



**Statement of the Council of the Federation\* -- Support for the negotiation of a new and comprehensive economic agreement with the European Union**

**OTTAWA, February 20, 2009** -- At their summer meeting in Quebec City, Canada's Premiers urged that negotiations commence between Canada and the European Union on the development of a new and modern economic partnership to improve the economic well-being of our respective societies. They also held a conference call, February 11 2009, to update on the project, following recent discussions between Québec's Premier, Mr. Jean Charest, and the president of the European Commission, Mr. José Manuel Barroso.

In recent months, the federal government has been working with the European Union on a joint document which would describe the opportunities for enhanced trade and investment between the European Union and Canada and identifies numerous potential areas of discussions for a possible deepened economic agreement. The federal government has been consulting provinces and territories throughout the development of this document which highlights that several of the issues that will be discussed in these negotiations fall within the exclusive or shared jurisdiction of provinces and territories.

Accordingly, the involvement of provinces and territories is necessary for the successful conclusion of negotiations and subsequent implementation of an agreement. As such, Premiers are pleased the federal government has committed to a process that enables all provinces and territories to participate directly in the negotiations. Consequently, after a final agreement, provinces and territories will take the necessary measures to ensure the implementation of any commitments they, as individual provinces and territories, undertake through the negotiation process.

More than ever, Premiers intend to actively contribute to the discussions and are prepared to work together with the government of Canada, throughout the negotiations, on the basis of a partnership respectful of their respective jurisdictions and responsibilities. They look forward to the results of the coming discussions with the European Union and underscored the importance of maintaining current and opening new markets in a period of economic uncertainty.

\* The members of the Council of the Federation supporting this Statement are: Québec, Ontario, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Manitoba, British Columbia, Prince Edward Island, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut. The views of Newfoundland and Labrador are expressed in a separate communiqué they have issued.

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