

STRENGTHENING OFFICIAL TRANSATLANTIC LINKS

RECOMMENDATION 17:

That the federal government redouble its efforts to expand the Canada-EU bilateral relationship. Possible measures to be considered within the European Union-Canada Trade Initiative (ECTI) framework include: negotiating mutual recognition agreements in a larger number of industrial sectors, making progress in the area of trade facilitation, and establishing improved bilateral mechanisms to resolve trade irritants. The formation of a bilateral group under ECTI to systematically address regulatory barriers to Canada-EU trade should be considered.

The Government of Canada continues to regard the EU-Canada Trade Initiative as a valuable instrument to guide our efforts to reduce barriers to trade and investment. In setting specific goals and subjecting these to review every six months at Canada-EU summits, ECTI can play a helpful role by offering the political impetus required to resolve bilateral issues.

At the Joint Cooperation Committee meeting held in November 2000, Canada tabled a number of new objectives for consideration as ECTI goals. In subsequent discussions, the European Commission expressed a preference to first survey respective business communities to determine their perceptions of priorities with respect to trade and investment barriers. ECTI objectives would then be modified on the basis of the results of these surveys. This approach was seen as being particularly relevant with respect to regulatory barriers, as it would help identify those that are of special concern to exporters. Given the resource demands associated with negotiating new annexes for established mutual recognition agreements on conformity assessment bodies, for example, or taking the further step of harmonizing standards, Canada and the EU share the view that a prioritization exercise based on the business survey would allow both sides to take the most efficient approach. We are undertaking such a survey.