

# FMRI



## FORUM OF MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR IMMIGRATION

### **Federal, provincial and territorial immigration ministers commit to work together to maximize the benefits of immigration for Canada**

#### **News release**

**November 17, 2023—Toronto, Ontario**—The Forum of Ministers Responsible for Immigration (FMRI) met today in Toronto to continue discussions on the future of immigration in Canada. Ministers expressed support for a coordinated approach to address immigration opportunities and challenges, including collaborating on economic immigration to meet labour needs, while addressing pressures on social infrastructure, housing and settlement services. This approach is based on the principle of shared jurisdiction and mutual respect for both federal and provincial-territorial roles and responsibilities for immigration in Canada.\* Ministers agreed that immigration is a key component of the country's fabric, as it contributes to its diversity, economy, and meeting labour market needs. Ministers also concurred on the importance of supporting Canada's response to humanitarian crises and the needs of vulnerable newcomers.

The results of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's (IRCC) recently released report, *An Immigration System for Canada's Future*, were presented to the ministers. Key themes in the report include creating a more welcoming experience for newcomers, continuing to align immigration with labour market needs, and developing a comprehensive and coordinated growth plan, including among federal and provincial-territorial (FPT) partners, to best support immigrants and communities across the country. Provinces and territories shared perspectives on the future of Canada's immigration system, as well as challenges and opportunities facing their jurisdictions.

Ministers discussed the 2024-2026 Immigration Levels Plan in the context of FPT immigration priorities and responsibilities. These include emphasizing economic immigration, including through provincial nominee programs, continuing to reunite families, and meeting Canada's humanitarian commitments. Provincial and Territorial Ministers recognized the recent increases to the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) and called for a greater share of PNPs in immigration levels planning. Ministers discussed the importance of FPT programming in advancing economic immigration, and in attracting and retaining immigrants outside of large urban centres. They also discussed the importance of reducing duplication and processing times and supporting Francophone immigration outside Quebec. Ministers affirmed that levels planning must consider the country's capacity, which varies across provinces and territories, to settle, integrate and retain selected newcomers, while monitoring system-wide pressures across critical

sectors, such as housing and infrastructure. Immigration continues to play an important role in addressing labour shortages across the country, supporting social services and infrastructure by recruiting health care and skilled trade workers. Ministers also agreed that Canada's ability to welcome, support and integrate newcomers will require close collaboration between all orders of government and all immigration partners.

Ministers continued their discussion from March 2023 on ways to deliver a more responsive, client-centred economic immigration system and to coordinate efforts to select economic immigrants. Specifically, ministers discussed solutions to promote complementary federal and provincial-territorial economic selection programs, recognizing the importance of both federal economic streams and provincial nominee programs to address labour market needs and further support communities currently underserved by economic immigration.

Ministers committed to working together, including with the Forum of Labour Market Ministers, on initiatives to reduce barriers and streamline foreign credential recognition (FCR) processes, particularly in regulated occupations, such as the skilled trades and health care. They discussed how to strengthen the connection between selection and licensing, and how to make it easier for professionals to work in their occupations when they land in Canada. These initiatives could include the selection of candidates who are practice-ready or on a clear pathway to becoming licensed, and efforts to increase the knowledge of licensing requirements so that newcomers can start their FCR process before arriving in Canada. Ministers also considered lessons learned from jurisdictions that are aligning FCR with newcomer selection through provincial nominee programs or the Atlantic Immigration Program.

Ministers engaged on Canada's response to humanitarian crises, including efforts to resettle refugees from Afghanistan and measures to provide Ukrainians a temporary safe haven. They discussed the efforts made by provinces and territories to support Ukrainians and pathways to permanent residence for those seeking to remain in Canada. Ministers also discussed the importance of collaborating on a crisis response framework to inform a consistent approach to helping foreign nationals in need of protection. Conversations centred on strategies, such as improved data collection and collaboration to adequately support vulnerable arrivals in the future, including asylum seekers. They also discussed the need for early engagement and communication when changes to program requirements are being contemplated.

Ministers shared views on how settlement services can better support successful newcomer outcomes and retention in their chosen destination of landing, and how governments can work together to address pressures on housing, infrastructure and social services. Ministers considered how innovative and client-centred approaches to settlement services could improve labour market outcomes and support the integration of newcomers to Canada, including temporary residents. They discussed the importance of considering expanding eligibility and services to meet the growing needs of certain arrivals, particularly asylum claimants and temporary residents on a clear path to permanent residence.

Ministers agreed on the need to address issues associated with the International Student Program, including unprecedented growth, student vulnerability and program integrity, housing and the role that learning institutions play in supporting their students. Ministers also agreed on the importance of aligning work permit programs with provincial-territorial labour market needs, and on continued discussions about potential changes to eligibility requirements to target and retain students. Ministers committed to continued engagement on this file, together with provincial-territorial education officials. They recognize the ongoing contribution of international students to communities and the labour force.

Ministers considered progress in attracting francophone newcomers to Canada and discussed IRCC's Francophone immigration policy. Ministers tasked officials to review the *2018 FPT Action Plan for Increasing Francophone Immigration Outside of Quebec* to ensure the plan continues to improve the promotion, selection, settlement, integration and retention of French-speaking immigrants in Canada's Francophone minority communities, in coordination with Ministers' Council on the Canadian Francophonie.

*\*Note: As requested by the Government of Quebec, the Quebec minister responsible for immigration holds observer status at the federal and provincial-territorial ministers' table. Under the Canada-Québec Accord, Quebec 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, and legislates, regulates and sets its own standards.*

**About the FMRI:** The FMRI is an FPT decision-making body with the goal of supporting a flexible, timely and effective immigration system for Canada. In 2020, FPT ministers established a vision for immigration to Canada and a mission for the FMRI. The vision articulates a coordinated strategic plan for a system that strengthens the positive economic and social benefits of immigration in all parts of Canada. The FMRI's mission is to advance joint immigration priorities and to enhance Canada's immigration policies and programs.

#### **Quotes:**

"Today was an important day for immigration in Canada as we advanced critical discussions among ministers at the federal, provincial and territorial levels. The focus of our discussions was Canada's ability to continue welcoming skilled newcomers, as well as our collective response to humanitarian crises around the world. As Canada continues to welcome newcomers, we will continue to work across all levels of government to ensure that housing, infrastructure planning and sustainable population growth are taken into account so that newcomers are set up for success. I look forward to continued discussions and collaboration with my provincial and territorial colleagues."

- The Honourable Marc Miller, P.C., M.P., Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship and federal co-chair of the Forum of Ministers Responsible for Immigration.

"Immigration is critical to addressing labour shortages, attracting new investment, and supporting Canada's economic growth. Provinces and territories play a key role in ensuring that immigration is responsive to employers' labour needs and benefits all regions of the country. Several provinces and territories are also taking steps to improve foreign qualification recognition to ensure newcomers can work in occupations aligned with their skills and experience. Today, provincial and territorial immigration ministers re-emphasized the need for a focus on economic immigration, particularly through Provincial Nominee Programs, responsive, locally-informed settlement services, and strong federal-provincial-territorial collaboration to address immigration-related challenges and opportunities"

- The Honourable Jeremy Harrison, Minister of Immigration and Career Training and provincial-territorial co-chair of the Forum of Ministers Responsible for Immigration.

#### **Contacts for media only**

**Bahoz Dara Aziz**

Press Secretary  
Minister's Office  
Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada  
[Bahoz.DaraAziz@cic.gc.ca](mailto:Bahoz.DaraAziz@cic.gc.ca)

**Media relations**

Communications Sector  
Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada  
613-952-1650  
[media@cic.gc.ca](mailto:media@cic.gc.ca)

**Jamie Richards**

Government of Saskatchewan  
Executive Director  
Communications, Ministry of Immigration and Career Training  
Cell: 306-510-4016  
[Jamie.Richards2@gov.sk.ca](mailto:Jamie.Richards2@gov.sk.ca)