

PROMOTING TRADE AND INVESTMENT WITH EUROPE

RECOMMENDATION 6:

That the federal government provide a boost to DFAIT's direct trade and investment promotion budget in Europe. These increased resources should be targeted towards expanding Canadian involvement in European trade fairs, thereby enhancing Canada's image and presence within the European business community, and to a broader, more extensive search for additional investment throughout Europe.

Over 400 trade and investment activities in Europe receive federal government support each year despite reduced program budgets. The nature of Government support for European activities has changed, but not the commitment to excellence.

Team Canada Inc departments have developed measures such as the "New Approach" to minimize the amount of time spent responding to requests of a routine nature and to maximize the amount of time dedicated to providing high-value services. Electronic service delivery systems were also developed. For example, Government Web sites post basic market information to give exporters a general sense of the target markets. These mechanisms enable Canadian SMEs to access general information instantly without having to contact personnel at posts abroad, where resources are better deployed in other activities. Standardized core services have been developed so Canadian SMEs can now get the assistance they have said they wanted: market intelligence, face-to-face briefings, market assessment, assistance identifying key local contacts, visit information, and assistance with troubleshooting. Participation in trade fairs is still an important element of doing business in Europe, however, and the Government is committed to participating in world-leading trade fairs in Europe in cases where there is a large presence of Canadian companies.

In short, although a reduction in resources has led to challenges, the Government has responded by focusing on the private sector's expressed wish for value-added services such as market intelligence and trade leads.