



## **AP Poll: Majority of French See Influence of Immigrants As Negative**

**Washington, D.C. (AP)** — More than half of the French say immigrants are a bad influence on their country, even though a majority feel religious diversity is a good thing, an AP poll found.

*The Associated Press Poll is conducted by Ipsos-Public Affairs. Between May 7-17, 2004, the AP/Ipsos poll interviewed a representative sample of about 1,000 residents of Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Spain and the United States. The margin of error is +/- 3 for all adults. Please reference the topline results for the complete list of number of interviews and margin of error for each country.*

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### **Associated Press**

**Washington, D.C. (AP)** — More than half of the French say immigrants are a bad influence on their country, even though a majority feel religious diversity is a good thing, an AP poll found.

In the AP-Ipsos poll, 53 percent of respondents to an AP-Ipsos poll said immigrants to France are a bad influence on the country and a similar number, 52 percent, said it is better for a country if nearly all its residents share the same customs and traditions.

Not all the French sentiment about immigrants was negative, however.

Seven in 10 said it is better for a country to have a variety of people with different religions, however. And three-fourths said immigrants take the jobs that French nationals are unwilling to work.

Immigration has long been a difficult issue in France, which is home to both the largest Muslim population in Western Europe — 5 million — and to the largest Jewish community in Europe. Many Muslims are also French citizens.

The country's growing Muslim population hails mainly from former French colonies of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. The French government also is concerned about a rise in Muslim fundamentalism and the fact that some Muslims have not fully integrated into French society.

A recently passed law in France forbids students from wearing conspicuous religious symbols and clothing to school. The law was enacted mainly to defuse controversy about Muslim head scarves, but also applies to attire such as the Jewish yarmulke and large crucifixes.

In 1999, the latest year for which statistics are available, there were 3.2 million foreigners living in France, roughly 5.6 percent of the country's 60 million people. Major nationalities included Portuguese (553,000), Italians (201,000), Moroccans (504,000), Algerians (477,482) and Tunisians (154,000).

141,000 permanent foreign residents permits were accorded in 2001, and, significantly 69 percent of them were for consolidation of family members — bringing families together once a father, for instance, is a resident. Six percent went to refugees and 8 percent were for work.

The AP-Ipsos poll of 938 French residents, conducted May 14-15, has a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

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