

Canada – Italy Bilateral Relations

Interchange between Canada and Italy is sustained, mutually beneficial, and highly diversified. The two nations hold common interests through their memberships in the Group of Seven (G-7), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

Italy shares with Canada a firm commitment to strengthening transatlantic ties, fostering East-West détente, and achieving progress on arms control and disarmament.

Canada and Italy also have strong cultural, trade and industrial ties that are enhanced by the fact that Canada is home to more than one million people of Italian origin. Visits to Italy by senior federal and provincial officials are increasing, along with trade missions and parliamentary exchanges. The Canadian government has also reinforced institutional ties and technical cooperation.

Working group meetings have been held in the context of the 1988 Economic and Industrial Cooperation Agreement. John Crosbie, Canada's Minister of International Trade, held the first meeting in January 1989. Renato Ruggiero, Italy's Minister of Foreign Trade, hosted the most recent in September 1990.

Italy holds the presidency of the European Community from July to December 1990 and this provides many opportunities for interchange among ministers and heads of government. Prime Minister Mulroney's official visit to Italy in November 1990 is an opportunity to enhance Canada's relations, not only with Italy, but with the European Community (EC).

Italy holds high priority in Canada's program of international cultural relations. The 1984 Canada-Italy Cultural Agreement established a joint commission to stimulate cultural interchange. A third session of the commission will be held in Rome in 1991.

Canada-Italy academic relations are strong and exchanges numerous. The Canadian Studies Program encourages Italian universities to undertake research, teaching, and publications on Canada. English-Canadian literature receives the most attention, followed closely by French-Canadian and Quebec studies and by history.

The importance of this program in Italy is illustrated by the growing number of studies being carried out by universities, government departments and the national research centre.