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For immediate release:

CANADA AND EU SUPPORT TRADE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMME

Ottawa, December 19, 2002 – Government leaders from Canada and the European Union agreed today to support an Action Programme aimed at enhancing transatlantic trade. The programme, entitled “*Creating Opportunities: A Roadmap for Action in Canada and the EU*”, was submitted to International Trade Minister Pierre Pettigrew and European Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy by the Canada-Europe Round Table for Business (CERT).

“Businesses on both sides of the Atlantic will clearly benefit from increased dialogue between the private sector and government on trade-related matters,” stated the Hon. Roy Maclaren, Canadian Chair of CERT. “While much progress has been made over the past few years on lowering barriers to trade, more work need to be done to ensure that Canada and the European Union continue to diligently and proactively move towards greater trade enhancement activities.”

Minister Pettigrew and Commissioner Lamy met with several senior executives from CERT to discuss the governments’ transatlantic trade agenda on the occasion of the Canada-EU Summit. The leaders discussed ways that the business community can work more effectively to promote trade enhancement within the context of government policy and decision-making.

Initiated during a recent meeting of senior executives in Montreal, the Action Programme focuses on liberalizing bilateral trade and investment between Canada and the EU in six key areas, including:

- Regulatory cooperation
- Mutual recognition
- Research and development
- Labour mobility
- Government procurement
- The WTO Doha Development Agenda (DDA)

It also supports recent interest in a trade enhancement agreement between Canada and the European Union. CERT believes that such a proposed agreement constitutes a real opportunity to modernize existing agreements and trading practices to reflect the current needs of the transatlantic business community.

CERT sees the Action Programme as a blueprint for business input to both governments on the liberalization of trade and investment. The Action Programme will also help set targets for business and government to achieve in creating an even more prosperous trade and investment climate between the two regions, complimenting the work of the existing EU-Canada Trade Initiative (ECTI). This process will commence in January 2003.

Editors Note:

The Canada Europe Round Table for Business is a permanent forum for dialogue on major trade and investment matters among senior Canadian and European business leaders. CERT operates on the belief that enhanced economic relations can offer the most substantial and tangible route to greater transatlantic co-operation in all aspects of the Canada-EU relationship.

CERT was formed in 1999 by a number of companies to articulate the interests and concerns of businesses that operate between Canada and the EU. Among its members are Alcan, Interbrew-Labatt, Tractebel, the Canadian Pulp & Paper Association, Novartis, GPC International, Bombardier, and Power Corporation.

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For more information:

In Canada:

Chris Benedetti

Tel: (416) 598-0055 ext. 242

Fax: (416) 598-3811

email: chris.benedetti@gpcinternational.com

In Europe:

Jason Langrish

Tel: +32 2 502 0163

Fax: +32 2 502 0859

email: j.langrish@canada-europe.be

Web site: www.canada-europe.org