

THE FUTURE OF CANADA-EUROPE RELATIONS

Paper from the Thinkers' Retreat

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Netcast: www.ecommons.net/ccfpd-europe

Introduction

Canada's ties to Europe span over 500 years. From a legacy of early contact and settlement to a transatlantic partnership in wartime and through the Cold War. Current relations are based on common values, trade, and investment. Despite these enduring links, the relationship is changing as the character of both Canada and Europe continues to evolve. Canadian identity is no longer solely European in origin; it is continually being re-shaped by successive waves of migration from every corner of the world. Meanwhile, some argue that European societies are becoming more "European" as they increasingly envision their future in common, based on a shared sense of European identity and institutions. Hence, as Europe moves further inward and as Canada looks less to Europe for identity and community, it is important to reflect on future directions for Canada-Europe relations.

To assess the policy implications of the changing relationship, the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development, in partnership with European Union Division of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, the Centre international de formation européenne (Nice), the Institute for German and European Studies (York University and Université de Montréal) and the Foreign Policy Centre (London), brought together leading scholars, experts and journalists from across Canada and Europe for a Thinkers' Retreat on Canada-Europe Relations. This report draws on their analyses of 'A Changing Europe,' 'A Changing Canada,' and the future of transatlantic relations.¹ The conclusions that follow are based on the idea that Canada and Europe face common challenges, including democracy, federalism, economic integration, migration, cultural diversity, cultural preservation, security and defence, and quality-of-life concerns, including the environment. Secretary of State (Central and Eastern Europe and Middle East), Gar Knutson, M.P., opened the Retreat. The keynote address was given by British journalist John Lloyd, and Paul Dubois, Assistant Deputy Minister (Europe) opened the panel discussions. Director General Ron Halpin (Central, East, and South Europe Bureau) opened the second day of discussions.

¹This report is a synthesis of conclusions and policy options drawn from presentations and discussions. Chatham House rules were employed for Retreat discussions. Formal presentations and some commentaries are available in online video at www.ecommons.net/ccfpd-europe.