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V. Cooperation in Space, Science and Technology

True to a long tradition in France, science, scientific culture and science education are conducted on a very high level. French investment in S&T research is the fourth highest in the world.

France is a world leader in some key sectors of prime interest to Canada, especially telecommunications, medicine, biotechnology, agriculture and aerospace.

Canada and France have the same sector priorities, and there are already many S&T interchanges and much cooperation between government departments and agencies, institutes and laboratories, as well as between individual researchers. This cooperation includes joint participation in proposals for EU research programs and the space program.

Official government to government relations are under the aegis of the Canada-France Joint Commission on Scientific Interchanges. It was created under a cultural agreement signed in 1965 and its first meeting was in 1969.

The tenth session of this Joint Commission was held in Ottawa on September 29, 1998. Cooperation was established in certain emphasized sectors that were confirmed at this time, namely: medicine and biotechnology, agriculture, fisheries and oceans, forestry, the humanities and social sciences, and information and communication technology. Particular attention will be paid to biotechnology and the new information and communication technology, as well as to facilitating technological cooperation between small and medium businesses. France and Canada agreed to strengthen their partnership in basic science, especially mathematics. They also agreed to intensify their interchanges of researchers and facilitate balanced access to each other's laboratories and programs through both bilateral and multilateral relations. On the institutional level, Canada and France confirmed their intention to continue intensifying relations between:

- the National Research Council of Canada (NRC) and the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS). This activity falls under the NRC-CNRS agreement of 1971, which includes the France-Canada-Hawaii telescope. Ten new projects were announced in 1998 in the fields of telecommunications, biotechnology, manufacturing technology and molecular science.
- the Medical Research Council (MRC) and the Institut National de la Santé et de la Recherche Médicale (INSERM);
- the Research Branch at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique (INRA). A bilateral meeting held in June 1998 provided an opportunity to have a progress report on the projects underway and explore new avenues of cooperation;
- The Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) and the Institut Français de Recherche pour l'Exploitation de la Mer (IFREMER);