



## 2002 CEO Roundtable – Report

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CERT's second annual CEO Roundtable in Montréal on 29 October focused on the competitiveness of the Canada-European Union (EU) business relationship. Recommendations were delivered from the chairs of CERT's 2002 working groups on trade and competition, environment, technology & innovation and market access.

Discussions highlighted that business competitiveness could be significantly improved via the deepening of ties between Canada and the EU. This was seen as an effective means through which to increase transatlantic economic cooperation, increase trade diversification and offer stable, long-term prospects for investment. Central to this long-term vision would include prospects for a bilateral free trade agreement.

"It is clearly in Canada's interest to boost its trade and investment performance with all its trading partners and Europe is no exception," said the Hon. Roy MacLaren, Canadian Chair of CERT and former Canadian Minister of International Trade.

Speaking on the need for trade diversification, Perrin Beatty, President & CEO of the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, Canada's largest industry body, outlined, "We strongly believe that it is critical for Canada to develop a free-trade agreement with the European Union."

Other speakers at the included Baron Paul De Keersmaecker, European Chair of CERT and former Chairman of Interbrew, Anne Golden, President of the Conference Board of Canada, Daniel Gagnier, Senior Vice President, Corporate and External Affairs for Alcan Inc. and Robert Keyes, Senior Vice President International of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce.

**Key outcomes** from the event included decision by the CERT membership to:

1. Develop an Action Programme as an operational means to further liberalising bilateral trade and investment, with the view to the development of an eventual Canada-EU free trade agreement, albeit subject to priority being given for the time being to the more pressing issue of post-Doha WTO negotiations.
2. Align CERT policy work through the Action Programme with existing bilateral initiatives, including the ECTI (EU-Canada Trade Initiative). To this end, CERT will develop a package of issue for negotiation under six priority areas: Regulatory cooperation, research and development, mutual recognition, government procurement, labour mobility and the Doha Development Agenda (DDA).
3. Deliver the CERT Action Programme to the EU Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy and Canadian Trade Minister Pierre Pettigrew on the occasion of the upcoming Canada-EU Summit of 19 December in Ottawa.
4. Prepare the package of issues under the CERT Action Programme for input to the ECTI process for January 2003. CERT will continue to input to ECTI and meet with negotiators on an ongoing basis.

The CERT Action Programme will be available on the CERT website in January 2003.