

ii) Political

Since its election in the early 1980s, the Mitterrand government has been operating at a "proper" distance from Canada's constitutional debate. Recently, the healthy Quebec-Paris relationship has been a positive factor in overall Canada-France relations. With the election of a centre-right government in Paris, it remains to be seen if this pattern will hold.

The bilateral relationship has grown richer and more diversified in recent years. French diplomacy has taken a more broadly based approach in the development of its relations with Canada.

There are, however, a number of problematic issues in the relationship. France and Canada have had significant disagreements over quotas for fish catches in the North Atlantic and the delimiting of territorial waters in the area around the islands of Saint-Pierre and Miquelon and associated deep-sea mining rights.

(See Book I, section F, East-Coast Fishery.)

Canada and France are members of a wide variety of multilateral organizations, including the UN, NATO, the OECD and the G-7. The two countries see eye-to-eye on most issues but differences do arise, for example, in the G-7 where France does not share Canada's enthusiasm for the political consultation dimension of G-7 activities. The French have also taken a hard line on agricultural matters in the Uruguay Round and, if the negotiations do not succeed, they may have to bear much, if not most, of the blame for their failure.