

Canada-Sweden Bilateral Relations

Canada and Sweden have much in common geographically, politically and, perhaps, psychologically. Canadian and Swedish people generally work together easily and effectively (most notably in multilateral forums).

The state visit to Canada by King Carl XVI Gustaf and Queen Silvia in March 1988 provided a recent opportunity to re-emphasize common interests, bilateral relations, and future co-operation. In November 1989, Prime Minister Mulroney stopped briefly in Stockholm for consultations en route to Moscow. Foreign Trade Minister Anita Gradin visited Canada in March 1991, and Environment Minister Birgitta Dahl visited British Columbia in April 1991.

Both Canada and Sweden were leaders in founding the United Nations; and both continue to be leading proponents of the multilateral system. For many years, the two countries have contributed funds and personnel to UN peacekeeping forces in various parts of the world.

This co-operation is paralleled by similar efforts in pursuit of common objectives in development assistance, environment, human rights, and opposition to apartheid.

While Sweden's non-aligned status leads to a distinctive approach to security-related matters, Canada and Sweden have broadly similar views on the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, arms control, nuclear non-proliferation, and developing techniques for verifying arms agreements. Canada has joined Sweden and the other Nordic countries in a working group on the aftermath of the Persian Gulf War.

In recent years, Sweden and Canada have co-operated closely to develop ways to manage problems facing the Arctic. Both have strongly supported the creation of the International Arctic Science Council; and they took part in the Conference on the Arctic Environment, held in Rovaniemi, Finland, on June 13-14, 1991. Sweden has supported Canada's proposal for the creation of an Arctic council.

The Swedish welfare state, social security system, and employment policy continue to stimulate interest in Canada. Federal and provincial delegations regularly visit Sweden to study its legislation and practices. Sweden has reciprocal agreements with the federal and Quebec governments to pay pensions to Canadians and Swedes who have lived in both countries during their careers.

There is also a Canadian interest in Swedish energy, transportation, regional policies (such as incentives for diversifying industry in economically depressed resource towns and areas), and in the organization and funding of Swedish science, technology and research.

A bilateral air agreement was signed in March 1989. Scandinavian Airlines has instituted near-daily service between Stockholm and Toronto, improving access between the two countries for business people and tourists.