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**Canadians becoming more immigrant friendly amid refugee crisis, survey finds**

A year after Ottawa opened its door to Syrian refugees, Canadians have grown to be more welcoming of immigrants, a joint survey by the Environics Institute and Canadian Race Relations Foundation finds.

A year after Canada opened its doors to 31,000 Syrian refugees, a new national survey finds Canadians have not been caught up in the xenophobia witnessed elsewhere, but have grown to be more immigrant friendly.

Almost half of Canadians said Canada has received the right number of Syrians, with 10 per cent saying too few were admitted, according to the joint survey by the Environics Institute and Canadian Race Relations Foundation conducted between Oct. 3 and 16.

Although 36 per cent of the 2,000 respondents said Canada was taking in too many Syrians, their primary concern was over the country’s capacity to support them and how it might divert resources from other priorities, rather than fear of newcomers failing to fit in or posing a security threat.

“Is growing international xenophobia and racism catching hold in Canada or emboldening Canadians to more explicitly express previously suppressed politically incorrect views?” asks the poll to be released Tuesday.

“The results of the latest Focus Canada survey of Canadian public opinion confirm the answer is no.”

Overall, 58 per cent of respondents disagreed there was too much immigration in Canada, compared to 37 per cent who said the immigration level was too high.

Environics has been surveying Canadians about their attitudes to immigration since the 1970s. The latest poll found fewer Canadians now express concern about immigrants not adopting “Canadian values,” the lowest ever recorded in the last two decades. Nine out of 10 said someone born elsewhere is just as likely to be a good citizen as someone born here.

Those who believe too many immigrants are not adopting Canadian values are also in the decline. Just over half of Canadians now agree newcomers are not fitting in, down from 11 points.

The findings came just as Immigration Minister John McCallum is about to announce Canada’s immigration levels for the next three years and a Conservative Party leadership race that has made the screening of potential immigrants and refugees for “anti-Canadian values” a campaign issue.

While previous polls found the majority of respondents said most refugees are not real refugees, the new poll found 44 per cent of Canadians now believed asylum seekers have real cause for Canada’s protection, surpassing the 39 per cent who said otherwise.

Two out of three respondents said Canada is doing a good job of keeping criminals and suspected criminals out of the country, which is at the highest level recorded since this question was first asked in 1993.

Although these results apply generally across the country, negative opinions about immigration are most prevalent in the Prairie Provinces.

For instance, 46 per cent of people in Manitoba and 44 per cent in Alberta felt there was too much immigration to Canada, compared to 26 per cent of those in British Columbia and 29 per cent in Atlantic Canada.

It is also in Alberta (49 per cent) and Manitoba/Saskatchewan (43 per cent) where people were most likely to say the number of Syrian refugees accepted in Canada is too high. The number of people sharing those views in Atlantic Canada and British Columba were 28 per cent and 29 per cent respectively.

When it comes to newcomers failing to adopt Canadian values, Quebecers and respondents from the Prairies came on top, with 57 per cent of the people sharing the view, compared to 47 per cent in B.C. and 48 per cent in Atlantic Canada.

The results are considered accurate to within plus or minus 2.2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.