

# Canada-EU trade talks prove speedy

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Talks on a free-trade pact between Canada and the European Union should be wrapped up successfully before the end-of-2011 target date, Canadian Trade Minister Peter Van Loan, below, said yesterday. Officials from both sides yesterday started the fifth round of talks on an agreement that could boost trade flows by billions of dollars a year. Mr. Van Loan, cautioning that the toughest negotiations are still ahead, said he would meet European trade chief Karel De Gucht in early December to review progress so far. "Unless something earth-shattering happens, if we make the anticipated progress in this round, I expect we will probably conclude there is good reason to continue to go forward.... Right now we're well ahead of expectations, so I'm pretty optimistic," he said. "Our target has been the end of 2011 and we remain on schedule -- in fact, ahead of schedule -- to meet that target," he said.