

Other fish product exporters to the EC, like Norway, enjoy advantages in the EC market, notably proximity and more favorable tariffs. Nonetheless, Canadian exporters have achieved high sales in the EC, for example in lobsters, shrimp, salmon and cod. As the world's second largest seafood exporter, Canada has a strong base to build on in the EC market.

For Canada's hi-tech product exporters, a potential problem is the adoption of new European product standards. While there is obvious benefit in establishing common standards for European countries, there is also the potential for those standards to inhibit imports from third countries having different standards. EC standards are especially important because they often become world standards, quickly adopted by the over 70 countries with which the EC has preferential trade arrangements.

Another important consideration is that preference in public markets will continue to be given to firms able to provide products with a 50 per cent Community content. To sell into these markets, Canadian companies in the telecommunications and computer industry will have to create a presence in Europe by one means or another. As with many other sectors, alliances with EC firms can be an important aspect of achieving greater market penetration.

With this conference in St. John's and a forthcoming one in Toronto, the initial phase of our information program is nearing completion. For the second phase, my department is planning new seminars and workshops to focus on standards, environmental equipment and strategic alliances. I hope you will take advantage of those second phase activities as well.

Several of you will be participating in two trade missions going to Europe from Atlantic Canada this month. One mission is on food products, the other on high technology. Both are under the NEXOS program, which seeks to extend the range of export markets for Canadian companies. For example, 13 seafood companies will be part of the NEXOS group going to Germany and France, to attend major trade fairs and receive advice from Canadian trade officials on doing business in those countries.

Canadian businesses are competing in Europe today and can achieve greater successes in future. That will require a thorough understanding of a complex and fast-changing situation. That is why the government has made "Europe 1992" such a central element of its "Going Global" trade strategy: to give you the information you need to take the initiative for increased exports to Europe.