

Philadelphia Chapter of the French-American Chamber of Commerce - 9/27/18

FACC's **International Innovation through Global Migration: Canada - US - France** program presented the impact that migration is having on innovation for each respective country. A diverse group of nationalities and professions attended to learn from the distinguished speakers. Michael E. Scullin, Laure Pallez, and Jonathan A. Grode all gave compelling and informative speeches. An entertaining evening with wine, cheese, networking, good conversations, and excellent presentations took place.

[Michael E. Scullin](#), Honorary Consul of France in Philadelphia & Wilmington, and Counsel, McElroy, Deutsch, Mulvaney & Carpenter LLP, opened and closed the program. He briefly discussed business relations between France and the U.S. and gave information on French visas.

[Laure Pallez](#), Deputy Economic Counselor, Embassy of France in the United States offered an optimistic view on why France is a great place for international business. President Emmanuel Macron's proposed economic reforms to promote business development and welcome global business are a promising sign for international companies. France has one of the most open and inviting economies for foreign companies. A lower cost of doing business, a skilled workforce, high R&D incentives, a large startup ecosystem ([La French Tech](#)), the global, trendsetting city of Paris, and the lowest expatriate general tax rate all make France an excellent choice for foreign investors and businesses. President Macron's ongoing pro-business reform agenda increases flexibility and predictability by improving human capital with a focus on vocational training and apprenticeships, while decreasing the corporate tax rate. France remains [welcoming](#) of both businesses and incoming talent.

[Jonathan A. Grode](#), Esq., US Practice Director, Green and Spiegel LLC, Immigration Law Firm, followed with an update on hiring foreign workers under the Trump administration. Grode started by making the point that immigration is historically not a partisan issue. Although Republicans are now considered to be "harder" on immigration, former Presidents Clinton and Obama had their fair share of legislation on decreasing immigration. In fact, President Obama was often called the "Deporter-in-Chief" for the amount of individuals that were deported under his watch. However, how President Trump's administration has regulated immigration goes above and beyond what any previous administration, regardless of party, has done. Much of the immigration argument today is made on moral grounds (understandably so). However, the immigration cutdown is also illogical from an economic perspective. There are currently over 600,000 open jobs in the U.S. that cannot be filled with American workers. Great attention has been paid to President Trump's attacks on DACA and TPS (not to mention ICE employer raids), but acquiring H-1B visas are also much more difficult under this administration. Lowering the number of high-skilled H-1B workers is restricting 1 million potential workers from entering the U.S. In addition, processing times are dramatically slower.

Next, Grode discussed the differing approach that Canada is taking with immigration. At the same time the U.S. is becoming more closed, Canada is becoming more open to foreign workers and businesses. Programs such as [Mobilité Francophone](#) and the [Global Skills](#)

[Strategy](#) offer quick and numerous opportunities for foreign nationals to work in Canada. In fact, because of the more amenable immigration approach, many foreign companies are nearshoring in Canada to be close to New York and U.S. global cities, without having to be physically located there.

The talks raised the question: is international business expansion better in France and Canada than in the U.S? One might be tempted to answer yes to that question. However, it is important to note that while that may seem like the case now, in a globalized, ever-changing world, situations can change quickly. The current U.S. administration might only be in power for two more years, and laws can change quickly in France and Canada. What is clear is that international business opportunities still do exist for all three places.

— Alexander David Bervik