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NEWS RELEASE

Majority of Canadians strongly support immigration But poll finds Canadians don't want immigration levels increased

Montreal – While most Canadians think that immigration is a positive feature and that it is good for the country, they also believe immigration levels should be maintained at the current level or reduced, according to the latest Nanos Research poll for *Policy Options*, the monthly magazine published by the Institute for Research on Public Policy.

“These conflicting findings might appear counterintuitive, however, they are logically consistent with the current economic cycle,” says pollster Nik Nanos, president and CEO of Nanos Research, a national public opinion research firm based in Ottawa. “In the present economic cycle, coming out of a severe recession, Canadians are more supportive of the status quo. In other words, immigration is a good thing, but we don’t want too much of a good thing.”

The poll found that four Canadians in five agree (65.3 percent) or somewhat agree (16.1 percent) that immigration is “a key positive feature of Canada as a country.” About one Canadian in six disagrees (11.8 percent) or somewhat disagrees (4.2 percent) with this statement. But, when asked if immigration levels should be increased, decreased or maintained at present levels, Canadians are much more ambivalent. Only one in five (21.4 percent) believes immigration levels should be increased, while nearly four in 10 (38.9 percent) believe present levels should be maintained. One in three (32.4 percent) believes immigration levels should be decreased.

Canadians also have a high degree of sympathy for the challenges immigrants encounter when relocating to a new country. Nearly two in three Canadians polled agree (45.8%) or somewhat agree (19.9%) that governments should do more through language and labour market support to help immigrants settle in Canada.

“Overall the results of this poll are very positive on immigration and related issues, subject only to the caution that, in difficult times, such as those we have recently experienced, Canadians generally do not have an appetite for immigration levels to be increased,” notes Nanos.

The random telephone survey was conducted with 1,008 Canadians between May 29 and June 3, 2010. The margin of accuracy is 3.1 percentage points, plus or minus, 19 times out of 20.

The poll, in the July-August issue of *Policy Options*, can be downloaded free of charge from the Institute's Web site (www.irpp.org).

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