



**Canadian Employee Relocation Council**

44 Victoria Street, Suite 1711

Toronto, ON M5C 1Y2

Tel: 416- 593-9812 Fax: 416-593-1139

Toll-free: 1-866-357-CERC (2372)

E-mail: [info@cerc.ca](mailto:info@cerc.ca) [www.cerc.ca](http://www.cerc.ca)

March 9, 2016

The Honourable John McCallum, P.C. M.P.  
Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship  
365 Laurier Avenue West  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 1L1

**Re: 2015 Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration**

Dear Minister McCallum,

On behalf of the members of CERC, I am writing to respectfully express our disappointment with the decision to reduce the target for the number of economic class immigrants in 2016 from 181,300 to 160,600, a reduction 11 per cent. The 2016 target is also a reduction to the 165,089 admissions in 2014.

We believe this reduction will have a negative impact on the business community and on Canada's economy over the longer term. Economic immigrants possess the requisite skills, experience, education and language proficiency needed to drive innovation and contribute to Canada's economy. Economic immigrations provides a key stimulus to enable Canada to enter global markets and fund future economic growth initiatives. For these reasons we ask that the 2016 targets for economic class immigrants be maintained at the 2015 levels.

While we agree with your government's overall agenda to build an immigration system that is grounded in compassion and economic prosperity for all. Numerous recent studies (IDC, ICTC, ITAC etc.) however, have all identified key risks if Canada does not quickly increase the number of highly skilled workers. As a result, we see no compelling reason to reduce the number of economic class immigrants. We believe a more balanced strategy would have been to maintain the levels for economic immigrants at the 2015 target of 181,300, and increase overall targets to fulfill commitments for refugees and family reunification.

Not unlike many developed nations, Canada's birthrate is in decline and the workforce is marching towards retirement. According to Statistics Canada the number of people aged 65 years or over now surpasses the number of children aged 14 years or under. This shift, a first in the history of the Canadian population, will have significant impact on Canada's economy and its labour force and social security systems. It is estimated that by 2031 there will be just 2.16 Canadian workers supporting one retiree, by comparison there were 3.96 workers supporting one retiree in 2010. To continue to grow as a global leader the Canadian population must grow to about 43 million people over the next two decades.

At the same time as the working age population is in decline, the skills gap is expected to grow. A report published earlier in 2015 by Miner Management Consultants, projects a shortage of workers in Canada of about 1.75 million by 2026, comprised of a shortage of about 2 million skilled workers and a surplus of 257,000 unskilled workers. As a nation we should be doing everything possible to avert this situation today.

A very positive step in your report is a commitment to improve service delivery. As you may recall our recent survey of employers highlighted many of the challenges employers experience in accessing immigration programs, and we have provided your officials with a number of suggested improvements to address those issues.

We are pleased to see that your report includes a commitment to review processing times under the Express Entry system, and to examine ways to increase transparency and integrity of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. We are also pleased to see the restoration of the maximum age of dependants from 18 to 22 years and the commitment to find ways to reduce barriers for foreign students.

Minister, we look forward to working with you and your officials to build a robust, effective, and efficient immigration system, which is critical to Canada's long-term economic growth.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Cryne', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Stephen Cryne  
President and CEO, Canadian Employee Relocation Council