

# EU moves closer to a trade deal with Canada

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**The European Union appears close to concluding a free-trade agreement with Canada, with a flurry of recent activity suggesting there is a concerted bid by negotiators to reach a deal by mid-June.**

A team of Canadian negotiators has been in Brussels for more than a week. Within the past ten days, the EU's trade relationship with Canada has been added to the agenda of a meeting next Friday (14 June) of trade ministers from the EU's member states.

The heightened level of discussion comes before Canada's prime minister, Stephen Harper, begins an eight-day trip to Europe on 11 June.

The EU's negotiations with Canada began in 2009 and have been beset with difficulties. The most recent target date for an agreement that passed unmet was the end of 2012

However, sources say both sides are anxious to reach an agreement before EU negotiators turn their attention to the potentially far larger transatlantic trade and investment partnership (TTIP) agreement with the US (see above).

Sources suggest that, on the EU side, the appetite for an agreement with Canada has been increased by doubts about whether Karel De Gucht, the European commissioner for trade, can achieve his stated ambition of agreeing the TTIP before his term ends in late 2014.

The principal residual concern of Canadian negotiators is to boost access to the European market for its exporters of beef and pork. For the EU, the main sticking points concern intellectual property.

Negotiations remain "very complex", a diplomat on the EU side said.

The Canadians are, he said, "linking everything: agriculture and market access, cars, rules of origin, government procurement, investment protection".

Canadian government officials quoted in the Canadian media have, however, reinforced the impression that a final push is under way.