EU-Canada relations

Canada is one of the closest and longest-standing partners of the European Union. Our common democratic values, responsibility to defend human rights, and strong commitment to multilateralism, the rules-based international order and free trade define our relationship.

In 1976, the European Union (then the European Economic Community) concluded a Framework Commercial and Economic Agreement with Canada and opened its overseas diplomatic mission in Ottawa, which at the time was its third worldwide.

Now, EU-Canada relations are stronger than ever, having benefitted in particular in recent years from the Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) and Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA).

Strategic Partnership

The European Union has negotiated with Canada the Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA), which institutionalises links and significantly upgrades EU-Canada foreign policy and sectoral cooperation. It reflects our joint commitment to uphold and advance democratic principles, human rights and to work together to strengthen international peace and security, effective multilateralism and the rules-based international order. Through the SPA, the EU and Canada will also cooperate on global economic issues, sustainable development, energy security, environment, and climate change. The agreement further seeks to reinforce judicial and law enforcement cooperation between EU and Canada, aimed at fighting, *inter alia*, organised crime and corruption, terrorism, illicit drugs and cybercrime.

The Agreement was signed on 30 October 2016 on the occasion of the EU-Canada Summit and two-thirds of the Agreement entered into effect on a provisional basis as of 1 April 2017, while the rest will enter into force upon ratification by all EU Member States and Canada. The governing bodies of the SPA – the Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) and the Joint Ministerial Committee (JMC) - held their first meetings in June and December 2017 respectively.

Foreign and security policy cooperation

The EU and Canada have similar approaches on many foreign policy issues and a shared commitment to multilateralism. For example, as like-minded partners, we support the full implementation of the
Minsk agreements and the work of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine. We participate in the International Syria Support Group (ISSG) and in the Global Coalition against Da'esh. We support accountability efforts, including through the International Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM) – and action against any confirmed use of chemical weapons. In line with that, the EU and Canada both support the work of the UN Commission of Inquiry on Syria and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Fact Finding Mission in Syria. The EU, its Member States and Canada jointly fund a number of humanitarian, stabilisation and development partners and initiatives operating inside Syria, facilitating greater coordination and effectiveness. The EU and Canada continue to support the full implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

In November 2005, the European Union and Canada concluded an agreement establishing a framework for Canada's participation in EU crisis management operations. Canada is one of the most consistent contributors to the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy missions and operations. To date, Canada has participated in 10 missions/operations, namely EUPM BiH, Concordia, Artemis, EUFOR Althea, EUPOL Kinshasa, EULEX Kosovo and EUPOL Afghanistan. Currently, Canada is seconding personnel to two civilian missions - EU Police Missions in the Palestinian Territories (EUPOL COPPS), and the EU Advisory Mission for Civilian Security Sector Reform in Ukraine (EUAM Ukraine) - as well as providing a financial contribution to the military operation to EUTM Mali.

A dedicated Security and Defence Dialogue was launched on 1 May 2015. This is an important platform for regular exchanges as well as for exploring new areas for cooperation, including on participation in CSDP missions and operations, education and training, research and development as well as capacity building. Starting in 2014, annual symposia on EU-Canada cooperation in Common Foreign and Security Policy have been held, bringing together senior representatives of the EU's and Canada's foreign and security policy community. The EU and Canada also work jointly to combat terrorism, both bilaterally through the EU-Canada Counter-Terrorism Political Dialogue and multilaterally through the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum (GCTF), the Global Coalition against Da'esh, and the Countering Violent Extremism Summit process. This close partnership is also reflected in the Security of Information Agreement (SIA), which entered into force 1 April 2018 and sets the framework for the exchange of classified information between EU and Canada. The Agreement aims to facilitate further CSDP cooperation, cooperation on Counterterrorism, cyber security and sanctions.

Canada is a participating state in EU Election Observation Missions (EU EOMs), together with Switzerland and Norway. Canada is sending Long- and Short-term Observers to the EU's election observation missions, with recent examples including Zimbabwe (2018), Peru (2016), Egypt (2014), Tunisia (2014), and Pakistan (2013).

Global issues

The EU and Canada know that global challenges stand a chance to be effectively addressed when we work together in multilateral institutions and engage in strong partnerships. As a result, the EU and Canada support key multilateral processes, such as the Paris Agreement, Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, the UN Global Compacts on Migration and Refugees, and ocean governance.

Following the provisional entry into force of the Strategic Partnership Agreement, the first EU-Canada Development Policy Dialogue took place in Brussels on 17 November 2017. The dialogue was an occasion for an extensive exchange of information on many areas, notably on responses to challenges on the international development agenda, in particular the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
The EU and Canada both show leadership in international efforts to combat climate change and head towards a low-carbon global economy. On 20-21 June 2018 in Brussels EU, Canada and China co-convened a Ministerial on Climate Action (MoCA), with the participation of representatives from 36 governments worldwide. The meeting re-confirmed the irreversibility of the Paris Agreement and reiterated the commitment to concluding the negotiations on the Paris Agreement Work Programme at COP24. On 24 May 2018, the European Union and Canada held a High Level Dialogue on Climate, which allowed discussing the current international climate issues, respective approaches and the preparations for the upcoming climate related events.

Canada has been a key ally of the EU in calling for global responsibility sharing on migration, including as part of the G7 and the G20. The European Commission and Canada hold a regular political dialogue on migration and asylum issues, with the latest one held on 13 June 2018 covering visa policy, international migration governance, asylum, regular pathways and readmission issues. An informal platform for the exchange of expertise between the EU and its Member States and Canada was established in 2017. The second migration platform event was held on 14 June 2018 where labour migration was discussed.

Trade and economic relations

The EU is Canada's second largest trading partner, with bilateral trade in goods amounting €64.3 billion in 2016. The top three categories of products which the EU and Canada exported to each other in 2016 were: machinery, transport equipment, chemical and pharmaceutical products. The EU is also Canada's second-largest investment partner, with total bilateral investment stocks at nearly €440 billion.

The Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) was signed at the EU–Canada Summit in October 2016 and is being provisionally applied since 21 September 2017. CETA is a state-of-the-art trade agreement that sets new standards for global commerce with one of the EU's closest allies. It is the EU's first free trade agreement with a G7 country and one of the most progressive agreements it has ever negotiated.

CETA will boost trade, strengthen economic relations and create jobs. CETA's progressive nature will set a new global standard for sustainability chapters in trade agreements. It will make business with Canada easier, removing customs duties, substantially improving access to public contracts, opening up new sectors of the Canadian services market, offering predictable conditions for investors, and protecting Geographical Indications. Companies in several sectors will also benefit from the gains derived from the elimination of double testing, in particular SMEs. With CETA, the EU and Canada are committed to ensure that economic growth, social development and environmental protection are mutually supportive.

Through its Partnership Instrument, the EU helps EU businesses to take full advantage of the opportunities created by CETA. It identifies market access barriers and supplies databases, tailored business-relevant reports, legal advice and analysis to EU companies. It also aims to strengthen ties between EU Chambers of Commerce and EU and Canadian institutional stakeholders to ensure the correct provisional implementation of CETA at federal level and across Canadian provinces.

For more information on CETA, visit the website, which includes an overview, FAQs, exporters' stories, a quick guide to the benefits, and more. The text of the agreement is available here.

Energy, environment, fisheries and the Arctic

The EU and Canada hold regular High Level Dialogues on energy, environment and fisheries. The
most recent High Level Dialogue on Energy took place in September 2016, while the environment dialogue met in October 2017 and the fisheries in January 2018 in Ottawa.

The EU and Canada have identified several areas for enhanced cooperation, ranging from gas markets in the EU and Canada (including infrastructure, LNG and unconventional resources), to research and innovation (for example carbon capture and storage, bioenergy, and smart grids), renewables, energy efficiency and security of supply. Cooperation on as many of these issues as possible in relevant international fora, for example, the G7, G20, International Energy Agency, and the Clean Energy Ministerial, among others, is desirable.

As climate change and economic development accelerate and the strategic importance of the Arctic region increases, the EU is committed to engaging with Canada and other Arctic partners on environmental protection and sustainable development of the region. Canada supports the EU's observer status in the Arctic Council. In 2014, Canada and the EU signed a Joint Statement on a framework for cooperation to enable access to the EU of seal products from traditional hunts conducted by Canadian indigenous communities that contribute to their subsistence. The EU's financial contribution to Arctic cooperation stands at €20 million a year for research and €1.18 billion over the last seven years for regional development. An EU-funded Partnership Instrument project on black carbon in the Arctic was launched in 2018 and will run for three years with a budget of €1.5 million. This project aims to develop a collective response to reduce black carbon emissions and their accumulation in the Arctic, and to reinforce international cooperation to protect the Arctic environment. In 2013, a trilateral EU-Canada-US Transatlantic Ocean Research Alliance was established, focusing on the North Atlantic Ocean and Arctic, and the promotion of sustainable management of its resources. The EU and Canada also cooperate on marine and Arctic research in the context of the Horizon 2020 research framework programme. Since 2014, an EU-Canada working group on Arctic Research Cooperation has coordinated various research and science initiatives.

The EU and Canada cooperate in many international fisheries fora and hold regular dialogues on fisheries and maritime affairs. The basis for cooperation on combatting illegal, unreported and unreported fishing was laid in 2016 through the signature of a Joint Statement.

**Scientific and technological cooperation, People-to people contacts**

A Scientific and Technological Cooperation Agreement has existed between Canada and the EU since 1996. Cooperation under the agreement is strong and focuses mainly on marine research in the Atlantic and the Arctic, health research, aeronautics and ICT research, and agri-food. Since 2014, 162 Canadian researchers and staff members have been supported by the Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions, and 149 Europeans have been hosted by Canadian entities. The University of Toronto (16), McGill University (14), University of British Columbia (14), Université de Montréal (9) are the most frequent participants. Between 2015 and 2018 almost 1,500 exchanges have been funded through Erasmus+, representing more than 30% of the overall number of exchanges with North America. Currently Canadian universities engage in highly integrated academic cooperation via the consortia of universities that deliver Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees. Since 2014, approximately, 100 Canadian students have received full Erasmus Mundus scholarships for joint master degrees in Europe.

The EU and Canada seek to foster transatlantic youth exchanges, including through non-governmental organisations and think-tanks, in order to deepen transatlantic ties and find solutions to common challenges. A Partnership Instrument project worth €900,000 is foreseen for exchanges in the areas of youth, security, peace and the digital sphere.

The first meeting of the EU-Canada bilateral dialogue on employment, social affairs and decent
work under the Strategic Partnership Agreement was held in Brussels on 12-13 December 2017. The participants had the chance to exchange views and expertise in area such as working conditions, skills needs and social protection, the participation of women in the labour market, and the promotion of youth employment.

Home affairs

Negotiations with Canada on a new Passenger Name Record (PNR) Agreement were opened in January 2011. The EU-Canada PNR Agreement was signed in June 2014 and sent to the European Parliament for consent in July 2014. In November 2014, the European Parliament decided to submit the draft agreement to the EU Court of Justice for an opinion on whether it complies with the EU Treaties. The Court delivered its Opinion on 26 July 2017, considering that the envisaged Canada Agreement cannot be concluded in its current state because some of its provisions are incompatible with the fundamental rights to privacy and to personal data protection recognised by the EU. The Commission recommendation for a new negotiating mandate was adopted on 18 October 2017. Canada adopted its negotiating mandate on 24 May 2018 and the negotiations launched on 20 June 2018. The PNR agreement will set a legal framework for the transfer of PNR data by carriers operating passenger flights between the EU and Canada. The PNR data may be used to prevent, detect, investigate and prosecute terrorist offenses or serious transnational crimes.

Visa reciprocity is a central principle of the EU’s common visa policy. On 1 December 2017, Canada lifted the visa requirement for short stays for all Romanian and Bulgarian citizens. As these were the two remaining EU Member States with visa requirements, the EU and Canada have now achieved full visa reciprocity. The EU and Canada committed to continued engagement on visa issues because maintaining the sustainable lifting of visas is in the interest of all parties.

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