

PRIME MINISTERS MEET TO DISCUSS STRENGTHENING OF CANADA-FRANCE  
RELATIONS

July 2, 2008  
Ottawa, Ontario

Prime Minister Stephen Harper welcomed Prime Minister François Fillon of France to Ottawa for a one-day working visit. The two prime ministers met to discuss issues of importance to Canada and France, including Afghanistan, the upcoming G8 Summit, October's Francophonie Summit in Quebec City and the Canada-European Union Summit, to be held in Canada this fall. Prime Minister Fillon's visit coincides with the beginning of France's six-month term where it holds the EU Council Presidency.

"I am pleased to have met with Prime Minister Fillon and to have furthered our bilateral relations through the discussion of key issues of interest to our two countries," said Prime Minister Harper. "Canada and France are important partners on the world stage, and I am pleased we have had the chance to work closely together ahead of the Canada-European Union Summit and the Francophonie Summit."

The two prime ministers also discussed issues such as international efforts to combat climate change and the possible launch of negotiations on a closer economic partnership between Canada and the EU. At the conclusion of their meetings, the two leaders signed a declaration covering four memorandums of understanding (MOU), designed to strengthen relations between Canada and France.

"Signing these arrangements highlights Canada's rich relationship with France, and will generate concrete benefits for the people of both our countries," said Prime Minister Harper. "These arrangements will help us to deepen our cooperation with France in cutting-edge areas of scientific research."

The MOU are between Health Canada and the French Food Safety Agency, MITACS (Mathematics of Information Technology and Complex Systems) and the French National Institute for Research in Computer Science; the National Research Council (NRC) of Canada and the French Atomic Energy Commission; and between the NRC's Industrial Research Assistance Program and OSEO, the French government's support program for small- and medium-sized enterprises.

The day following his arrival in Ottawa, Prime Minister Fillon will travel to Quebec City to participate in the July 3 opening ceremonies for the city's 400th anniversary, which will be celebrated across Canada.

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The Prime Minister's Office - Communications

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