

EU - Canada Summit Ottawa, 16 December 1999

Statement on Northern Cooperation

On the eve of the new Millennium, the European Union and Canada reaffirm our shared commitment to facilitating closer cooperation between all the countries of the circumpolar and adjacent northern regions with a view to promoting sustainable development as well as environmental and human security.

The Finnish Presidency of the European Union, the European Commission and Canada organised on October 20, 1999, in Canada, a seminar on Circumpolar Cooperation and the Northern Dimension. The report, to be issued, will offer useful perspectives for EU-Canada cooperation on northern issues.

The Northern Dimension in the External and Cross-Border Policies of the European Union has been reaffirmed at the Helsinki European Council. Canada is moving forward with the development of the Northern Dimension of Canada's Foreign Policy as stated by the Government of Canada in the recent Speech from the Throne. The European Union and Canada have identified common goals and agreed on the usefulness of exchanging information and enhancing synergies in advancing the northern dimensions of their policies. The European Union and Canada will therefore under the existing cooperation framework pursue expert level dialogue on the basis of the northern dimension of their respective policies.

In the envisaged dialogue, specific areas for future northern cooperation between the European Union and Canada should be identified. An effort will be made to use existing general and sectoral agreements between the European Union and Canada as a foundation to future northern cooperation. The dialogue will be open ended, which facilitates participation of interested member states. A report will be presented at the latest, during the first half of the year 2001.

The dialogue will be focussed on such cooperation that can engage other northern countries such as the Russian Federation, acceding countries in the Baltic Sea Region as well as Norway and Iceland. Ways of drawing maximum benefit from the specific competencies of existing multilateral and regional northern fora such as the Arctic Council, Nordic Council, Barents-Euro Arctic Council, and the Council for Baltic Sea States will be examined. Attention will be given to the Arctic Window in the EU's Northern Dimension in order to enhance dialogue between the EU, Canada and Arctic nations. As regards specific cooperation themes, high priority will be attached to inter alia:

- sustainable development, including sustainable and environmentally friendly management of natural resources as well as preserving biodiversity;

- issues of interest to the Arctic indigenous peoples affected by the Northern Dimension policies;
- exchange of timely information and experience on environmental issues, notably with regard to climate change and chemical pollutants;
- transfer of eco-efficient technology in the entire Arctic region;
- northern children/youth, education and student exchange, public health;
- enhanced cooperation in research and higher education, utilising fully the potential of the University of the Arctic;
- information technology and telecommunications in the Arctic area.

The European Union and Canada recognise the significance of achieving a strong and effective international convention on persistent organic pollutants (POPs) and will intensify our efforts to achieve such an outcome.