

An issue which came up in Halifax relates to the amount of media coverage. Participants felt that the local print and other media had not to date devoted much space or time to exploring or discussing the possible effects of free trade for the Atlantic region and for industries and businesses within the region.

2. Understanding

A lack of understanding is attributable to the concerns noted above regarding information and the lack of it. There were several kinds of information people felt they would like to see more of, with the most precise comments relating to economic effects for themselves personally. People wanted to know how it would affect them personally in terms of jobs, prices and standard of living, as well as more about what are the issues involved in the discussions.

Several also were interested in more information and explanations about the rationale for free trade. Questions posed in this context by participants were: "Why are we doing this? What are the reasons behind it? Why do we have to do this with the United States and not other countries? Who started this and why?" There was a sense in the groups that the major stakeholders had not explained the issues and rationale to the Canadian public very well.