

Relations Between Canada and the European Union

- The European Union (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-EU Summit is held every six months to coincide with the EU's rotating presidency. In December 1997, Canada's Prime Minister met in Ottawa with the Prime Minister of Luxembourg, who was the outgoing President of the European Council, and with the President and the Vice-President of the European Commission. In January 1998, Canada's Foreign Minister met in Ottawa with the British Foreign Secretary, who is the current Chair of the EU Council of Ministers, and with the Vice-President of the European Commission.
- A number of bilateral agreements promote political and economic co-operation between Canada and the EU. The 1976 Canada-EU Framework Agreement for Commercial and Economic Co-operation serves to facilitate trade and investment and to encourage various forms of 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 gives qualified Canadian and EU companies access to government-funded research and development consortiums. In 1996, the Canada-EU Action Plan set out a wide range of specific objectives in Canada-EU relations, including the drafting of a joint study on ways to remove trade barriers.
- In 1997, the EU and Canada reached two significant agreements. The Agreement on Humane Trapping Standards provides an effective framework for an industry that employs many Europeans and Canadians. The Agreement on Customs Co-operation and Mutual Assistance enhances transatlantic trade between the EU and Canada by strengthening the ability to combat fraud and building on the current, close working relationship.
- Canada and the EU have worked very closely in the Balkan region since 1992. The EU and the World Bank are co-ordinating reconstruction in the former Yugoslavia. Canada is supporting that process through humanitarian assistance, social and economic reconstruction and democracy building.