

CANADA-EU PARTNERSHIP AGENDA

The relationship between Canada and the EU dates back to 1976, the European Community's oldest formal relationship with any industrialised country. Much has changed since the Framework Agreement of 1976 was signed, and our bilateral relationship has evolved in light of new realities, even since the Joint Political Declaration on Canada-EU relations of 1996. As a result, it was decided at the Ottawa Summit in December 2002 to launch a comprehensive review of our relations. This report sets out the results of that review, and recommends new action to enhance our relationship and strengthen dialogue, with a number of specific priorities for enhanced cooperation.

The Strategic Importance of the Relationship

Canada and the EU share common values that underpin the fundamental nature of our societies. Our close historical and cultural ties, as well as our respect for multilateralism, are the foundations of our partnership. As the EU evolves and enlarges, and as we both face diverse and evolving global challenges, it is critically important to expand our multi-faceted relationship and build upon these foundations. The increasing frequency with which we vote together in international organisations – well over 90% of the time during the most recent session of the UN General Assembly – is a clear indication of our mutual understanding of the importance of the United Nations and other international and regional organisations. This strong demonstration of our like-mindedness has encouraged Canada and the EU to deepen consultative mechanisms still further across the multilateral system.

We will enhance our relationship and strengthen our contacts at the political level in order to:

- advance international security and effective multilateralism
- further global economic prosperity
- deepen cooperation on justice and home affairs
- address global and regional challenges
- foster closer links between the people of the EU and Canada

Strengthening Dialogue and Contacts at the Political Level

Faced by the constant challenges to our common values posed by internal and external pressures, it is imperative that we intensify our dialogue to benefit from our mutual experiences. We will actively strengthen our contacts at the political level by ensuring that appropriate mechanisms are in place to facilitate direct timely contacts, and to implement promptly and effectively the decisions taken. This intensified dialogue will allow a more strategic, sustained and coherent approach to issues affecting Canada and the EU involving an increasingly wide range of sectors. This rich dialogue will be conducted at many different levels, including inter-parliamentary contacts, and