



For immediate release:

CERT CHALLENGES CANADA AND EU TO TAKE LEADERSHIP ON CONVERGENCE OF INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION RULES

Brussels, 28 November 2001 – The Canada Europe Round Table for Business (CERT) today issued a challenge to regulators and trade negotiators in Canada and the European Union to lead a multilateral effort to promote the convergence of international competition rules and regulations.

Meeting together with 80 CEOs, senior executives and government officials from Canada and Europe, the CERT Interest Group on Competition Policy delivered its report on the international convergence of competition rules.

Richard Evans, Executive Vice-president of Alcan Inc., who delivered the report's findings on behalf of the group, emphasised the importance of this initiative to governments, businesses and consumers. "Streamlined competition rules will lead to greater investor confidence and a stronger investment climate, which will in turn strengthen the economy and lead to greater choice and lower prices for consumers. This initiative takes on particular significance as governments strive to stave off a worldwide economic downturn," he said.

CERT European Chair Baron Paul de Keersmaecker added, "With this report, CERT hopes to assist our members by directly addressing a major barrier to doing business between Canada and Europe. To date, we have received a good deal of positive feedback on this initiative from both business people and policy makers." He added that he was encouraged by the sizeable turnout at the first of what will be an annual conference for CERT, which will discuss major issues and trends affecting business in the EU and Canada.

Guests to the Round Table also heard views from several speakers, including Annemie Neyts, representing the Belgian Presidency of the EU, Mogens Peter Carl, Director General for Trade in the EU, and Senator Raymond Setlakwe, from the Canadian Senate Committee for Banking, Trade and Commerce, and Foreign Affairs. Interbrew CEO Hugo Powell, Philippe Guérin Délégué Général of the Chambre de Commerce France-Canada, and Robert Anderson, the Counsellor responsible for Competition Policy with the World Trade Organisation also voiced their opinions on the effect of competition policy on trade and investment.

Editors Note:

The Canada Europe Roundtable for Business is a permanent forum for dialogue on major trade and investment matters among senior business leaders, Canadian and European, and among business leaders and governments. Initiated in 1999 by a number of European and Canadian companies, CERT operates on the belief that enhanced economic relations can offer the most substantial and tangible route to greater transatlantic co-operation in all aspects of the Canada-EU relationship. Founding members include Alcan, Interbrew, Tractebel and EADS.

CERT's mission is to promote and strengthen trade and investment dialogue between the EU and Canada in the bilateral and global economic *interests* of both industry and government. To achieve this, CERT members work with the Canadian and EU administrations to help shape the economic policy issues that are of key importance to this trans-Atlantic business community.

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