

Europe

During 1977, Canada aimed at developing and strengthening its political, economic and trade relations with Europe. A number of international gatherings provided Canada with an opportunity to make the case for more and better relations, both bilateral and multilateral, in many areas of common interest.

In its continuing effort to find new means for diversifying its external relations in accordance with domestic interests and to reduce its vulnerability to changes occurring throughout the world, Canada naturally looked towards Western and Northwestern Europe. The European Community was already Canada's largest trading partner after the United States. Canada participated with representatives of the United States, Japan, Britain, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy and the EEC in the economic summit meeting held in London on May 7 and 8. The meeting discussed action that might be taken jointly to deal with problems created by the world economic situation, the state of international trade, unemployment among the young, the North-South dialogue, energy shortages and the spread of nuclear weapons. The participation of the President of the Commission of the European Communities was of exceptional significance, since it gave the EC a single voice on the international scene.

Negotiations between Canada and the European Community continued during 1977 in pursuit of a new agreement to ensure the peaceful use of atomic energy and of Canadian nuclear technology. Conclusion of such an agreement would enable Canada to resume deliveries of uranium to the European Community.

In addition, co-operation was pursued with the countries of West and Northwest Europe by means of regional and international conferences, official visits and meetings between ministers. These exchanges related principally to the maintenance of peace, the peaceful uses of atomic energy, social and economic development, the law of the sea, development of natural resources, environmental protection and telecommunications.

Cultural and academic exchanges increased, mainly with France, Britain and Belgium but also with Italy and the Federal Republic of Germany. Programs of Canadian studies were promoted by the Canadian missions in those countries.

Relations between Canada and the countries of Eastern Europe were strengthened by numerous meetings and ministerial discussions on matters of bilateral interest in the fields of health and welfare, sport, urban affairs, industry, trade and commerce, science, agriculture and energy. Canada and Romania signed an important agreement on nuclear safeguards.

Canada was active in the search for ways to reduce tensions and increase security in Europe as a prerequisite for improving East-West relations. It was a participant in the preliminary studies and the initial follow-up meeting in Belgrade to the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, held in Helsinki in 1976. At the Belgrade meeting, the CSCE participants (33 European countries, the United States and Canada) reviewed the progress made in giving effect to the provisions of the Final Act of the Helsinki Agreement.