

Canada-European Union Relations

- The European Union (EU) comprises 15 member states: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.
- The EU is Canada's second most important trading partner and a principal player in international political and socio-economic issues.
- Canada and the EU hold regular meetings at the prime minister and minister levels. The Canada-European Union Summit is held every six months to coincide with the EU's rotating presidency. In December 1998, Canada's Prime Minister met in Ottawa with the President of the European Commission and with the Austrian Chancellor, whose nation held the presidency of the European Council during the second half of 1998. In March 1999, Canada's Foreign Minister met in Ottawa with the Vice-President of the European Commission and with the German Vice-Chancellor and Foreign Affairs Minister, whose nation holds the presidency of the European Council for the first six months of 1999.
- A number of agreements promote political and economic co-operation between Canada and the EU. The 1976 Canada-EU Framework Agreement for Commercial and Economic Co-operation facilitates trade and investment and encourages industrial research and development and technical co-operation. The 1990 Transatlantic Declaration on EU-Canada Relations established regular high-level political consultations. The 1995 Agreement for Scientific and Technological Co-operation (amended in 1998) gives qualified Canadian and EU companies access to government-funded research and development consortiums. In 1996, the Canada-EU Action Plan set out specific objectives, including drafting a joint study on ways to remove trade barriers.
- In 1998, the EU and Canada signed three significant agreements. The Veterinary Agreement recognizes equivalent sanitary measures while maintaining high levels of health protection. The Agreement on Co-operation in Nuclear Research gives Canadian researchers access to EU research projects on nuclear energy. An agreement on mutual recognition of conformity assessment reduces the regulatory approval costs for selling Canadian products in Europe and vice versa.
- Experts from Canada and the EU regularly discuss regional political issues of common concern that arise in forums such as the G-8, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, NATO, the Council of Europe and the UN.