



**PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC
MAY 6, 2009**

BUSINESS LEADERS HAIL LAUNCH OF EU-CANADA TALKS

Business leaders today welcomed the decision by the European Union (EU) and Canada to launch negotiations on an ambitious and comprehensive EU-Canada economic partnership agreement. This important step will boost transatlantic economic growth and send a positive signal to markets at a time of unprecedented economic crisis.

The proposed EU-Canada economic agreement should set a new benchmark for bilateral economic integration. Business groups on both sides of the Atlantic believe strongly that the agreement should be of the highest standard and should be concluded within two years. Negotiators should ensure that it secures real market access for goods, services and investments and includes an ambitious regulatory cooperation agenda.

Priority issues for European and Canadian companies include:

- The elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers;
- Much greater reciprocal access to public procurement at all levels;
- Cooperation on access to raw materials;
- A commitment to regulatory convergence in priority sectors;
- Stronger intellectual property protection;
- Dispute settlement;
- Increased labour mobility, including mutual recognition of qualifications for business personnel.

Canada and the EU should also show collective leadership in advancing common transatlantic and multilateral interests. As business leaders, we count on the EU and Canada to work together closely for the successful and timely completion of the World Trade Organization's Doha Development Agenda. The EU and Canada must also cooperate closely in international negotiations to ensure that all major players, including emerging economies, join the fight against climate change.

BUSINESSEUROPE (www.businessseurope.eu) – BUSINESSEUROPE represents 20 million small, medium and large companies through its 40 leading national business federations from 34 countries. BUSINESSEUROPE actively promotes the role of business in Europe: strong enterprises make a strong Europe. It advocates for a favourable and competitive business environment to foster sustainable economic growth and sound economic governance.

The Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic - SP (www.spcr.cz) – SP brings together employers and enterprises in the Czech Republic. SP has as its mission to shape economic and social policy in order to create optimum conditions for business development.

The Canada Europe Roundtable for Business – CERT (www.canada-europe.org) – The Canada Europe Roundtable for Business is the leading association dedicated to creating business opportunities between Canada and the European Union. CERT members support a greater level of ambition for the bilateral trade and investment relationship. More than 100 Canadian and European chief executives have signed CERT's declaration in support of a Canada-EU Trade and Investment Agreement.

Canadian Council of Chief Executives (www.ceocouncil.ca) – Founded in 1976, the Canadian Council of Chief Executives is a non-partisan organization composed of 150 chief executives and leading entrepreneurs from all major sectors and regions of Canada. Member chief executives lead companies that collectively administer \$3.5 trillion in assets, have annual revenues of more than \$800 billion, and are responsible for the vast majority of Canada's exports, investment, research and development, and training.

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