

Overall, Eight in Ten (81%) Support a Free Trade Agreement Between Canada and the European Union

Support Dwindles to One-Third (31%) When Factoring In Extended Drug Patents That Would Increase Prescription Costs

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Toronto, ON – As Canada and the European Union (EU) continue to negotiate a trade agreement, Canadians, overall, are vastly supportive of such a deal. Eight in ten (81%) Canadians ‘support’ (20% strongly/61% somewhat) a free-trade agreement between Canada and the European Union. Two in ten (19%), however, say they ‘oppose’ (5% strongly/15% somewhat) such a trade agreement between Canada and the European Union.

- Men (84%) are slightly more likely to support a Canada-EU free trade agreement than women (77%).
- Residents of the Prairies (Saskatchewan/Manitoba – 87%, Alberta – 85%) and Atlantic Canada (85%) are most supportive of the trade agreement, followed by Quebec (81%) and British Columbia (81%), while Ontario is the least supportive (77%).
- Support for the trade agreement tends to increase with an increase in level of education. Canadians who are university graduates (86%) are most supportive of a Canada-EU free trade agreement, followed by Canadians with some level of post-secondary education (82%), and high school graduates (78%), while those with less than a high school education (77%) are least supportive.

What many Canadians are unaware of is that a proposed free trade agreement between Canada and the EU may include a provision that extends patents on brand-name pharmaceutical drugs. This is intended to encourage investment in new product development, but would also increase the cost of prescription drugs for Canadians.

When educated on such a provision, only one-third (31%) of Canadians say they ‘support’ (5% strongly/26% somewhat) a free trade agreement between Canada and Europe, meaning a shift by half of the Canadian population away from supporting the agreement. Seven in ten (69%) Canadians ‘oppose’ (34% strongly/35% somewhat) a trade agreement between the two parties when informed of such a provision that would increase prescription drug costs.

- Women (75%) are most opposed to a trade agreement that would extend drug patents, while men (63%) are the less opposed.

- British Columbians (74%) are the most opposed, followed by Albertans (71%), Ontarians (70%), and Quebecers (66%). Residents of Saskatchewan and Manitoba (65%) and Atlantic Canada (65%) are the least opposed to such an agreement.
- Nearly three-quarters (74%) of Canadians seniors, aged 55+, are opposed to a Canada-EU trade agreement that might ultimately increase prescription drug costs, likely because they are the most affected by such a provision. Seven in ten (71%) middle-aged Canadians oppose the agreement, while six in ten (60%) young Canadians similarly oppose.
- Interestingly, lower and higher income Canadians share similar feelings of opposition to a Canada-EU trade agreement that would increase prescription costs when compared with middle class Canadians, who are the most likely to oppose the agreement. Two-thirds of Canadians making under \$40,000 annually (66%) and over \$100,000 annually (64%) oppose a Canadian trade agreement with Europe that would increase prescription drug costs, compared to seven in ten Canadians making between \$40-59,000 a year (71%) and between \$60-\$99,000 a year (70%) who also oppose.

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted between September 10th to 17th, 2012, on behalf of The Council of Canadians. For this survey a sample of 1,008 Canadians from Ipsos' Canadian online panel was interviewed online. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. A survey with an unweighted probability sample of this size and a 100% response rate would have an estimated margin of error of +/- 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what the results would have been had the entire population of adults in Canada been polled. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

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