

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH CANADA

(16 members)

Chairmen:

2002-2004	Mr Willy DE CLERCQ	(ELDR, Belgium)
1999-2001	Mr Robert STURDY	(PPE, United Kingdom)
1997-1999	Mr Pietro Antonio DI PRIMA	(PPE, Italy)
1995-1996	Mr Georges BERTHU	(EDN, France)
1994-1995	Mr James GOLDSMITH	(EDN, France)
1993-1994	Mr Jean-Thomas NORDMANN	(LDR, France)
1992-1993	Mr Charles BAUR	(LDR, France)
1989-1992	Mr Gijs de VRIES	(LDR, Netherlands)
1987-1989	Mr Roberto COSTANZO	(PPE, Italy)
1984-1987	Mrs Eva GREDAL	(PSE, Denmark)
1979-1984	Sir James SCOTT-HOPKINS	(ED, United Kingdom)

The origins of interparliamentary relations between the European Parliament and the Canadian Parliament date back to 1973. Since then a total of 25 interparliamentary meetings have taken place between delegations of the European and the Canadian Parliament.

Interparliamentary meetings since the first direct elections of the European Parliament in June 1979:

- 27th meeting	26 October - 1 November 2004	Vancouver, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal
- 26th meeting	25-26 November 2002	Brussels
- 25 th meeting	7-16 October 2001	Vancouver, Saskatoon, Toronto, Ottawa
- 24 th meeting	21-24 March 2000	Brussels
- 23 rd meeting	28 September-2 October 1998	Ottawa, Montreal, Toronto
- 22 nd meeting	21-23 March 1995	Brussels
- 21 st meeting	13-18 February 1994	Ottawa, Vancouver (BC)
- 20 th meeting	8-12 June 1992	Strasbourg, Picardy
- 19 th meeting	19-26 May 1991	Ottawa, Victoria (BC), Whitehorse
- 18 th meeting	23-25 April 1990	Brussels, Amsterdam
- 17 th meeting	1-5 May 1989	London (Ontario)
- 16 th meeting	23-26 May 1988	Naples
- 15 th meeting	19-25 September 1987	Banff (Alberta)
- 14 th meeting	22-26 September 1986	Luxembourg
- 13 th meeting	2-6 June 1985	Quebec, Ottawa
- 12 th meeting	25-30 March 1984	Strasbourg
- 11 th meeting	7-11 May 1983	St. John's (Newfoundland)
- 10 th meeting	September 1982	Copenhagen
- 9 th meeting	23-27 June 1981	Vancouver
- 8 th meeting	20-25 November 1980	Strasbourg, Brussels
- 7 th meeting	26-30 November 1979	Ottawa, Toronto

Commentary

The meetings have generally underlined the excellent state of relations between the EU and Canada. In recent meetings, a parallelism was to be noted in discussions concerning EU institutional developments and the constitutional debate in Canada, both sides showing interest on questions of sovereignty and subsidiarity.

The most recent meetings were characterised by the wide breadth of topics discussed. Asylum and immigration policies, forestry, biotechnology, GMOs, and security issues formed the backbone of the bilateral agenda and the basis of a constructive dialogue. Both sides attached importance to the successful launching of a new round of WTO negotiations at Doha and stressed the opportunities for strengthening trade relations; in general, both sides showed a broad agreement on multilateral approaches to global challenges.

Following the adoption by the European Parliament on 13 September 1990 of a resolution on the native peoples of Canada, a group of MEPs visited Canada in January 1991. Native claims and the constitutional questions regarding Canada's future, after the failure of the Lake Meech Accord, figured prominently in discussions at the 19th and 20th meetings.

The 21st meeting was originally scheduled to take place in Canada in spring 1993. However, because of the announcement of Prime Minister Mulroney's resignation before the summer, both sides agreed to postpone the meeting until after the general elections, which were due in autumn 1993. The 21st meeting should have then taken place in December with Ottawa and Quebec as venues. However, because of the intentions of the EP's Socialist group and the Green group to table two draft resolutions on forestry practices in British Columbia, the Canadian side suggested to change the place of the meeting from Quebec to Vancouver and to schedule the meeting for spring 1994 in order to give MEPs the opportunity to inform themselves directly about the situation in British Columbia before tabling a draft resolution on this subject.

Consequently, the issue of Canadian forestry practices and particularly the situation in Clayoquot Sound B.C., was the most prominent item on the agenda of the delegation's last visit to Canada. At the end of the meeting in Vancouver both delegations issued a joint statement "on the continuing need to pursue a global consensus on forests, balancing environmental and development issues and the concerns and economic needs of indigenous peoples". They also called for the formulation of "mutually agreed definitions of sustainable forestry before the end of 1995" which should be reviewed by both delegations at their meeting in 1996.

Few days before the 22nd interparliamentary meeting the Canadian authorities had seized a Spanish trawler in international waters. This caused a major crisis in EU/Canada relations and the meeting was nearly cancelled. After the crew of the trawler was released, the meeting took place but dealt primarily with the incident and with fishery issues.

The 23rd interparliamentary meeting was originally scheduled to take place in February 1996 in Canada. However, the visit was cancelled due to some critical observations on Canadian federalism made by the leadership of the EP delegation, in the context of an informal visit to Quebec during the referendum campaign in October 1995. The Joint Political Declaration and the Joint Action Plan, signed in Ottawa on 17 December 1996, further enhance parliamentary exchanges between Canada and the European Union.

The 24th meeting then took place in March 2000 in Brussels. There was a wide-ranging agenda, including the review of the EU/Canada Summit of December 1999, developments in the EU and Canada and other bilateral issues. However, foreign affairs and the promotion of human rights were the dominant topics in this interparliamentary meeting.

The 25th meeting, which took place in October 2001 in Canada, took stock of progress made since the conclusion of the first EC-Canada Framework Agreement in 1976. Although the visit took place against the backdrop of the events of September 11, the visit marked the commonality of interests and positive climate in bilateral relations since the solution of the sensitive fisheries problem in 1999. Co-operation covers a wide area spanning from common efforts leading to de-mining, human security issues, combating the spread of small arms and light weapons, combating communicable diseases, especially in Africa and even spearheading the dialogue on conflict prevention on the international fora.

The 26th meeting took place in October 2003 in Vancouver, Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal. Two main areas of discussion had been agreed: asylum and immigrant integration policies, as well as environment protection, including renewable energy and global warming. EU/Canada relations, and in particular in the Security area, featured also prominently in the dialogue. Both Delegations agreed on a common Statement, asking the respective Executives to increase efforts in view of concluding a "Trade and Investment Enhancement Agreement", and indicated priorities to this effect. The Statement was intended in view of the EU/Canada Summit initially scheduled for December 2003, which finally took place in March 2004.

The development of relations between the EU and Canada is of strategic importance given that both sides share common values and very often pursue common objectives in the international arena.