canada, the challenges and opportunities in promoting Francophone immigration, and how governments can achieve successful attraction, retention, and integration of French speaking immigrants,” said ministers Arseneault and Landry.

To close the Forum, the ministers in attendance agreed to work together to enhance promotion efforts aimed at French-speaking immigrants and foster their recruitment, selection and integration. They also discussed various measures that could be adopted. Such efforts could include working with interested provinces and territories to add a Francophone dimension as part of any renewed immigration bilateral agreements, mobilizing a greater number of partners in efforts to promote Francophone immigration to Canada abroad, supporting the enhancement of pre-arrival services in French for French-speaking immigrants, increasing the selection of French-speaking immigrants through federal programs and continuing to nominate French-speaking immigrants through provincial and territorial nominee programs.

The ministers also discussed the importance of continuing to support capacity building in local Francophone communities across Canada by strengthening the provision of French language services in these communities, promoting French-speaking and bilingual newcomers’ social and civic participation, and encouraging employers to recruit them as part of their workforce.

The co-chairs expressed the hope that the meeting has paved the way not only for dialogue between governments and between the two tables, but also for a more sustained collaboration between ministers responsible for immigration and Canadian Francophonie within each government. These elements are key factors to foster francophone immigration throughout Canada, thereby increasing the number of French speakers in each province and territory and therefore throughout the country.

Improvements are on the way for the Express Entry system—Canada’s flagship application management system for key economic immigration programs. Starting on June 6, 2017, additional points will be awarded to candidates who have strong French language skills and points for candidates with siblings in Canada and voluntary registration in Job Bank.

“Increasing Francophone immigration and growing Francophone communities across Canada remains a priority for the Government of Canada. The bilingual nature of our country strengthens our economy and society. I am pleased that with the changes announced today to Express Entry, Canada will welcome more French speakers and others with skills and experience who will help our economy and communities grow.”

– The Honourable Ahmed Hussen, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship

The ministers in attendance expressed their support for the following:

1. Developing a concrete action plan by the federal, provincial and territorial governments to attract, receive, integrate and retain Francophone immigrants;
2. Holding a federal-provincial-territorial and community symposium to lay the foundation for new collaboration;
3. Maintaining a joint committee to follow up on the first forum, participate in the delivery of this federal-provincial-territorial and community symposium and organize a second Forum on Francophone immigration within twelve months.

Prior to the Forum, the ministers also met with the participants in the *Journée de réflexion nationale sur l’immigration francophone*, a national conference on Francophone immigration held annually by the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne (FCFA) du Canada, and with the Commissioners of Official Languages of Canada and New Brunswick and the French Language Services Commissioner of Ontario, who reiterated the importance of Francophone immigration to the vitality of the Francophone and Acadian communities in the country.

It should be noted that under the Canada-Quebec Accord Relating to Immigration and Temporary Admission of Aliens, Quebec fully assumes sole responsibility for establishing immigration levels and for the selection, francization and integration of immigrants. In areas under its responsibility, Quebec develops its policies and programs, legislates, regulates and sets its own standards.

The Forum of Ministers Responsible for Immigration is made up of the federal, provincial, and territorial ministers responsible for immigration to Canada. The Forum seeks to strengthen

intergovernmental cooperation on matters relating to immigration, with the goal of improving the benefits of immigration for newcomers, the host communities, and all Canadians.

The Ministerial Conference on the Canadian Francophonie, established in 1994, deals with diverse issues related to the Canadian Francophonie, provides direction for intergovernmental cooperation, and plays a unifying role in support of the Canadian Francophonie. One of the Conference's priorities is to exercise leadership in certain spheres of activity that contribute to the advancement of the Canadian Francophonie. Francophone immigration has been a priority issue for the Conference since 2008.

-30-

Information

Sylvie Painchaud
Acting National Coordinator
Conférence ministérielle sur la francophonie canadienne
867-335-2336
Sylvie.Painchaud@gnb.ca

Immigration Secretariat
204-945-1831
Vanessa.Arrojado@gov.mb.ca