

**Recommendations of the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal as part
of consultations on the new Quebec policy on immigration, diversity and
inclusion**



February 5, 2015

Preamble

The Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal has over 7,000 members. Its mission is to be the voice of Montréal's business community and to promote the city's prosperity. It 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 organization in Quebec devoted to economic development.

Background

In December 2014, the Government of Quebec announced that it would hold public consultations through a Parliamentary Committee on the new Quebec policy on immigration, diversity and inclusion. The goal of this exercise is to give voice to the vision, guiding principles and strategic choices that will form the foundations of the new policy and steer the government's actions. This new policy will also support the direction of a multi-year immigration planning exercise beginning in 2016 and the review of Quebec immigration law.

Attracting and retaining skilled immigrants and integrating them to the workforce is a priority for the economic development of Greater Montréal and for the city's business community, so on February 5, 2015, the president and CEO of the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal (the Board of Trade), Michel Leblanc, will present a Parliamentary Committee with the Board of Trade's comments and recommendations for developing this new policy on immigration, diversity and inclusion.

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

Introduction

Access to skilled labour is a crucial issue for a knowledge-based economy grappling with an aging population. This is the case for the economy of Quebec and Montréal. To respond to this issue, we need to take action on a whole host of factors that affect the availability of labour: improving productivity in the workplace, honing the fit between education and employment, improving graduation rates and increasing the size of the working population. Immigration – insofar as it swells the ranks of the labour force – is one of the fastest and most effective solutions for increasing the availability of skilled labour.

Besides, Quebec and Montréal are lagging behind the rest of Canada when it comes to entrepreneurial drive. Immigration helps increase entrepreneurship, innovation and the development of foreign markets.¹ These are decisive factors for our economic growth.

Finally, immigration is primarily a metropolitan phenomenon. The city's world-class universities, research centres, industrial clusters and head offices make Montréal a leading destination for foreign talent. Almost 87% of immigrants to Quebec choose Greater Montréal as their new home. And yet, labour market indicators show the extent to which this resource goes underutilized.

This is why the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal considers immigration such an important issue and supports the integration of skilled immigrants through a variety of programs. The Board of Trade sees the new Quebec policy on immigration, diversity and inclusion as an opportunity to improve the selection and integration of immigrants, to better respond to the needs of the job market and strengthen social unity.

Of course, this new policy must closely consider the economic reality and challenges facing Quebec and Greater Montréal. Specifically:

- It is important to improve **the selection of immigrants** to achieve a closer fit between their experience and skills and the needs of the job market, and more specifically, the needs of businesses;
- This policy must also focus on **integrating skilled immigrants to the job market**. This is essential to enable immigrants to make a greater contribution to our economy, increase their participation in our society and, in turn, strengthen social unity. The Board of Trade has taken concrete action to promote this integration through Interconnection, a program supported by Emploi-Québec;
- The Greater Montréal business community is in favour of **increasing the number of immigrants** to respond to the longer term needs of our economy;
- Finally, this new policy must defend the positive role of immigration and diversity for the economic, social and cultural prosperity of Quebec and Montréal.

¹ Several sources, including the Conference Board of Canada. October 2010. *Immigrants as Innovators: Boosting Canada's Competitiveness*.

This brief lists the principles and directions that should guide the development of the new Quebec policy on immigration, diversity and inclusion. More specific recommendations will follow during government consultations for developing multi-year immigration planning and reviewing Quebec immigration law. Of course, this brief primarily addresses the immigration of skilled labour and should be read against the backdrop of the Board of Trade's other positions on labour availability.

I. GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR AN EFFECTIVE AND UNIFYING POLICY ON IMMIGRATION, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

A strong, effective policy on immigration and diversity responds to the economic and social needs of a society, while reinforcing its cohesion.

The Greater Montréal business community believes that the new Quebec policy on immigration, diversity and inclusion should respect the following principles:

Recognizing and valuing immigration and diversity

The new policy must recognize and value immigration and diversity as sources of creativity, productivity and social and economic enrichment for our society.

The government must reassert, draw attention to and celebrate the benefits of immigration and cultural diversity for the population of Quebec, thereby encouraging it to adopt this vision.

Clarity, simplicity and transparency

The new policy on immigration, diversity and inclusion must be clear, simple and transparent. Immigrants should receive all the information they need to understand the conditions and procedures for immigrating to Quebec. They must also receive complete information regarding the host society and its labour market, such as the specifics of that market, professions that are in demand, working conditions and the regulatory framework – even before their arrival in Quebec – so that they can make informed decisions and prepare for their integration.

Equity

The government must ensure that immigrants, people from diverse backgrounds and those born in Quebec have equal access to public and private institutions, goods and services. It must also see to it that public resources are distributed fairly based on the different needs of the population to ensure equal opportunity. Finally, equity in treatment and working conditions is also important.

Compatibility with our needs

The policy on immigration, diversity and inclusion must be based on a long-term evaluation of the needs of the job market. This is why an exhaustive analysis of long-term labour requirements is essential. The new policy must also promote a good fit between the needs of businesses and the skills of immigrants. To do this, the government needs to ensure that the mechanisms for

recognizing experience and skills and for providing language and bridge training are effective and meet the real needs of our society.

Shared responsibility

Successfully integrating immigrants to the work force is a key principle for an effective policy on immigration, diversity and inclusion. This is essential for promoting the participation of immigrants in the host society, and it is also a key factor for integration and social cohesion. However, the integration of immigrants is a responsibility that is shared by immigrants and society. The new policy must therefore ensure that the mechanisms for integrating immigrants to the work force target both parties.

Efficiency

An efficient policy on immigration, diversity and inclusion should respect the principle of subsidiarity and be evaluated periodically.

The government needs to distribute resources and responsibilities to authorities and agencies that have the expertise and geographical proximity with the target clientele, as they are often in a better position to deliver certain services.

To be effective and efficient, this policy must be accompanied by clear objectives and measurable results to facilitate the evaluation process and ensure public funds are not wasted. Putting in place a dashboard would be worthwhile, to compile exhaustive, comparable statistics on immigration and diversity, introduce a monitoring mechanism and periodically evaluate the economic and social benefits of this policy to assess progress and make improvements as required.

II. THE BOARD OF TRADE'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NEW POLICY ON IMMIGRATION, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION TAKES INTO ACCOUNT THE CITY'S ECONOMIC REALITY AND CHALLENGES

An effective policy on immigration, diversity and inclusion must contribute to the economic performance and prosperity of Quebec and Montréal. The facts regarding the suboptimal integration of immigrants to the city's job market are well known and widely documented.² However, we will briefly summarize the main facts and challenges related to professional integration that the Board of Trade considers a priority.

It is a well-known fact that the unemployment rate among immigrants within the census metropolitan area (CMA) of Montréal (11.5%) is much higher than that of native-born Canadians (6.2%).³ This is an enormous difference, particularly given that within the CMA of Toronto, the gap between the two unemployment rates is only one percentage point. It is worth noting, however, that with time this gap is closing. In fact, immigrants who moved to the city 10 years ago tend to have an unemployment rate closer to that of native-born Canadians. To better

² In particular in the Government of Quebec consultation document, *Vers une nouvelle politique en matière d'immigration, de diversité et d'inclusion*.

³ Source: Statistics Canada (2014 data).

understand these differences, it is important to remember a few important facts. Immigrants to Quebec and Montréal are:⁴

- more diverse: the origin of immigrants is more evenly distributed among the continents than elsewhere in Canada. However, the city has a larger proportion of immigrants from Africa and the Americas than other major Canadian cities;
- more educated: in Quebec, there are proportionally more immigrants who have university degrees than the rest of the population. There are also proportionally more graduates compared with immigrants to Ontario and British Columbia;
- more immigrants fluent in French and English: 78.2% of immigrants to Quebec speak French, compared with 6.3% in Ontario and British Columbia.⁵ Plus a large proportion of immigrants who speak French also have a knowledge of English.

To tackle these challenges, the immigration strategy must be studied with a focus on four main areas: the selection of immigrants, their integration, volume and awareness among the population of Quebec and Montréal.

A. Improve the selection of immigrants to reinforce the fit between the experience and skills of immigrants and the needs of companies

1. Select immigrants who are a better fit with our economic needs

The school dropout rate, the low university graduation rate and the high rate of overqualification in the Montréal area reveal not only a suboptimal use of human resources, but also the magnitude of the challenge of ensuring a fit between local business needs and available labour. This has a negative impact on labour productivity and our competitiveness.

The tertiarization of our economy and the development of the city's high-tech sectors will intensify needs for highly skilled labour. In fact, on the Island of Montréal alone, between 2012 and 2016, over 80% of jobs will require a college or university education.⁶ The majority of vacancies will be in management, technical and professional positions.⁷ Better training of resources, combined with better selection of immigrants, is essential for tackling this challenge.

In considering the selection of immigrants, we note that many immigrants to Quebec are more educated than those to Ontario and British Columbia, but they nonetheless have a harder time integrating to the work force. This demonstrates the limits of the current selection system based on human capital.

As such, it is important to draw inspiration from best practices and selection models for immigrants established by other countries, in particular New Zealand and Australia. They have

⁴CIRANO. November 12, 2014. *L'impact de l'immigration sur la dynamique économique du Québec*.

⁵ Idem.

⁶EMPLOI-QUÉBEC. November 2013. *Analyse du marché du travail: Tendances et enjeux 2014-2017 version synthèse*.

⁷ Enquête 2012 sur les besoins en main-d'œuvre dans les établissements de la RMR de Montréal.

put in place a declaration of interest system, which gets businesses more involved, since applications are classified according to needs expressed by employers. The federal government would also do well to launch the same system in the near future.

In the same vein, such a system should encourage immigrants to make efforts to have their experience and skills recognized once the selection process is under way.

The Board of Trade recommends that the government adopt the declaration of interest model for selecting immigrants, which is based more on the needs of businesses to improve the fit between immigrant labour and job market needs.

2. Properly balance language requirements, while taking into account the needs of the job market and the potential pool of skilled immigrants

Montréal is a cosmopolitan city, the most multilingual one in Canada, where 50% of the population is bilingual.⁸ This is a strength for a world-class city and is naturally reflected on the job market. The city's business community is convinced of the importance of the French language as a cornerstone of Quebec society and as a basis for successful professional integration. In fact, greater fluency in French is often required for more skilled jobs. The Government of Quebec thus recently increased French requirements for immigrants. But we need to ensure that this does not result in a disproportionate number of francophone immigrants – for the mere fact that they are francophones – distracting us from the need to choose immigrants in fields that are in demand and who are the most compatible with our needs. To do otherwise would be to restrict access to a larger labour pool against a backdrop of intense competition. Fluency in French must be balanced with skills already acquired and the ability to develop language skills.

The business community is active in helping people develop language skills. Since 2008, the Board of Trade has been taking concrete action to reinforce the place of French in business. It presides over the *Stratégie commune d'intervention pour le Grand Montréal: Le français, notre affaire à tous* (Joint intervention strategy for Greater Montréal: French is everyone's business), a partnership between the city's business community, the government and socioeconomic actors to improve the linguistic profile of companies. The Board of Trade developed two programs that target both small businesses and large corporations. The first is the Carrefour francisation program, intended to promote French and support small businesses with under 50 employees in a voluntary francization process. From 2011 to 2014, over 650 companies were certified by the Office québécois de la langue française. The second is the French in the Workplace program, intended to promote francization in companies with 50 employees and more by offering free French courses in the workplace for immigrant workers. Between 2008 and 2014, over 1,100 companies were pointed toward French courses, and over 3,350 employees took advantage of them.

⁸MONTRÉAL INTERNATIONAL. Attractiveness Indicators.

Finally, in a North American environment where our main trading partners are primarily Anglophone, having English as a second language is increasingly required both for native-born Quebecers and immigrants. Our school system is structured to give Quebec students graduating from high school a level of English considered the minimum for performing effectively on the job market, so it only makes sense to have the same requirements for candidates for immigration.

The challenge is to effectively balance language fluency (for both languages) required of immigrants at the time of selection with the actual needs of the job market.

The Board of Trade calls for the government to:

- rebalance requirements for choosing immigrants to maximize their chances of successfully integrating to the job market:
 - by placing greater weight on experience and skills that are in line with job market requirements;
 - by reducing the importance placed on fluency in French when selecting immigrants, while significantly reinforcing support and French courses for immigrants once they have arrived.
- Place more importance on a basic knowledge of English as a second language to improve the employability of immigrants in the city.

3. Attract and retain foreign students and temporary workers

Foreign students are a strategic group for immigration. They already have a degree from Quebec that is recognized by employers, are fluent in at least one of the two languages of work and understand our society's values. The same applies to temporary workers. They already have a job in Quebec, and their skills are also more readily recognized by local employers. Retaining international students and temporary workers should be priority for the government.

As such, the Board of Trade calls for the government to:⁹

- Foster the transition in status from temporary to permanent among international students and temporary workers. The government must expedite the process and reduce red tape, improve access to information and better coordinate and align the available resources;
- Better support international students and temporary workers in their efforts and job searches;
- Introduce a refundable tax credit on tuition fees for foreign students who remain in Quebec to work.

⁹MONTRÉAL INTERNATIONAL. 2015. Study.

4. Attract and retain immigrants who are investors and entrepreneurs to make up for a weak entrepreneurial drive and encourage the internationalization of companies

Quebec and Montréal have a weaker entrepreneurial drive than the rest of Canada, and more limited intentions for growth.¹⁰ Additionally, the province is facing a major challenge with respect to the next generation of entrepreneurs; according to a Board of Trade study,¹¹ between 5,700 and 10,000 Quebec companies could close their doors within the next 10 years, resulting in the elimination of 79,000 to 139,000 jobs and the loss of \$8.2 to \$12 billion in GDP. This is in addition to the challenge of internationalization facing companies, particularly SMEs, to ensure their growth. And yet, studies have shown¹² that immigration makes a major contribution to increasing entrepreneurship, innovation and the development of foreign markets. Attracting immigrant investors, entrepreneurs and self-employed workers can help improve Quebec's performance in entrepreneurship. The government must focus more on this category of immigration.

The Board of Trade asks the government to pursue measures to attract and retain immigrants who are investors and entrepreneurs to reinforce the entrepreneurial drive in Quebec and Montréal and promote the development of international markets.

B. Improve the professional integration of immigrants

1. Improve the evaluation and recognition of experience and skills among immigrant workers

Recognizing experience and skills is essential for integrating foreign labour to the job market. And yet, it is clearly more difficult to have a degree earned or experience gained abroad recognized in Quebec than elsewhere in Canada.¹³

Red tape and long processing times for files often discourage immigrants. Furthermore, the costs associated with these difficulties and bridge training required by some regulatory organizations, including professional orders, are often criticized. Such attitudes are tantamount to employment protectionism. A number of professional orders have made progress, but much remains to be done.

The increase in the number of professional regulatory organizations and thinly spread resources are other challenges for recognizing experience and skills in regulated, and even in unregulated, professions.

¹⁰ EMPLOI-QUÉBEC. November 2013. *Analyse du marché du travail: Tendances et enjeux 2014-2017 version synthèse*.

¹¹ BOARD OF TRADE OF METROPOLITAN MONTREAL. May 2014. *Transferring Businesses to the Succession: A Major Issue for the Quebec Economy and the Sustainability of SMEs*.

¹² Several studies, including that of the Conference Board of Canada. October 2010. *Immigrants as Innovators: Boosting Canada's Competitiveness*.

¹³ EMPLOI-QUÉBEC. November 2013. *Analyse du marché du travail: Tendances et enjeux 2014-2017 version synthèse*.

It is also worth pointing out that the vast majority of professions do not have a regulatory body. Almost 85%¹⁴ of active immigrants admitted each year do not have to deal with a regulatory body. That means that employers have the weighty responsibility of evaluating the experience and skills of immigrants. Often companies, and particularly SMEs, do not have the knowledge or resources needed to effectively evaluate the experience and skills of foreign nationals.

For regulated professions, the Board of Trade believes that the professional orders must:

- Better communicate the requirements for obtaining accreditation from the order in question. Professional orders need to publish information and statistics regarding the failure or abandon rate during the process for obtaining accreditation and employability indicators to help immigrants who want to initiate such efforts make informed choices;
- Speed up the accreditation and recognition process and target reductions in file processing costs;
- Provide the support required for immigrants who are beginning such efforts to facilitate their employment.

For unregulated trades and professions, the Board of Trade asks the government to:

- Standardize and entrust the experience and skills recognition process to a limited number of organizations to avoid duplicating structures and spreading resources too thinly and, above all, to expedite the process for immigrants;
- Institute a system for recognizing foreign experience and entrust it to the appropriate organization, which will be a resource for employers that want to better understand employee skills acquired abroad;
- Expedite the processing of files. This is a priority so that immigrants can more quickly find a job commensurate with their experience and skills;
- Better align bridge training and make it more flexible. To do this, we need to encourage collaborations between schools and businesses. It is also important to encourage part-time, short-term and à-la-carte training to facilitate efforts and better accommodate new immigrants.

The Board of Trade asks that the new immigration policy expedite the evaluation and recognition of experience and skills both for regulated professions and trades (better communication of needs and requirements, acceleration of certification processes, better support for immigrants) and for unregulated professions (standardization and centralization of the recognition process and system, faster processing of files, alignment and flexibility).

2. Strengthen measures to encourage contact between immigrant workers and employers

To improve the professional integration of immigrants, we need to get employers more involved. Many companies in the metropolitan area have introduced best practices and succeeded in

¹⁴CONSEIL EMPLOI MÉTROPOLÉ. 2012. *Guide du participant. Rendez-vous métropolitain pour l'emploi.*

integrating a large share of immigrants to their company – Peerless Clothing Inc., Bombardier and others. But plenty of effort is still needed to raise awareness among companies about best practices in integrating immigrants to the job market.

In this, the Board of Trade's Interconnection program is highly effective. Among participating companies, 98% believe that Interconnection helped them recognize the potential and skills of immigrant job seekers. In 2014, 1,000 professional immigrants had contact with 400 participating companies through 2,000 professional networking activities (speed interviewing, networking activities, internships). The job placement rate in the participants' field for this period was 63%. And by providing a forum for the business community and companies to express needs and requirements, this program helps identify immigrant candidates likely to satisfy them. The government needs to maintain and develop this model.

Furthermore, internships with companies are a powerful tool for the professional integration of immigrants. They allow them to gain some initial professional experience in Quebec, which is invaluable, to develop a network of local contacts, to expedite the recognition of their skills and more. This is why even unpaid internships are very much in demand among immigrants. However, the current debate around unpaid internships, in addition to the fact that these are often short term, limits the appeal of these internships for companies. Furthermore, end-of-studies internships, which are longer term, better respond to corporate needs. But immigrants cannot take advantage of this important connection between companies and schools. The government needs to create the conditions for companies to see internships for immigrants as a profitable investment. We need to create a policy that encourages internships with companies to, on the one hand, encourage businesses to express and clarify their needs and, on the other hand, encourage better cooperation between companies and professional training schools to allow immigrants to gain entry to a company via an internship, while honing their professional qualifications.

The Board of Trade asks the government to increase its support to programs that foster closer connections between the city's businesses and immigrants, by creating conditions that encourage companies to offer more internships to immigrants. This will contribute directly to their employability.

3. Improve the regionalization of immigration

Geographical distribution is an important issue because the vast majority of immigrants are in Greater Montréal, and the population in the regions is aging faster.

Greater Montréal can play an important role in improving the regionalization of immigration, in particular by referring to the regions new immigrants who have the skills that are in demand there. For example, the Board of Trade, through the intermediary of its Interconnection program, supported the Chambre de commerce et d'industrie de Québec in its efforts to attract more skilled immigrants. Having a larger pool of candidates established in the city, Interconnection was able to refer the candidates most likely to respond to the needs of Quebec. This sort of model should be reintroduced, in fact reinforced.

The Board of Trade asks the government to improve the regionalization of immigration by supporting initiatives to improve collaboration between the city's key organizations for integrating immigrants and other economic development and employment organizations in the regions of Quebec.

C. Increase the volume of immigration so that it meets our economic and demographic needs

The population of Quebec and Montréal is aging both faster and more markedly than elsewhere in Canada, to say nothing of the fact that Quebec's demographic weight in Canada is declining year after year.¹⁵ This affects its political weight. While recent demographic figures published by the Institut de la statistique du Québec reveal that the province's total population will continue to grow, specifically through international immigration, the decline in numbers of those aged 20 to 64 – in other words, the working age population – is cause for concern. We should note, however, that the total population is increasing slower than in Ontario and British Columbia, because Quebec receives proportionally fewer immigrants. This is in addition to the net negative interprovincial migration that has been going on for decades. Hence, the current volume of 50,000 immigrants admitted per year will not prevent this degrowth, on the contrary: the working age population will see a marked decline between 2017 and 2030.¹⁶

As a result, Quebec and Montréal companies will find it increasingly difficult to meet their labour needs. Furthermore, according to Emploi-Québec forecasts, during the period 2013-2017, there will be some 149,500 jobs¹⁷ to fill in the Montréal census metropolitan area, 70% of them resulting from retirement.

In light of these findings, the Board of Trade asks the Government of Quebec to increase the number of immigrants admitted to 60,000 per year, or proportional to the province's demographic weight in the rest of Canada. In fact, the Government of Quebec consultation document for the new policy on immigration, diversity and inclusion clearly states that admitting 60,000 new immigrants per year is the minimum requirement for preventing a decline in the working age population in Quebec.

The Board of Trade asks the government to increase the number of immigrants to Quebec to approximately 60,000 people per year to better respond to the long-term economic and demographic needs of Quebec and Montréal.

D. Defend the positive role of immigration and diversity for the economic, social and cultural prosperity of Quebec and Montréal

¹⁵ INSTITUT DE LA STATISTIQUE DU QUÉBEC. 2014 edition. *Bilan démographique du Québec*.

¹⁶ MINISTÈRE DE L'IMMIGRATION, DE LA DIVERSITÉ ET DE L'INCLUSION. December 2014. *Cahier de consultation, vers une nouvelle politique québécoise en matière d'immigration, de diversité et d'inclusion*

¹⁷ EMPLOI-QUÉBEC. July 2014. *Perspectives à moyen (2013-2017) et à long terme (2013-2022)*.

Immigration and cultural diversity have been at the centre of many debates in recent years. Immigration as an answer to our economic and demographic challenges has at times been called into question,¹⁸ to say nothing of issues related to the secular state. This has sent a chilling signal with respect to immigration and cultural diversity. Obviously, this can affect the city's image as a welcoming place for immigrants and could hamper the attraction of foreign talent.

In its new policy on immigration, diversity and inclusion, the government needs to send a clear message that immigration, diversity and foreign talent are beneficial to our economy and an important part of society. To do this, the Board of Trade recommends:

- Stepping up awareness-raising efforts about the benefits of immigration and diversity for our society. This is essential to correct biases;
- Pursuing intercultural and diversity training activities and efforts;
- Getting the business community more involved. Major corporations that hire immigrant labour and people from diverse backgrounds must become ambassadors to other companies for integrating this labour.

The Board of Trade asks the government to step up awareness-raising efforts and initiatives to defend the positive role of immigration and diversity in the economic, social and cultural prosperity of Quebec and Montréal.

Conclusion

For the business community, the cultural and linguistic diversity of Montréal is a major asset. Furthermore, attracting and retaining immigrant labour and ensuring professional integration are essential for a knowledge-based economy with an aging population.

The new policy on immigration, diversity and inclusion must first and foremost reaffirm the strategic role that diversity plays in our economic prosperity and cultural richness. It must also aim to improve the professional integration of immigrants by refining their selection based on needs of the job market and reinforcing measures to increase their employability. Finally, since the availability of skilled labour is a long-term issue, the Board of Trade stresses the importance of increasing the volume of immigration proportional to the demographic weight in Canada.

¹⁸BENOÎT DUBREUIL AND GUILLAUME MAROIS. 2011. *Le Remède imaginaire. Pourquoi l'immigration ne sauvera pas le Québec.*

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

I. Guiding principles for an effective, unifying policy on immigration, diversity and inclusion.

Recommendation 1: The Greater Montréal business community believes that Quebec's new policy on immigration, diversity and inclusion should respect the following principles:

- Recognizing and valuing immigration and diversity
- Clarity, simplicity and transparency
- Equity
- Compatibility with our needs
- Shared responsibility
- Efficiency

II. The Board of Trade's recommendations for the new policy on immigration, diversity and inclusion take into account the city's economic reality and challenges.

A. Improve the selection of immigrants to reinforce the fit between the experience and skills of immigrants and the needs of companies

Recommendation 2: The Board of Trade recommends that the government adopt the declaration of interest model for selecting immigrants, which is based more on the needs of businesses to improve the fit between immigrant labour and job market needs.

Recommendation 3: The Board of Trade calls for the government to:

- rebalance requirements for choosing immigrants to maximize their chances of successfully integrating to the job market:
 - by placing greater weight on experience and skills that are in line with job market requirements;
 - by reducing the importance placed on fluency in French when selecting immigrants, while significantly reinforcing support and French courses for immigrants once they have arrived.
- Place more importance on a basic knowledge of English as a second language to improve the employability of immigrants in the city.

Recommendation 4: The Board of Trade calls for the government to:

- Foster the transition in status from temporary to permanent among international students and temporary workers. The government must expedite the process and reduce red tape, improve access to information and better coordinate and align the available resources;
- Better support international students and temporary workers in their efforts and job searches;
- Introduce a refundable tax credit on tuition fees for foreign students who remain in Quebec to work.

Recommendation 5: The Board of Trade asks the government to pursue measures to attract and retain immigrants who are investors and entrepreneurs to reinforce the entrepreneurial drive in Quebec and Montréal and promote the development of international markets.

B. Reinforce the professional integration of immigrants

Recommendation 6: The Board of Trade asks that the new immigration policy expedite the evaluation and recognition of experience and skills both for regulated professions and trades (better communication of needs and requirements, acceleration of certification processes, better support for immigrants) and for unregulated professions (standardization and centralization of the recognition process and system, faster processing of files, alignment and flexibility).

Recommendation 7: The Board of Trade asks the government to increase its support to programs that foster closer connections between the city's businesses and immigrants, by creating conditions that encourage companies to offer more internships to immigrants. This will contribute directly to their employability.

Recommendation 8: The Board of Trade asks the government to improve the regionalization of immigration by supporting initiatives to improve collaboration between the city's key organizations for integrating immigrants and other economic development and employment organizations in the regions of Quebec.

C. Increase the volume of immigration so that it meets our economic and demographic needs

Recommendation 9: The Board of Trade asks the government to increase the number of immigrants to Quebec to approximately 60,000 people per year to better respond to the long-term economic and demographic needs of Quebec and Montréal.

III. Defend the positive role of immigration and diversity for the economic, social and cultural prosperity of Quebec and Montréal.

Recommendation 10: The Board of Trade asks the government to step up awareness-raising efforts and initiatives to defend the positive role of immigration and diversity in the economic, social and cultural prosperity of Quebec and Montréal.