

EMBASSY

EU envoy jumps from one big trade deal to another

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It's a bittersweet departure for **Maurizio Cellini**.

The EU Delegation's economic, commercial, and trade section head takes away great memories of his kids growing up in Canada and he's proud of the deep network of contacts he built professionally.

But he was set to leave his Canadian posting last weekend after four years without seeing an EU-Canada trade deal inked. He's been on the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement file every step of the way, having arrived in the fall of 2009 just as the first round of negotiations got underway.

"On the one side, you see family change, the children growing up," says the Italian-bred envoy on July 8, "but negotiations [are] still there."

Mr. Cellini shrugs, noting that it would have been nice to see the trade deal finished before his departure. But he's optimistic it will get done. There are tricky technical and political spots to smooth over in areas like agriculture, public procurement, and financial services, he says.

And he notes that he works for an institution that keeps chugging along through human resource changes.

"Somebody else will take over. And the important thing in the end is that we have an agreement which is good, which is acceptable to both Canada and the EU," he says.

"We cannot force the events," he says, even if it is a "little bit a pity" not to see out the deal he helped start.

But Mr. Cellini is set to have another crack at it.

He's headed to do a similar job at the EU Delegation in Delhi, India, which is also in the midst of trade talks. Like with Canada, negotiators there had hoped to seal the deal in 2012. But talks dragged on over issues including Indian access to Europe's labour market.

"All the experience accumulated here, I think that will be useful in India as well," says Mr. Cellini.

In a previous posting, he was involved in regional economic and partnership negotiations with West Africa.

Mr. Cellini is one of a few senior EU diplomats who have bowed out of Canada lately, or will do so soon. The delegation's political and public affairs head, **Giovanni Di Girolamo**, left last year, and its ambassador, **Matthias Brinkmann**, is set to leave soon too.

But Mr. Cellini isn't worried about the close departure dates.

"I think we have the capacity to deal with this situation," he says, pointing out that Mr. Di

Girolamo's successor, **Manfred Auster**, is well settled now.

And as for him, he said he leaves a strong team, including his de facto deputy, **Rafal Lapkowski**, and local colleagues.

Mr. Cellini has played a supporting role to Brussels-based trade negotiators.

A key part of that job has been to develop contacts not just with the standard Canadian government counterparts, but a broader group of civil society, academia, and provincial representatives. It was rewarding to build this professional network.

"It was really the opportunity to have a very deep contact with the Canadian reality —Ottawa, but well beyond Ottawa as well," he says.

While the trade deal has taken up a lot of his time, he had a hand in other files including the touchy fuel quality directive, Ontario Green Energy Act, and seal spats with Canada. And there were less visible anti-dumping and market access issues, and regular reporting duties for headquarters, among other duties.

Throughout all this, Mr. Cellini watched his kids grow through an important period of their lives: **Bernardo** is now 13, and **Carlotta** 17.

"Now, if you look back, it becomes very personal. You see how they grow up, how they change, how they develop their own personality, their own experiences."

With his kids and wife **Vera**, who is Portuguese, he recalls family trips to ski at Mont Tremblant, Que. and other slopes, as well as summer canoeing and kayaking adventures including at Lac Philippe in Gatineau Park.

Relaxed and smiling, he calls canoeing a "truly Canadian thing," remembering that it was a bit unstable at first, "but once you get used to it, it's very nice."

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