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CANADA AND ITALY TO SIGN CULTURAL AGREEMENT

The Honourable Allan J. MacEachen, Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs, and the Honourable Giulio Andreotti, Foreign Minister of Italy, announced today that a Cultural Agreement between the Government of Canada and the Government of the Republic of Italy will be signed in Ottawa on May 17. Signing on behalf of Canada will be the Honourable Jean-Luc Pepin, Minister for External Relations, and for Italy Senator Susanna Agnelli, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, who will be visiting Canada on May 17 and 18.

Canada and Italy have been conducting cultural and academic exchanges between one another on a substantial scale for a number of years. Hitherto these exchanges have taken place within the framework of a formal Exchange of Notes between the two countries which was entered into on February 12, 1954. Efforts to conclude a more comprehensive accord have been underway for sometime and particular attention has been devoted to this matter during recent years. Negotiations between both countries reached a successful conclusion in the summer of 1983 and since that time the two governments have been seeking a suitable occasion upon which to sign the Agreement. The visit to Canada by Senator Agnelli, who will also officially open the new offices of the Italian Cultural Institute in Toronto, will serve as a further demonstration of the excellent state of Canada-Italy bilateral relations and the high mutual regard in which each nation holds the other.

The Agreement has as its primary goal to reinforce and strengthen the cultural ties between the people of Canada and Italy and covers the whole spectrum of cultural and academic relations between the two countries. It provides a formal framework for the conduct of cultural exchanges and enjoins both nations to facilitate visits by artists, scholars and students. The Agreement seeks to promote a free and widespread exchange of information and opinion as well as to facilitate and encourage the exchange of cultural products and scholarly research. All of these activities, taken together and individually, will serve to enhance mutual understanding and cooperation and assist in the development of the national cultural life of both countries.