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Volpe aiming for 300,000 immigrants a year

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Canada could be accepting as many as 300,000 immigrants each year by 2010, if Immigration Minister Joe Volpe convinces his cabinet colleagues to go along with new targets.

- INDEPTH: [Immigration](#)

Last year, the country took in 236,000 immigrants to feed a growing demand for workers, according to a report Volpe is expected to table in the House of Commons Monday. This year's number should be around 245,000 by the end of December.

Volpe told the Globe and Mail in an interview published Monday that he hopes 255,000 people will be admitted to Canada as immigrants in 2006.

A spokesman for his department said cabinet must still approve the plan.

At the moment, about 700,000 prospective immigrants are waiting to have their applications processed, Volpe told the Globe and Mail. The process can take up to four years.



Joe Volpe (CP file Photo)

The Liberal government has long been promising to deal with the backlog. In April, it announced a series of measures aimed at speeding up applications from people with close relatives already in Canada.

- FROM APRIL 18, 2005: [New immigration plan to clear backlog](#)

Now Volpe is proposing to accept more people on temporary visas to fill jobs that are going unfilled, mostly in the construction industry.

"We have to start thinking about the Immigration Department as a recruiting vehicle for Canada's demographic and labour market needs," he told the Globe and Mail. "We are the lungs of the country."

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