



Delegation for Relations with Canada

## **39th EU - Canada Inter-Parliamentary Meeting**

**7-11 May 2018, Ottawa and British Columbia, Canada**

# **REPORT**



- **Summary:**

The EP Delegation for relations with Canada travelled to Ottawa for the 39th EU-Canada Inter-Parliamentary Meeting (IPM). A very successful meeting confirmed the good relations between the two delegations, the liked-mindedness of the EU and Canada as well as the increasing maturity of the EU - Canada inter-parliamentary dialogue.

During the IPM, the good attendance from EU and Canada, including from government and opposition MPs, allowed for well-informed discussions. The EP Delegation witnessed the positive results from the intensification of exchanges, agreed during the previous IPM as a result of the Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA). The exchanges were more open, addressing points of disagreement. The strong relationship between the co-chairs contributed to this success.

Continuing the good practice of the previous IPM, travelling to one of the provinces in addition to the meetings in Ottawa to get acquainted with this huge and very diverse country, this time Members visited British Columbia. It enabled Members to discuss a wide range of topics with experts from provincial government, universities, business and civil society. Thanks to good cooperation with the EEAS, a rich and varied programme was put together, which was highly appreciated by the Members, who actively participated throughout the programme.

- **Highlights of the discussion**

In the morning prior to the IPM, Members were briefed extensively by the EU ambassador, Mr Peteris Ustubs, who gave a comprehensive overview of developments in Canada, Canada-EU relations and the Canadian G7 Presidency. Members had exchanges with Canadian senior government officials on trade, natural resources/energy, environment/climate change and policies on the situation of indigenous people.



### The Inter-Parliamentary Meeting

The IPM took place on Monday 7May 2018 and on Tuesday 8May in the Canadian Parliament in Ottawa. Opening the meeting, Mr Scott SIMMS, the Canadian co-chair, and his European

counterpart, Mr Bernd KOLMEL, welcomed the increase in EU - Canada contacts through the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), SPA and the intensification of inter-parliamentary relations as a result of SPA in this increasingly uncertain world. Compared to previous IPMs, the agenda was more focused, allowing for 'recent political and economic developments in Canada and the EU' to be added to the three panel discussions (environment, migration and trade).

During the environment and climate change panel, Members discussed respect for the commitments in the Paris Agreement in the context of the different energy situations. Domestic energy interconnectivity is high on the agenda in both Canada and the EU, but it is not easy to achieve the desired goals due to political and constitutional complexities, in particular the division of competences between the federal and provincial levels. Members discussed the EU reliance on coal and fossil fuels imports from Russia, exports from oil sands by Canada and the need for the export of clean energy to the rest of the world.



During the trade panel of the IPM, Members expressed optimism on the impact of CETA on the EU and Canada. In the present climate of increasing protectionism, the WTO should be safeguarded as the basis of the global economy. Members agreed that openness through diversification and bilateral agreements, such as CETA and the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) are the best answer to US protectionism. In the coming 12 months, Canada could well become the most interconnected economy. Canadian Members explained that after 24 years, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) needed to be renegotiated. The outcome of the renegotiation is however uncertain as it is unclear what the Trump administration in the US would consider a win.

During the panel on migration, Members acknowledged that the different geographic position and the numbers of migrants arriving in Canada and the EU have a strong impact on the

respective migration policies. Members discussed the need for effective integration of migrants in society, which would not only enable migrants to contribute to society, but also allow political leaders to build a positive consensus around migration. In the debates, it became clear that the Trudeau government is facing opposition as its policies to increase regular migration further, in part as a result of an increase of irregular migrants leaving the US because of uncertainty there.



### British Columbia

After the IPM, the delegation travelled to British Columbia (BC), the most westerly province of Canada. In Victoria, the provincial capital, Members met the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of BC as well as various provincial ministers (from the left leaning provincial government). Members discussed the need for migration in an ageing society, where a booming economy had brought with it increased housing costs. With the environment Minister, Members discussed the BC opposition to the trans-mountain pipeline, which would be used to transport oil sands from Alberta through BC to export markets, which opponents claimed could have an adverse impact on the environment in BC.

In the afternoon, Members were welcomed at the University of Victoria, which has a Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence and actively cooperates with EU universities, where they had discussions with representatives of the Oceans Network Canada. On Thursday morning Members went to the University of British Columbia where they considered, together with migration experts, whether the Canadian model could be applied in the EU. They found that the geographical realities, which mean that Canada gets only a small fraction of the number of migrants that the EU does, preclude any meaningful direct application or read across. Afterwards, Members discussed sustainable building and visited the tallest wooden building in the world, Brock Commons, recommended by one of the delegation Vice-Chairs.



After a tour through the clean energy research centre and a presentation on natural resources politics and First Nation interests, Members had a meeting with the David Suzuki Foundation, a well-respected environmental NGO, which wants to put the eco back into economics, followed by a presentation from the Vancouver Board of Trade, which had just published its 2018 scorecard for Vancouver. Regarding CETA, it found that 20% of exporting companies wanted to target the EU but needed more information regarding EU business partners.

On Friday, the Vancouver Economic Commission explained some of the factors why Vancouver had been so successful and BC Tech showed its innovation centre and explained how it offers start-up companies the right support infrastructure to grow. The rich and diverse programme was closed off with a tour through to the newest reception facilities for newcomers at the immigration services society, which integrates all services needed by newcomers under one roof.

- **Conclusions**

The 39th IPM was a very successful meeting that confirmed the good relations between the two delegations, the liked-mindedness of the EU and Canada as well as the increasing maturity of the EU Canada inter-parliamentary dialogue. The rich and varied programme in British Columbia enabled the members to get to know an important province of Canada and to discuss a wide range of topics with experts from provincial government, universities, business and civil society.

- **Follow-up**

Consider possible options for intensification of inter-parliamentary relations, which does justice to the maturity of the relationship.

Explore a possible incoming IPM for January-February 2019, which was proposed by the Canadian co-chair at the end of the IPM

- **Next meeting**

This was the third IPM of this mandate (after 2016 and 2017) and the second delegation visit to Canada since 2012. As the 39th IPM was a very successful meeting which confirmed the good relations that exist between the two delegations, the liked-mindedness of the EU and Canada, as well as the increasing maturity of the EU - Canada inter-parliamentary dialogue, Members of both sides undertook to explore the possibility to hold an IPM in Brussels in the beginning of 2019.

- **Participating Members of Parliament**

The delegation, which was led by the Chair, (Bernd KÖLMEL (ECR, Germany), comprised Godelieve QUISTHOUDT-ROWOHL (Vice-Chair) (EPP, Germany), Paul BRANNEN (2nd Vice-chair) (S&D, United Kingdom), Geoffroy DIDIER (EPP, France), Jerome LAVRILLEUX (EPP, France), Razvan POPA (S&D, Romania), Ricardo SERRAO SANTOS (S&D, Portugal), Davor SKRLEC (Greens, Croatia) and Kathleen VAN BREMPT (S&D, Belgium).

ANNEX

- *Final programme*