

## Canada-France Relations

- Canada's excellent relations with France over the years have been reinforced by historical, linguistic, and cultural ties between Canadians and the French.
- In recent years the two countries started working together in new areas of mutual concern, including the challenges of globalization and the governance of increasingly multicultural societies. The French government has expressed an interest in recent reforms within the Public Service of Canada and the restoration of Canada's fiscal health.
- Ties between the two countries are also strengthened by the fact that both belong to numerous international organizations, including the United Nations, the G8, la Francophonie, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the World Trade Organization, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and the International Centre for Crime Prevention.
- France is an important partner for Canada in implementing the commitments made in international organizations. Common priorities include official development assistance, such as the G8 Africa Action Plan adopted at the Kananaskis Summit in June 2002.
- Within UNESCO, la Francophonie, and the International Alliance of Culture Ministers, Canada and France have developed joint initiatives to promote diversity and to protect cultural identities.
- Through the Canada-France 2004 Program, marking the 400th anniversary of the first French settlement in Canada, the two countries are organizing events that will help to update French perceptions of Canada and generate economic, cultural and tourism spinoffs.
- The official visit of French Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin in May 2003 gave both countries an opportunity to further their co-operation. Prime Minister Raffarin and Prime Minister Chrétien released a joint statement on cultural diversity and presided over the signing of an agreement on youth exchanges and an action plan between National Research Council Canada's Industrial Research Assistance Program and France's Agence nationale de valorisation de la Recherche. The action plan will facilitate knowledge and information exchanges and increase technological partnership between small and medium-sized business.