

Canada – Europe
Parliamentary Association



Association parlementaire
Canada – Europe

**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
respecting its participation at the
38th Interparliamentary Meeting with
the European Parliament's Delegation responsible for
the Relations with Canada and Third Part of the
2017 Session of the PACE**

Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association

**Brussels, Belgium and Strasbourg, France
21-29 June 2017**

REPORT

From 21 to 29 June 2017, the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association (CEPA) sent a delegation of six parliamentarians to Brussels, Belgium; and a delegation of four parliamentarians to Strasbourg, France. The delegates participated in the 38th Interparliamentary Meeting (IPM) with the European Parliament's Delegation for Relations with Canada (EPDRC) and the third part of the 2017 Ordinary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE). The delegates were Mr. Scott Simms, M.P. and Head of the delegation; Hon. Percy Downe, Senator (participation at the IPM); Hon. Ghislain Maltais, Senator; Mr. John Oliver, M.P.; Mr. Dean Allison, M.P.; and Mr. Don Davies, M.P. (participation at the IPM). The delegation was accompanied by Association Secretary, Ms. Guyanne Desforges, and Association Advisor, Mr. Maxime-Olivier Thibodeau.

PARTICIPATION AT THE 38th INTERPARLIAMENTARY MEETING WITH THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT'S DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH CANADA AND RELATED MEETINGS

From 21 to 23 June, the delegation participated in the 38th Interparliamentary Meeting with the European Parliament's Delegation for Relations with Canada and other meetings related to that event.

A. Meeting with the Ambassador of Canada to the European Union and his staff

The delegates started their mission by meeting with His Excellency Daniel Costello, Ambassador of Canada to the European Union (EU), who shared his preoccupations regarding Canada-EU relations. He explained that the difficult period that followed the financial crisis of 2008 affected EU politics. As examples of difficult current issues, he mentioned the problems with Russia on the Eastern front, the recent terrorist attacks, the refugee crisis, Brexit, and the rise of populist anger.

According to Ambassador Costello, the ratification by the European Parliament of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement between Canada and the EU (CETA) was a test to show its capacity to get such an agreement through, against populist anger and trade opponents. He considers that Canada now needs to implement CETA, promote it, and make sure that all EU member states ratify it. CETA's provisional application will bring immediate economic benefits, according to Ambassador Costello.

Regarding the Paris Agreement on climate, Embassy staff explained that the international community's target for 2020 will be met, because the economic crisis has led to slower activity and consequently to less emissions. According to Embassy staff, the EU invests more than Canada in lowering emissions and is more involved with its partners.

B. Meeting with Andrei Marcu of the European Roundtable on Climate and Sustainable Transition

The delegation then met with Mr. Andrei Marcu of the European Roundtable on Climate and Sustainable Transition, a think tank operating under the umbrella of the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (which is related to the World Trade Organization). Mr. Marcu explained that the EU wants to see itself as a leader in climate change. It understands the importance of diversifying its energy sources and lowering its dependency on foreign energy.

According to Mr. Marcu, the EU is moving forward with the implementation of the Paris Agreement. The perception in the EU is that the United States (U.S.) withdrawal from the Paris Agreement cannot change the international will that has been expressed in reaching that agreement. Also, he considers that the U.S. withdrawal has no impact on EU policy for the moment. Mr. Marcu confirmed that the target for 2020 will be met ahead of time. He commented that the price of oil, gas, and coal will play a role in future EU decisions regarding its climate and energy policy.

C. Meeting with Ruth Paserman, Deputy Head of Cabinet for the European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility

The delegation met with Ms. Ruth Paserman, Deputy Head of Cabinet of Marianne Thyssen, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility. Ms. Paserman recalled that Commissioner Thyssen launched the “pillar of social rights” project earlier in 2017. Three priorities can be drawn from the 20 principles listed in this project:

1. Access to the labour market (life expectancy; youth unemployment, etc.);
2. Working conditions (safety at work, for example); and
3. Social protection (including access to affordable housing; minimum income; and pensions).

While recognizing the fact that social issues are mainly part of member states’ competences in the Treaty on European Union and that not many areas of EU legislation need to be reviewed, Ms. Paserman expressed the hope that member states will support the “pillar of social rights” project. She mentioned that consultations were being held about improving equity for women in the workplace, as well as establishing parental leave for men, which could lead to new legislation.

D. Meeting with Pavel Swieboda of the European Political Strategy Centre

The delegation met with Mr. Pavel Swieboda, Deputy Head of the European Political Strategy Centre (EPSC), which he presented as the European Commission’s in-house think tank. Mr. Swieboda explained that the EPSC provides strategic analysis of medium and long term policy, as opposed to the struggles of the moment. He highlighted that the EPSC issued the White Book on the future of Europe in spring 2017.

Mr. Swieboda identified the following four main drivers of Europe’s future:

1. A changing place in an evolving world (the EU’s economic weight, its population shift, and its defence priorities);

2. A profoundly transformed economy and society (climate change and environmental concerns, legacy of the economic crisis, changing demographics, and new technologies and digitisation);
3. Heightened threats and concerns about security and borders (geography's importance and migration, political instability and fast growing populations in the EU's neighbouring countries); and
4. questioning of trust and legitimacy (the EU's governance, changes in certain member states' favourable view of the EU).

Mr. Swieboda noted that the top concerns of EU citizens in 2016 were immigration (which was of lower concern in 2012 but is first now) and terrorism (which was not a concern at all in 2012 but is second now), before their economic situation (third now). He also noted that the United Kingdom (U.K.) is not favourable to the idea of a common defence for the EU, which moved ahead with a defence package issued by the European External Action Service (EEAS) the previous week.

E. Meeting with Christian Burgsmüller, member of Cabinet of the European Commissioner for Trade

The delegation met with Mr. Christian Burgsmüller, Cabinet member of Cecilia Malmström, European Commissioner for Trade. Mr. Burgsmüller explained that much of the Commissioner's work lately has focused on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), but the last presidential election in the U.S. brought a whole new dynamic. Regarding potential trade partners for the EU, he identified the three following priorities:

1. Japan (EU negotiators are in Japan now; the potential agreement were to be part of the discussions at the G20 summit in Hamburg at the beginning of July);
2. Mexico (which has a strong interest in diversifying its exports); and
3. Mercosur (the EU is the only potential partner negotiating there now; but it is difficult to have a common position on the Mercosur side).

Regarding CETA's implementation, Mr. Burgsmüller noted that the EU had not yet seen 18 sets of regulations that the Canadian government is working on. In answering the question: "What happens if one member state chooses not to ratify CETA?", he noted that the ruling of the Court of Justice of the EU (CJEU) on the free trade agreement with Singapore has opened some options on how to resolve that potential problem. The CJEU ruled that the regime governing dispute settlement between investors and states falls within a competence shared between the EU and the member states and that it cannot be established without the member states' consent. Consequently, the EU-Singapore free trade agreement can only be concluded by the EU and the member states jointly.

F. Meeting with Jacques Pelkmans of the Centre for European Policy Studies

The delegation met with Mr. Jacques Pelkmans of the Centre for European Policy Studies, to discuss EU trade policy. Mr. Pelkmans mentioned four free trade agreements of particular interest for the EU:

1. A potential EU-Japan free trade agreement (being negotiated at present);
2. The EU-South Korea free trade agreement (which took effect in 2011);
3. TTIP; and
4. CETA.

Regarding CETA, he considers that it is:

- the highest quality free trade agreement so far;
- very deep and comprehensive (only a few tariffs are left out);
- strong in conformity assessment;
- far-reaching in services;
- leading in a new model for investment protection;
- leading in sustainable development;
- unique in its public procurement reach; and
- deep in the protection of pharmaceutical intellectual property rights.

He also acknowledged the fact that the EU is a difficult trading partner, having 38 decision-makers within its ranks.

G. Meeting with Guy Verhofstadt, Brexit Coordinator for the European Parliament

The delegation met with Mr. Guy Verhofstadt, the Brexit Coordinator for the European Parliament. Mr. Verhofstadt is a former Belgian Prime Minister, a current member of the European Parliament and the leader of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) political group. He argued that Brexit was a failure for the EU. At the same time, he sees Brexit as a huge opportunity to reform the EU. According to Mr. Verhofstadt, the possibility of not reaching a deal after two years of negotiations would be in neither the UK nor the EU's interest.

Regarding CETA, Mr. Verhofstadt presented it as the best example of "taking too much time"; another example of that being the EU's reaction to the last financial crisis. He expressed a favourable opinion of CETA, arguing that it is an example of a free trade agreement with "added value".

Mr. Verhofstadt also argued that defence is the first priority for the EU, and that the contribution of 1% of the member states gross domestic product (GDP) to fund defence should be heightened. He argued that the EU needs to be a supra-national organization that works: a real federal system. According to him, the EU is at risk if certain organizational problems are not fixed, such as the absence of a common capital market and mortgage market.

H. 38th Interparliamentary Meeting with the European Parliament's Delegation for Relations with Canada

1. Working session on the future of bilateral relations following the provisional application of the Comprehensive and Economic Trade Agreement and the Strategic Partnership Agreement

Mr. Bernd Kölmel, Chair of the EPDRC, and Mr. Scott Simms, President of CEPA, co-chaired the IPM's first working session. Ms. Anna Carin Krokstäde, Chair of the Council Working Party on Transatlantic Relations and Deputy Head of the US and Canada Division of the EEAS, noted that the first Joint Cooperation Committee meeting, established under the Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA), was taking place on that same day in Ottawa. She recalled that the provisional application of the SPA started on 1 April 2017. She also recalled that a first meeting of the Ministerial Joint Committee (between High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission (HRVP) Federica Mogherini and Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs Chrystia Freeland), also established under the SPA, was to take place at the end of 2017. She noted that the SPA provides legal tools to make sure that fundamental principles, such as human rights and democracy, are respected.

Regarding CETA's implementation, Ms. Renita Baksha, a representative of the Directorate General for Trade of the European Commission, argued that the tension is now on Canada's side. Once the regulations process is completed on the Canadian side, CETA'S provisional application can come into force. According to her, the economic opportunities stemming from the agreement will start on the first day of the provisional application.

2. Working session on European and Canadian defence policies: the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and beyond (in association with the European Parliament's Subcommittee on Security and Defence)

Mr. Gabor Iklody, Director of the Crisis Management and Planning Directorate at the EEAS, recalled the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)'s three core tasks:

1. Protecting borders;
2. Being able to use the instruments that have been developed; and
3. Resilience.

He also recalled that the Lisbon Treaty enables a group of countries that are willing to do more to get in a binding agreement in the area of defence that would touch both capabilities and operations. Regarding the cooperation between the EU and NATO, Mr. Iklody recalled the joint declaration issued at the Warsaw Summit in July 2016, which dealt with, among other things: hybrid threats, the need to coordinate reactions, cyber operations, and strategic communications.

Mr. Simms presented the new Canadian defence policy, made public a few days before. He discussed the importance of NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) and the presence of Canadian troops in Latvia. Mr. Kölmel stated that the EU was grateful for that Canadian presence in Latvia. He also noted that, even with the investments over the next ten years announced in its new defence policy, Canada will not reach the 2% of GDP benchmark (required from NATO's members for its funding). In that regard, Mr. Iklody argued that the 2% of GDP benchmark should not be the only consideration: the ability and willingness to use the funds in question are more important.

3. Working session on environment and climate change

Mr. Simms chaired the last working session of the IPM, on environment and climate change. Mr. Adalbert Jahnz, Policy Officer at the Directorate General for Climate Action of the European Commission, explained that the EU environment and climate change policy also includes energy. He argued that the European Parliament is strongly engaged in adopting legislation in that field. He noted that Canadian emissions remain very high – three times the amount of European emissions – but argued that the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change, issued in December 2016, was a clear sign of an intention to tackle that problem.

Ms. Kathleen Van Brempt, a member of the EPDRC, recalled that the energy package was being discussed in the European Parliament at present. She also stressed the importance to keep up the international consensus on the Paris Agreement, despite the U.S. withdrawal. Mr. Paul Brannen, another member of the EPDRC, highlighted the importance of the role of forestry, agriculture and farming in the battle against climate change. He pleaded for an enhanced use of harvested wood products, such as cross-laminated timber, with the objective to increase carbon absorption. He noted that concrete alone is responsible for 8% of gas emissions.

Mr. Simms and Mr. Kölmel concluded the IPM by signing a [joint statement](#) (see **Appendix**) that aims to “strengthen and enhance the level of discourse” between European and Canadian parliamentarians.

I. Meeting with Vincent Charron of the Embassy of Canada to Belgium and Luxembourg

The delegation met with Mr. Vincent Charron, of the Embassy of Canada to Belgium and Luxembourg. Mr. Charron noted that Belgium contributes €3.6 million to NATO’s funding, which represents 0.9% of Belgium’s GDP. Mr. Charron explained that there are 1,200 military troops deployed in Brussels at present (in addition to police forces). While a popular measure, that situation has increased the pressure on the military. He also noted that Belgium is campaigning, as a Western francophone country, for a seat on the Security Council of the United Nations in 2019-2020. Mr. Charron brought the attention of the delegation to the fact that the F-35 was expected to be the chosen plane for the Belgian Armed Forces, and that a similar debate as in Canada occurred.

J. Meeting with General-major Johan Peeters of the Belgian Armed Forces

The delegation met with General-major Johan Peeters of the Belgian Armed Forces. He explained the role of the Belgian Armed Forces in the Coalition against Daesh. He also explained that Belgium has the military command of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), the EU Training Mission in Mali, and the EU Training Mission in the Central African Republic. General-major Peeters also discussed the issue of the protection of children during armed conflicts and the feedback received by the population regarding the homeland Operation Vigilant Guardian (OVG), under which military troops are deployed in Brussels.

General-major Peeters asserted that he would like to get rid of OVG as soon as possible. He argued that, in addition to taking away troops from military operations to

patrol the streets, it is not certain that it has a dissuasive effect: terrorist attacks still happened with the military in the streets. He also pointed out another problem: that the perception of security is becoming more important than the reality of security.

K. Meeting with Peteris Ustubs, Advisor to High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission Federica Mogherini

The delegation met with Mr. Peteris Ustubs, Advisor to HRVP Mogherini. He explained that he was working on behalf of the EU on the negotiations of three free trade agreements: Mercosur, Mexico, and Chile. For Mexico and Chile, the negotiations aim at modernizing existing agreements. Mr. Ustubs mentioned that Venezuela is also on the radar, with 800,000 EU citizens living on its territory. Regarding the SPA, Mr. Ustubs considers that it is the first of its kind for the EU. He commented that the EU and Canada need to work closely to make sure that the SPA has substance, that it really is a “strategic partnership”, in their approach and their exchanges.

L. Meeting with Fabian Zuleeg, Chief Executive and Chief Economist of the European Policy Centre

The delegation met with Mr. Fabian Zuleeg, Chief Executive and Chief Economist of the European Policy Centre (EPC), to discuss Brexit. Mr. Zuleeg explained that the EPC is pro-EU integration and that its aim is to make recommendations on EU policy. He argued that Europeans are more optimistic about EU's future now that they have been in the last ten years. He considers that Emmanuel Macron's election as President of France, U.S. President Donald Trump's actions in general and Brexit – which he described as a political and economic disaster – are bringing Europeans together.

Regarding Brexit, Mr. Zuleeg explained that it is not at the top of the EU agenda: many other issues are more important. He sees no upside to Brexit: it will be extremely difficult to entangle the U.K. from the EU, and extremely difficult to negotiate a new agreement between them because a less-integrated trade agreement is far more complex than a normal trade agreement. Despite the difficulties ahead, Mr. Zuleeg considers that the broad political lines have been made clear on the EU side:

- Brexit cannot endanger the cohesiveness of the EU and of the single market;
- The pressure is entirely on the U.K. side (the two years deadline to reach an agreement provided in Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union);
- The legacy payment by the U.K. to the EU will be significant (approximately €40 billion);
- There will need to be a form of control at the Northern Ireland border.

M. Meeting with Kerry Buck, Canada's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the North Atlantic Council

The delegation met with Her Excellency Kerry Buck, Canada's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the North Atlantic Council, which is the principal political decision-making body within NATO. Ambassador Buck recalled that Canada was a

founding member of NATO in 1949. She also recalled that Montenegro joined NATO recently, bringing the number of Allies to 29. Ambassador Buck summarized NATO's three essential core tasks and principles, as established in NATO's Strategic Concept in 2010, as follows:

- Collective defence (protecting allied territories and populations);
- Cooperative security (building capacity at the periphery); and
- Crisis management (security tasks outside NATO and periphery).

She considers that NATO has been through three ages so far:

1. Pre Cold War;
2. Cold War; and
3. The third age, which started in 2015 with the annexation of Crimea by Russia.

Regarding the presence of Canadian troops in Latvia under the umbrella of NATO's eFP, Ambassador Buck argued that it is designed to deter Russia from sending unmarked troops across the border. According to her, it is also a political signal, to show that the whole Alliance is at the borders. At the same time, she recognized the need to keep channels of communication with Russia open. She noted that no Russia-NATO council has taken place since Crimea's annexation.

PARTICIPATION IN THE THIRD PART OF THE 2017 ORDINARY SESSION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

From 26 to 29 June, the delegation participated in the third part-session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, for which Canada has observer status.

A. Overview of the Agenda of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

During the third part-session a wide range of topics were debated in the Assembly and in its committees and political groups. The Assembly held debates on the following:

- Progress report of the Bureau and the Standing Committee;
- Free debate;
- Recognition and implementation of the principle of accountability in the Parliamentary Assembly;
- Joint debate: Promoting integrity in governance to tackle political corruption; and Parliamentary scrutiny over corruption: parliamentary co-operation with the investigative media;
- The situation in Belarus;
- Joint debate: A comprehensive humanitarian and political response to the migration and refugee crisis in Europe; and Human rights implications of the European response to transit migration across the Mediterranean;
- Joint debate: Migration as an opportunity for European development; and Integration of refugees in times of critical pressure: learning from recent experience and examples of best practice;

- Current affairs debate: Europe's common fight against terrorism: successes and failures;
- Putting an end to sexual violence and harassment of women in public space;
- The implementation of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights;
- Political influence over independent media and journalists; and
- The “Turin process”: reinforcing social rights in Europe.

The Assembly also heard from the following speakers:

- Mr. Pavel Filip, Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova;
- Mr. Thorbjørn Jagland, Secretary General of the Council of Europe;
- Mr. Duško Marković, Prime Minister of Montenegro;
- Mr. Lubomír Zaorálek, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, Chairman of the Committee of Ministers;
- Mr. Georgios Kaminis, Mayor of Athens;
- Mr. Nils Muižnieks, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights; and
- Mr. Morgan Johansson, Minister for Justice and Migration of Sweden.

B. Canadian Activities during the Session

The members of the delegation actively participated in proceedings of the PACE, including plenary proceedings and committee meetings. The members also attended political group meetings.

C. Canadian Interventions in Assembly Debates

Mr. Scott Simms, Mr. John Oliver, Mr. Dean Allison and Senator Ghislain Maltais participated in Assembly debates during the part-session, making five interventions in debates and tabling one additional speech on a range of broad topics. The delegates’ speeches are available on the PACE [website](#)¹.

a. Tuesday, 27 June 2017

Mr. Dean Allison delivered a [speech](#) on “Promoting integrity in governance to tackle political corruption”.

Mr. Scott Simms and Mr. John Oliver delivered [speeches](#) on “Parliamentary scrutiny over corruption: parliamentary co-operation with the investigative media”.

b. Wednesday, 28 June 2017

Senator Ghislain Maltais was unable to speak on “A comprehensive humanitarian and political response to the migration and refugee crisis in Europe”, but tabled a written [speech](#) on that subject.

c. Thursday, 29 June 2017

¹ Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Verbatim Records, Third part-session, 2017 (http://assembly.coe.int/ASP/Doc/nwCRListingSession_EN.asp?IDSession=201706&Submit=Search).

Mr. Scott Simms delivered a speech in the context of the current affairs debate on “Europe's common fight against terrorism: successes and failures”. Mr. Simms also delivered a speech on “Political influence over independent media and journalists”.

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. Scott Simms, President
Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association

APPENDIX

**Joint statement issued at the 38th Interparliamentary Meeting
between the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association and the
European Parliament's Delegation for Relations with Canada**



The delegations of the European Parliament and the Parliament of Canada held the 38th inter-parliamentary meeting on 22nd June 2017 in Brussels. The following statement was adopted:

The Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) between the European Union and Canada provides a new framework for deepening the political cooperation between the two sides. In particular, under point e) of Article 27 it foresees the promotion of exchanges of delegations from the European Parliament and the Parliament of Canada. Taking the existing inter-parliamentary relationship as its basis, the European and Canadian legislators will aim to strengthen and enhance the level of discourse between them. It will do so against the background of other bodies set up under SPA, such as the Joint Cooperation Committee and the Joint Ministerial Committee.

In practical terms, the exchanges will continue to include the annual meeting of delegations. However, with a view to transforming these regular meetings into an ongoing and uninterrupted dialogue, additional contacts will be established. These will include:

- Additional meetings of delegations, including in Bureau format, organised with consent of both parliaments;
- Videoconferences, organised as needed between regular meetings of the delegations. This will serve to enable members to bring each other up to date on pending and topical issues. Responsibility for organizing and financing the conference will be shared on an alternating basis between the two institutions. Where issues are identified as having a possible impact on the other side, each party would be able to request an exchange via videoconference at an early stage. Efforts will be made to include members of relevant parliamentary committees.

Through these and other measures, the parliamentary dialogue between the EU and Canada would develop into a powerful tool to add a new level of democratic oversight to the expanding transatlantic relationship; at the same time, it would assist in the development of more harmonised approaches to issues of joint concern and be helpful in preventing disputes in sensitive areas before they occur.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Bernd Kölmel'.

Bernd Kölmel
Chair
Delegation for relations with Canada
European Parliament

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Scott Simms'.

Scott Simms
President
Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association
Parliament of Canada

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association
ACTIVITY	38th Interparliamentary Meeting with the European Parliament's Delegation responsible for the Relations with Canada and Third Part of the 2017 Session of the PACE
DESTINATION	Brussels, Belgium and Strasbourg, France
DATES	21-29 June 2017
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Hon. Percy Downe, Senator (participation at the IPM) Hon. Ghislain Maltais, Senator
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Mr. Scott Simms, M.P. and Head of the delegation Mr. John Oliver, M.P. Mr. Dean Allison, M.P. Mr. Don Davies, M.P. (participation at the IPM)
STAFF	Ms. Guyanne Desforges, Association Secretary Mr. Maxime-Olivier Thibodeau, Association Advisor
TRANSPORTATION	\$57,594.63
ACCOMMODATION	\$21,562.01
HOSPITALITY	\$978.34
PER DIEMS	\$10,103.12
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$293.59
MISCELLANEOUS	\$65.00
TOTAL	\$90,596.69