

**Recommendations of the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal as part  
of consultations on Bill 77, *An Act Respecting Immigration to Québec***



**February 2, 2016**

## Preamble

The Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal (the Board of Trade) has over 7,000 members. Its mission is to be the voice of Montréal's business community and to promote the city's prosperity. The Board of Trade is involved in key areas of economic development, promoting a philosophy of action based on engagement, credibility, proactivity, collaboration and innovation. The Board of Trade is the largest private economic development organization in Québec.

## Background

In December 2015, the Government of Québec announced public consultations by a parliamentary committee on Bill 77, *An Act Respecting Immigration to Québec*. This exercise will make it possible to update a law that has not been reviewed in depth since 1994. These consultations are being conducted as part of the review of Québec's policy on immigration, diversity and inclusion and multi-year planning on immigration, which will lay the groundwork for the Government of Québec's strategic orientations on immigration and integrating immigrants to Québec society.

Attracting, professionally integrating and retaining qualified immigrant labour is strategic for the economic development of Greater Montréal and for the city's business community. As such, the President and CEO of the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal (the Board of Trade), Michel Leblanc, presented the Board of Trade's comments and recommendations regarding Bill 77, *An Act Respecting Immigration to Québec*, before a parliamentary committee on February 2, 2016.

This brief reiterates the Board of Trade's recommendations on the topic.

## INTRODUCTION

The face of Québec has changed tremendously since 1994, the year *An Act Respecting Immigration to Québec* was last reviewed. From 1991 to 2011 alone, the proportion of Québec's immigrant population rose from 8.7% to 12.6%.<sup>1</sup> This impressive growth in the share of immigrants in Québec's population shows no signs of slowing and in fact will only intensify in the coming years, as the aging of the population becomes more significant and immigration replaces natural growth as the main source of demographic growth.<sup>2</sup> According to projections from the Institut de la statistique du Québec, international immigration will become the only source of population growth in the province within the next 20 years.<sup>3</sup>

Immigration is first and foremost a metropolitan reality. There are a number of reasons for this. First of all, Montréal is the gateway to Québec. Second of all, Québec is no exception in that new immigrants choose to settle in major metropolitan centres, creating a high concentration of immigrant communities in the city. We often hear that almost 87% of immigrants to Québec live in Greater Montréal. Too often we overlook the corollary that services for immigrants and community institutions are therefore necessarily concentrated in the metropolitan area.

Other factors contribute to the propensity of immigrants to congregate in the metropolitan area. The presence of world-class universities, research centres, industrial clusters and head offices make Montréal a leading destination for foreign talent.

Unfortunately, many indicators show that immigrants are not very well integrated to the work force. Again, there are a number of reasons for this substandard performance, which hurts both immigrants and society as a whole. Underemployment is even more of a concern given the demographic crunch and the labour shortage.

Recognizing the importance of tackling the challenge of integrating immigrants, the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal has been involved in networking between immigrants and employers through its Interconnection program since 2008. Interconnection provides the first step that gives the vast majority of participants access to the job market, for their benefit and that of Greater Montréal employers who are then able to draw on a large, dynamic pool of labour.

This field expertise combined with echoes from the city's business community have raised concern at the Board of Trade about the issue of immigration and, more specifically, the mechanisms for selecting and integrating immigrants.

As such, the Board of Trade applauds the Government of Québec's initiative in adopting a global, unifying vision of immigration in Québec by reviewing *An Act Respecting Immigration to Québec*, implementing a new policy in immigration, diversity and inclusion and the upcoming renewal of the multi-year plan on immigration. The vision presented in these three policy tools that will be

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<sup>1</sup> Data from the *1991 Census of Population* and the *2011 National Household Survey* conducted by Statistics Canada.

<sup>2</sup> INSTITUT DE LA STATISTIQUE DU QUÉBEC, *Perspectives démographiques du Québec et des régions, 2011-2061*, 2014 edition.

<sup>3</sup> The ISQ's projections show negative natural growth of the population beginning in 2034.

unveiled during the year will lay the foundations and strategic orientations to guide the Government of Québec's actions in the matter.

The current context makes the updates proposed in Bill 77, *An Act Respecting Immigration to Québec*, even more necessary. The wording of the new act must ensure that:

- **immigration adequately and effectively responds to the needs of companies** given the more limited pool of labour available and increased specialization in skills sought by employers;
- **immigrants and people from diverse backgrounds integrate and participate fully** in society to promote harmony and the retention of foreign talent in Québec and Montréal.

The recommendations presented by the Board of Trade in this brief echo certain concerns raised during public consultations on the new policy on immigration, diversity and inclusion. More specific orientations will be presented as part of consultations on multi-year planning for immigration beginning in 2016 in Québec. Understandably, this Board of Trade brief deals primarily with the immigration of specialized workers, whether qualified or not and, incidentally, with all of the Board of Trade's positions on labour availability.

## **I. ADOPT EFFECTIVE, TRANSPARENT AND FLEXIBLE SELECTION MECHANISMS THAT PROMOTE IMMIGRATION THAT BETTER REFLECTS THE NEEDS OF COMPANIES AND JOB MARKET REQUIREMENTS**

A little over half (53%) of the province's economic activity comes from Greater Montréal. Economic development strategies in recent years have meant that the core of this activity is increasingly organized around highly specialized and technological sectors such as aerospace, video games, information technology, pharmaceuticals and biotechnology. What these sectors have in common is that they are important sources of innovation, that they attract the lion's share of direct foreign investment in the city and that they have an international outlook. They all rely on highly specialized labour, whether qualified or not.

But the race for strategic talent does not play out only locally. This new reality is in part the result of a demographic challenge Québec and Montréal are increasingly confronted with, but also the result of the nature of skills sought. Strong international demand makes for more intense competition in finding workers who can contribute to what can be structuring projects for the companies that hire them. Furthermore, business leaders point to recruitment difficulties as one of the major challenges they will face in the coming years.<sup>4</sup>

Access to qualified labour is crucial for the growth of the city's businesses. Companies need to be able to count on an immigration system that reflects the economic and demographic challenges they are facing. Furthermore, the government needs to be consistent by harmonizing its immigration policies with its economic development policies, as the Canadian Chamber of

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<sup>4</sup> PWC, *The talent challenge: Adapting to growth, 17th Annual Global CEO Survey*, 2014.

Commerce pointed out in its most recent report on the Express Entry program.<sup>5</sup> To do this, the mechanisms need to enable a more effective selection of immigrants who show strong potential for integration, while being transparent, predictable and flexible, particularly with temporary foreign workers and international students.

**A. Adopt the expression of interest model to foster a better fit between the skills of the candidates selected and the needs of local businesses**

The current selection mechanism for candidates for economic immigration is based on the so-called human capital model. The evaluation criteria ensure that the candidates chosen show the greatest potential for integration. A maximum number of points are awarded to candidates with a doctorate, age 18 to 25 with a solid command of French. While these criteria increase the employability of immigrants in theory, they do not guarantee a match with the needs of employers in Québec and Montréal.

In fact, the current mechanism has a number of limitations, as the serious gap between the unemployment rate among immigrants in Greater Montréal (11.1%) and non-immigrants (7.5%) shows. This gap has historically been smaller in Toronto than in Montréal and, for the first time since this data has been collected,<sup>6</sup> the unemployment rate among immigrants (6.8%) was lower than that among people born in Canada (7.2%).<sup>7, 8</sup>

For example, while immigrants to Québec are more educated than those to Ontario and British Columbia, they have a harder time integrating professionally. The connection between the level of education of a population and the prosperity of that country is widely documented. However, there has to be a fit between the field and the level of degree held by candidates for immigration and the needs expressed by the job market if we want immigrants to become employed.

Language criteria is another example of the inadequacy of selection criteria and the reality of companies. The unemployment rate among unilingual allophone immigrants (French or English) is higher than that of bilingual allophone immigrants (French-English). While the value assigned to fluency in French in the selection criteria must remain high, we should not turn away immigrant workers who have the qualifications and skills sought by employers in the region.

Furthermore, a working knowledge of English as a second language is an important criterion for employability in the eyes of Greater Montréal employers. It is important to remember that English is the language of business used with our main trading partners. In 2014, close to 70% of Québec exports were to the U.S. Trade with Asia has also shown strong growth (+15.5%). In fact, our trade ties with francophone and francophile countries by no means represent the lion's share of economic activity, which justifies the use of English in certain contexts at work.

<sup>5</sup> THE CANADIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, *Immigration for a Competitive Canada: Why Highly Skilled International Talent Is at Risk*, 2016.

<sup>6</sup> Data gathered since 2006 as part of the Labour Force Survey.

<sup>7</sup> STATISTICS CANADA, *Table 282-0102 – Labour force survey (LFS), estimates by immigrant status, age group, for Canada, regions, provinces and Montréal, Toronto and Vancouver, census metropolitan areas, annual (persons unless otherwise indicated)*, CANSIM, site consulted January 15, 2016.

<sup>8</sup> We note a convergence between the unemployment rates among immigrants received over 10 years ago and that of Canadian-born workers, in Montréal and in other major Canadian cities.

In addition to criteria that do not adequately reflect the reality of businesses, sudden reviews of criteria creates a serious inconvenience for candidates in the midst of obtaining the Certificat de sélection du Québec (CSQ) and employers who rely on this immigrant labour. The most telling example of this occurred in August 2013, when language eligibility requirements for the Programme de l'expérience québécoise (PEQ) were raised without notice. This change was criticized by many members of the business community. Most of these employers had been actively encouraging their temporary foreign workers to learn and perfect their French to quickly obtain permanent resident status. This measure discouraged many candidates for permanent immigration and deprived local companies of the strategic talent they so need.

From this point of view, the new selection process for foreign nationals in the economic immigration category must:

- seek closer alignment with the immediate and future needs of the job market, which includes a certain level of bilingualism (French-English);
- use stable, predictable criteria.

The Board of Trade recommended adopting a selection model based on the expression of interest in its recommendations as part of public consultations on the new policy on immigration, diversity and inclusion and reiterates this position as part of this process.<sup>9</sup> This model reflects the above principles.

However, this new mechanism's effectiveness depends on the choice of criteria for evaluating a candidate's file so that, initially, the applicant's candidacy can be admitted to the pool of applications and then the candidate can be invited to submit an application for a CSQ. To this end, the Board of Trade reminds the government of the importance of:

- consulting the business community in developing and reviewing selection criteria for access to the applicant pool and submitting an application for immigration to improve the fit between immigrants' experience and skills and the needs of the city's businesses;
- take into account the future needs of the job market to establish selection criteria for the pool of candidates based on the forward-looking analyses of specialized organizations, such as sector labour committees, to avoid taking only a short-term approach;
- select immigrants whose skills and experience are recognized by professional orders and employers so that they can harness the qualifications of immigrant labour, but also to avoid demotivating immigrant workers by preventing them from exercising their profession;
- ensure selection criteria are predictable.

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<sup>9</sup> BOARD OF TRADE OF METROPOLITAN MONTREAL, *Recommendations of the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal as Part of Consultations on the New Québec Policy on Immigration, Diversity and Inclusion*, 2015.

**The Board of Trade recommends that the government:**

- **consult the business community** of Québec and Montréal **to establish criteria** for joining the applicant pool and for being invited to submit an application for permanent immigration **to align the qualifications of candidates selected with the actual needs of companies** and, incidentally, to maximize the likelihood of immigrants being integrated to the work force and Québec society;
- **periodically review the selection criteria** to ensure that they continue to match the needs of the job market and that changes are predictable for applicants. The business community must also be consulted when changes to selection criteria are planned.

**B. Have a more flexible system for receiving immigrant workers quickly by opening the door to pilot projects in permanent or temporary immigration**

The Greater Montréal economy is organized around high tech sectors, some of which have shorter, more demanding project cycles. Labour challenges are even more an issue in this context, where being unable to recruit adequate resources delays progress in projects that need to be completed quickly.

This is particularly the case in the video game and visual effects sectors, industries that are fuelled by their creative talent. Labour is the most important asset for companies that operate in these sectors. But new specializations crop up every year given the speed of technology development.<sup>10</sup> Employers therefore need to be able to attract and retain talent to grow their teams and complete their projects. Other sectors, particularly aerospace and hotel management, also depend to a large extent on foreign talent to occasionally round out their teams. Project and seasonal cycles require a degree of flexibility in the immigration system.

The Temporary Foreign Worker Program is an important tool for companies in the city's flagship sectors, because it allows them to recruit foreign talent and integrate it relatively quickly to teams. But the federal government's recent reforms to the program have seriously complicated the arrival of these immigrant workers by restricting the conditions for eligibility and adding to the administrative burden.

But temporary workers meet the needs of the city's business community. Access to temporary labour is a major challenge for the sustainability and development of companies in the high-value-added sectors typical of the Montréal economy. Employers therefore need a flexible mechanism to meet their requirements.

The Board of Trade is interested in immigration pilot programs that manage the arrival of temporary and permanent immigrants. If used in a context of labour scarcity, these programs could provide a more agile approach to recruiting foreign workers with strong potential for integration. However, the number of candidates admitted annually – a maximum of 400 temporary immigrants and 550 permanent ones – seems arbitrary. Furthermore, the Board of Trade reminds the government that to be effective these programs must:

- target the most pressing job market needs by relying on requests expressed by the business community;
- reduce processing time for requests. It should take no more than six weeks between submitting an application for immigration and the arrival of the workers chosen;
- be based on a more streamlined process, without neglecting security and other checks.

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<sup>10</sup> DESJARDINS ECONOMIC STUDIES, "Between the real and the virtual: The video game industry in Quebec," *Perspective*, volume 23, 2013.



The **Board of Trade** therefore asks the government to put in place a pilot project program to receive a limited number of immigrant workers temporarily or permanently, while ensuring that the selection of candidates is based on the most pressing needs of employers in Québec and Montréal, and that the processing time be no longer than six weeks.

### **C. Establish a formal approach to foster the transition of temporary workers and international students to permanent status**

A recent study put the number of temporary foreign workers and international post-secondary students in Greater Montréal at close to 42,000.<sup>11</sup> It is widely known that these two groups of temporary immigrants have tremendous potential for integration, making them leading candidates for permanent immigration. International students have a degree from Québec that is recognized by employers, are fluent in at least one of the two languages of business and are already familiar with Québec culture. The same applies to temporary workers. They already have a job in Québec, have access to a network of local contacts and their skills are also more readily recognized by employers. Retaining international students and temporary workers must be a priority for the Government of Québec.

The current PEQ recognizes the strategic value of temporary workers and international students by offering them a fast track to a CSQ. If the government adopts the expression of interest model and in doing so abandons the PEQ process, provisions that foster the transition from temporary to permanent status must be reflected in the expression of interest mechanism. This can be done by automatically admitting the applications of temporary workers and international students into the pool and then giving them priority to submit a CSQ application. The evaluation grid must also recognize the strong potential for integration of immigrants by awarding them more points for certain criteria, like time spent in Québec, or by creating a category of criteria specific to them.

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<sup>11</sup> MONTRÉAL INTERNATIONAL AND CONSEIL EMPLOI MÉTROPOLE, *Étude des facteurs associés à la rétention des immigrants temporaires dans le Grand Montréal*, 2015.

**The Board of Trade recommends that the government foster the retention of temporary foreign workers and international students** by immediately integrating them to the pool of workers accepted and giving them an advantage when it comes to the invitation to submit an application for a CSQ and in the subsequent evaluation of that application.

## **II. IMPROVE THE INTEGRATION OF IMMIGRANTS TO THE JOB MARKET AND QUÉBEC SOCIETY**

With the rapid aging of the population, we cannot afford not to take full advantage of everyone's skills, whether or not they are immigrants. Immigration, diversity and foreign talent benefit our economy and are in integral part of our society. Immigration must therefore be perceived as something positive, so it is important that we promote integration to Québec and Montréal society.

A wide range of programs and services already exist for receiving immigrants, for francization and for employment assistance. These services are provided by the government or by agents such as non-profit organizations, the Board of Trade among them. Yet certain deficiencies persist.

### **A. Avoid duplication in programs to integrate immigrants, tie supply to demand and ensure proper promotion**

A recent survey showed that few employers take part in programs designed for them.<sup>12</sup> Participation rates in the Employment Integration Program for Immigrants and Visible Minorities (PRIIME) and the Employment Integration Project for Foreign-Trained Persons Referred by a Professional Order (IPOP) – the two main employment integration programs for immigrants and visible minorities offered by Emploi-Québec – do not exceed the 5% threshold. The participation rate for the Board of Trade's Interconnection Program is higher, but reaches only 20% of the target clientele. In fact, employers cite the "lack of information about the existence of programs or how they work" as the main reason for their limited use of these programs. There is also a perception that most of these programs are for small and medium-sized businesses. We therefore have access to a fairly limited proportion of the target clientele.

It seems clear that additional efforts are required to increase the participation of companies in programs designed for them. The Board of Trade therefore encourages the government to be cautious when it comes to establishing and implementing new programs to improve the reception, francization and professional integration of immigrants. An in-depth study of programs currently in place must determine whether supply actually matches demand and whether the principles of performance, equity and predictability are respected. If necessary, better promotion of existing programs would be a more efficient solution than introducing new services. In any case, the government must ensure the programs available are adequately promoted to reach a larger proportion of target clienteles.

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<sup>12</sup> CONSEIL DU PATRONAT DU QUÉBEC, *L'immigration économique un riche potentiel de prospérité pour le Québec*, 2015.

In the same spirit, the Board of Trade would like to remind the government that certain organizations already successfully offer a range of programs to improve the reception, francization and professional integration of immigrants. As a result, reviewing or implementing new programs, as suggested in the bill, must reflect the principle of subsidiarity. The government must ensure that resources and responsibilities are distributed to authorities and organizations that have the expertise and proximity needed with target clienteles, as they are often in a better position to offer certain services.

**The Board of Trade asks the government to:**

- **perform an in-depth analysis of the performance of programs for receiving immigrants, francization and employment assistance** offered by the government and organizations active in the area to avoid duplication and tie supply to demand;
- **better promote the programs available** to reach a wider clientele and ensure that a larger number of immigrants and employers take advantage of them.

**B. Adapt the French courses available to meet the needs of immigrant clients by offering more advanced courses to allow immigrants to break into the job market and advance in their careers**

In recent years, more remote French courses have been available for candidates preparing to come to Québec as permanent immigrants. This increase was at the expense of the French courses available in Québec, although demand is still as strong. Plus, many studies clearly show that language fluency is essential for successful integration to Québec.

Employers in Greater Montréal have identified shortfalls in the level of oral and written expression among the immigrants they employ, even if they speak French when they arrive. According to private sector employers in Greater Montréal, a lack of fluency in advanced French is the greatest obstacle to professional advancement among immigrants.<sup>13</sup> It seems that in addition to being more limited, the French courses available do not meet the actual needs of immigrants.

**The Board of Trade recommends that the government develop more advanced French courses** to allow immigrants to access the job market and advance in their careers.

<sup>13</sup> BOARD OF TRADE OF METROPOLITAN MONTREAL. Forthcoming

### **C. Equip employers so that they can hire a greater proportion of immigrant workers and encourage connections between employers and immigrants**

Employers play a decisive role in the professional integration of immigrants. Many businesses in Greater Montréal have understood this and instituted best practices to integrate a growing number of immigrants to their organization. However, plenty of employers feel powerless when it comes to recruiting immigrants. In part, they have a hard time evaluating the skills of immigrant candidates. Additionally, a lack of work experience in Québec is seen as a hurdle to hiring.

We must not forget that most professions are not governed by a regulatory organization. Employers therefore have the weighty responsibility of evaluating the experience and skills of immigrant workers. Yet often companies, and particularly SMEs, do not have the knowledge or resources required to do so.

By putting appropriate information and tools in the hands of employers, we will enable them to fully play their role in integrating immigrants. For this, two avenues seem promising:

- implementing a system for recognizing foreign experience – beyond equivalencies for degrees and professional titles – which will serve as a reference for employers that want to better understand the skills their employees have acquired abroad;
- harmonizing the process for recognizing experience and skills by entrusting it to a limited number of organizations, to avoid duplicate structures and the dispersal of resources, and above all to facilitate and accelerate efforts for immigrants.

At the same time, employers can use programs that promote networking with immigrant workers whose profile matches their labour needs. The Board of Trade's Interconnection program is effective in this area: 98% of participating businesses believe it helped them recognize the potential and skills of immigrant job seekers. Since 2010, 5,000 immigrant professionals have had contact with 1,000 companies through 7,000 professional networking activities (speed jobbing interviews, networking activities, internships). Last year, the placement rate for participants was 70%.<sup>14</sup>

The contact between employers and immigrants created by the Interconnection program helps employers understand experience acquired abroad and evaluate skills. However, as an Emploi-Québec service for individuals, the Interconnection program has a mandate of promoting the success of immigrants. In fact, virtually all initiatives financed by the government pursue this same objective and are intended to prepare immigrants and put them in contact with companies.

But the Board of Trade believes that we must not lose sight of businesses as a clientele. They have needs in terms of support in managing diversity and information about employment equity. Yet there are no programs that allow the government's partners to equip companies for integrating immigrants, so there is significant need. Studies show that change will happen by improving the practices of SMEs. The Board of Trade is currently collaborating on action-research conducted by the Institut de recherche sur l'intégration professionnelle des immigrants to

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<sup>14</sup> Placement rate in employment and training.

develop support tools for intercultural interventions, which will be used by the Interconnection team. Through a Leger poll of 300 businesses, the Board of Trade has also identified unfulfilled needs of businesses in this area. The Board of Trade is confident that awareness among businesses is a source of lasting change for better integration and professional advancement of immigrants.

Services to immigrants should be improved, particularly internships. Internships in companies are a powerful tool for professional integration, because they allow immigrant workers to gain an invaluable first professional experience in Québec and to expand their network of local contacts. This is why immigrants express a great deal of interest in internships, even unpaid. However, companies find it less appealing and profitable to use immigrant interns because of the debate surrounding unpaid internships and the limited duration of the internships, which often last one month. Longer end-of-studies internships generally better meet the needs of businesses, but are only available to immigrants if they go back to school.

It is up to the government to create the conditions so that internships, particularly those exclusively for immigrants, are seen as a good investment. The government should therefore establish a policy to foster internships in businesses to promote better collaboration between companies and professional training schools. This would enable immigrants to more easily integrate to the job market while developing their professional qualifications.

**The Board of Trade therefore asks the government:**

- **to finance a service to help employers evaluate and validate international work experience**, paying particular attention to non-regulated professions. This service must aim to harmonize and centralize the process for recognizing immigrants' experience and skills;
- **to develop support programs for professional integration for businesses** (and not only immigrants);
- **to strengthen support to programs that promote closer connections between the city's businesses and immigrants**, in particular by creating favourable conditions to encourage companies to offer more internships to immigrants. This directly contributes to their employability.

## **CONCLUSION**

The new *Act Respecting Immigration to Québec* has to institute new mechanisms to improve the match between the skills of immigrant workers and the needs and imperatives of the job market. The expression of interest is the perfect mechanism, provided it takes into account the concerns of the business community in Québec and Montréal. The selection criteria must be defined in close collaboration with businesses; the implementation of a more flexible immigration system, particularly in the form of pilot programs, also adds flexibility to a process that became more restrictive after recent reforms by the federal government. Greater Montréal's flagship industries that employ highly qualified and strategic temporary labour will only be better served. Beyond the selection of economic immigrants, the city's employers must also be able to count on relevant, effective programs to support them in hiring immigrant workers. This will prompt them to fully play their role in the integration of immigrant labour, which will be beneficial both for them and the immigrants concerned.

## **SUMMARY OF THE BOARD OF TRADE OF METROPOLITAN MONTREAL'S RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **I. ADOPT EFFECTIVE, TRANSPARENT AND FLEXIBLE SELECTION MECHANISMS THAT PROMOTE IMMIGRATION THAT BETTER REFLECTS THE NEEDS OF COMPANIES AND JOB MARKET REQUIREMENTS**

The Board of Trade recommends that the government:

- consult the business community of Québec and Montréal to establish criteria for joining the applicant pool and for being invited to submit an application for permanent immigration to align the qualifications of candidates selected with the actual needs of companies and, incidentally, to maximize the likelihood of immigrants being integrated to the work force and Québec society;
- periodically review the selection criteria to ensure that they continue to match the needs of the job market and that changes are predictable for applicants. The business community must also be consulted when changes to selection criteria are planned.
- put in place a pilot project program to receive a limited number of immigrant workers temporarily or permanently, while ensuring that the selection of candidates is based on the most pressing needs of employers in Québec and Montréal, and that the processing time be no longer than six weeks.
- foster the retention of temporary foreign workers and international students by immediately integrating them to the pool of workers accepted and giving them an advantage when it comes to the invitation to submit an application for a CSQ and in the subsequent evaluation of that application.

### **I. IMPROVE THE INTEGRATION OF IMMIGRANTS TO THE JOB MARKET AND QUÉBEC SOCIETY**

The Board of Trade asks that the government:

- perform an in-depth analysis of the performance of programs for receiving immigrants, francization and employment assistance offered by the government and organizations active in the area to avoid duplication and tie supply to demand;
- better promote the programs available to reach a wider clientele and ensure that a larger number of immigrants and employers take advantage of them.
- develop more advanced French courses to allow immigrants to access the job market and advance in their careers.

- finance a service to help employers evaluate and validate international work experience, paying particular attention to non-regulated professions. This service must aim to harmonize and centralize the process for recognizing immigrants' experience and skills;
- develop support programs for professional integration for businesses (and not only immigrants);
- strengthen support to programs that promote closer connections between the city's businesses and immigrants, in particular by creating favourable conditions to encourage companies to offer more internships to immigrants. This directly contributes to their employability.