

EU, Canada to start trade talks despite seal spat

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PRAGUE (Reuters) - The European Union and Canada agreed on Wednesday to launch talks on a trade pact worth over \$27 billion per year despite a looming row between the two trading partners over an EU ban on seal products.

"We are pleased to announce the launch of talks on a deepened economic partnership agreement," the conclusions of a summit of EU and Canadian leaders, obtained by Reuters, said.

Canada and the EU first agreed in October 2008 to seek a "comprehensive economic agreement" to boost two-way trade by lowering tariffs on goods and services, and encompassing areas such as investment, regulatory cooperation and rules of origin.

(Writing by Darren Ennis, editing by Dale Hudson)