



Finland and Canada Northern Partners

Finland's Canada Action Plan



MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN
AFFAIRS OF FINLAND

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1. FOREWORD

Canada is a large North American federal state with rich natural resources and a successful economy. It is an important actor in the Arctic region. Canada is one of the most multicultural societies in the world and well known for its successful immigration policy. The good relations between Finland and Canada are fostered by their similar northern conditions, a shared value base and coinciding views on many international issues. In the economic sector, there is much potential for further cooperation.

For Finland, Canada is an important and natural partner and this Action Plan seeks to

- look at Canada as an international actor
- review the cooperation between Finland and Canada
- survey the bilateral relations between the EU and Canada
- outline concrete opportunities for cooperation between the parties.

The overall goal is to deepen the bilateral relations and strengthen cooperation between the EU and Canada.

2. CANADA IN THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

Canada is a member of the Commonwealth of Nations and comprises ten provinces and three territories. Federal political and administrative power is exercised by the Prime Minister and Government. The monarchy is represented by the Governor General. The current Prime Minister and Conservative Party leader, Stephen Harper, has been in office since 2006. In the 2011 parliamentary elections, the Conservatives won a majority in the House of Commons, which strengthens the position of Prime Minister Harper's Government.

Canada has a very successful economy. Thanks to its solid fiscal policy and a stable banking system, it coped with the global financial crisis better than most other industrial countries. Canada ranks ninth in terms of the size of its economy and eighth in terms of its foreign trade volume in the world. Canada is a member of G7/8 and G20.

Canada has traditionally been an active and dynamic player in international multilateral cooperation. It plays a prominent role in UN crisis management operations and it has often been proactive in projects promoting international security, such as the Ottawa Anti-Personnel Landmines Convention.

In its foreign policy Canada prioritizes relations with the United States. The countries are closely integrated in economic, political and military fields. Canada and the USA are among the founding states of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and members of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Canada's other foreign policy priorities are Afghanistan, South and Central America and the Pacific Sea region, especially its emerging economies.

Canada is an Arctic power and a substantial part of its land mass lies in the Arctic region. Canada reasserts its sovereignty over the region and is keen to play a role in the direction of developments in the Arctic. In the future, the region's political, military, economic and ecological significance for Canada will only increase. Canada is a key member of the Arctic Council and will chair it in 2013–2015.

Thanks to its rich natural resources, Canada is highly self-sufficient: for example its oil reserves are the second biggest in the world. Canada is also a significant mineral producer. Large parts of its mineral, oil and gas reserves are located in the northern parts of the country, which heightens the strate-

gic importance of that region. Canada's forest resources are vast and it is the biggest forest industry product exporter in the world.

Canada is a solid supporter of free trade. Its most important foreign trading partner is the USA, the destination of over 70 per cent of Canadian exports. In order to diversify the regional range of its foreign trade, Canada has signed several free trade agreements in recent years, among others, with countries in Latin America and the Middle East. The European Union is Canada's second largest trading partner. The parties are currently engaged in a round of negotiations on a Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA). It will considerably bolster commercial and economic interaction between Canada and the EU.

3. RELATIONS BETWEEN FINLAND AND CANADA

The relations between Finland and Canada are good. Both countries have a common value base, highly developed economies, a northern location, and bilingual societies. Like Finland, Canada supports the promotion of democracy, human rights and international security. In international forums, such as the UN, the countries' views have often coincided. They also actively participate in crisis management operations and Arctic issues. Interaction between the countries is characterized by openness and like-mindedness. During the Helsinki process, Canada took an active part in the informal Friends of the Helsinki Process group, convened by Finland and Tanzania, and especially coordinated the dialogues on the control of small arms and light weapons.

Finland is fairly well known in Canada and the Canadian society's affiliation with Finland is strong. At the end of the 19th century and in the first decades of the 20th century Finns migrated to Canada in large numbers. As a consequence, close to 130 000 people in Canada today are of Finnish ancestry.

The political relations between Finland and Canada are good, albeit there is potential to deepen the relations. However, contacts and mutual visits have become more frequent in recent years. In 2009 and 2010, there were several high political level visits between our countries: the Speaker of the House of Commons of Canada visited Finland and the Finnish Minister of Education visited Canada in 2009; Finnish political leadership visited Canada during the Vancouver Olympic Games, and the Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs visited Finland in 2010. Contacts from Finland to Alberta, Ontario, Quebec and the Atlantic provinces have also increased. Cooperation at the two administrative levels is important for Finland because Canada's provinces have sole or significant jurisdiction over such subject areas as energy, environmental policy, health care and education. The objective is to foster close contacts at federal and provincial levels alike.

Concrete and yet untapped opportunities for cooperation can be found, especially in the trade and innovation sectors. Canada regards Finland as a society that builds on innovation and knowledge and Finland's success in high technology is well known. There is much interest in cooperation with Finland.

Canada's successful immigration policy and the promotion of multiculturalism offer valuable models for Finland. These topics recur in discussions between the governments' authorities. Dialogue on issues concerning minorities and aboriginal peoples could be intensified. Education and training is yet another area offering vast opportunities for cooperation. Finland's success in basic education and structural solutions in secondary education attract much attention in Canada. Finland, for its part, can learn from Canada's education policy solutions concerning, for example, education of immigrants and network-based development of schools and their use of online courses. Dialogue should be deepened in matters concerning basic education and more partnerships should be created at the university level.

Collaboration in this area is in many ways befitting because, due to the similar climates of Finland and Canada, the conditions for sports resemble each other. Cooperation has been intensified at both the state and sports association levels.

Objectives:

- To actively work to intensify the exchange of visits at federal, parliamentary and provincial levels;
- To promote concrete cooperation in key sectors such as trade, innovation and research.

4. RELATIONS BETWEEN THE EU AND CANADA

The European Union and Canada are long-time strategic partners. Their economic cooperation dates back to the 1950s. In 1976, Canada and the then EEC (European Economic Community) signed the Framework Agreement for Commercial and Economic Cooperation. It was the first-ever agreement concluded by the EU with an industrialized country. Over the decades cooperation has significantly expanded also to other sectors and, among other things, is now close in crisis management, training and education, science and research, justice and home affairs, health, as well as transport and shipping. The EU and Canada convene annually for a summit meeting to establish the guidelines for future economic and political cooperation.

The EU is Canada's second largest trading partner. In May 2009, the EU and Canada launched negotiations for a Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA); the aim is to conclude the negotiations during 2012. When CETA enters into force it will be the most extensive economic cooperation agreement that the EU has signed with a third country and the first free trade agreement with an industrialized country. For Canada the agreement is important as it will expand its trade relations with Europe and thereby balance the predominant position of the USA.

According to various studies, trade between the EU and Canada has been forecast to grow by some 25 per cent once CETA becomes operational. During the negotiation process the legal commitment of Canada's provinces and territories to the agreement has been a key concern for the EU and also Finland, especially when it comes to public procurement. To date, the provinces have given their political commitment to the agreement and have taken an active part in the negotiations.

Negotiations on an upgraded EU-Canada Framework agreement, Agreement, which would cover all areas except economic cooperation, have also been launched in the autumn of 2011. The objective is to strengthen also the political dialogue by means of including political clauses on certain topics in the agreement (promoting human rights, democracy and good governance as well as action against terrorism and weapons of mass destruction).

Canada holds an observer status in the EU's Northern Dimension policy and participates in the Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership (NDEP) as well as the Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being (NDPHS).

Given the countries' similar backgrounds and views on many international issues it is evident that there is still scope and opportunity for closer interaction. Such areas can be found in, for example, Arctic issues, where cooperation can be intensified in research and questions relating to climate, environment or indigenous peoples. Finland considers Arctic issues to be a key aspect of the EU– Canada relationship and, therefore, Finland has emphasized them on the EU's agenda. The EU and its Member States will continue with their efforts to engage the Government of Canada to participate in international arrangements aimed at combating climate change.

The EU and Canada have certain trade disputes as well, the most recent of which concerns the EU's decision to impose a ban on seal products in the Community market. The case is currently being handled by the WTO Dispute Settlement Panel. A possible new item that may develop into a trade dispute involves provisions on the implementation of the EU Fuel Quality Directive (FQD). The oil sands industry is an important sector in Canada's economy and, in Canada's view, the new provisions would discriminate against crude oil extracted from oil sand over conventional crude oil in the Community market.

Objectives:

- To promote comprehensive cooperation between the EU and Canada in areas such as climate, the environment and indigenous peoples; to strengthen partnership in line with the objectives of the ongoing negotiations;
- To highlight Arctic questions as an important issue on the EU– Canada agenda including summit meetings;
- To ensure that the CETA and the Framework Agreement negotiations will be concluded on schedule and that the agreements will quickly enter into force and be effectively implemented.

5. FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY

5.1. Arctic issues

Canada is an Arctic power. Northern Canada constitutes about two fifths of Canada's entire area, that is, about 4 million square kilometers. For Canada, the political, military, economic and ecologic importance of the Arctic region continues to grow. Canada's North has significant oil, natural gas and mineral resources, and access to the region will be considerably facilitated by climate change. Climate change will also affect Arctic transit routes.

Finland and Canada are members of the Arctic Council. Canada sees the Arctic Council as the principal forum for dealing with Arctic issues, preferring it to the group of the so-called Coastal states. Canada has had some reservations concerning granting observer status to the European Union in the Arctic Council. However, the respective views have recently become closer, and dialogue concerning the matter should be continued.

Prime Minister Harper's Government has kept the Arctic issues high on the agenda. Canada's Arctic policy has emphasized Canadian sovereignty, and the Government has expressed its concern over the possible regional claims of other countries and transit via its territories. Canada's Integrated Northern Strategy's main policies were formulated in 2007. According to the Strategy, Canada's main priorities are sovereignty, environment, economic and social development and governance. In the most recent review, the Strategy of 2010, more attention was given to indigenous peoples.

Canada aims to increase its military presence in the Arctic region. Indications of this include, among other things, the Canadian Forces Arctic Training Centre in Resolute Bay, expansion of the Canadian Rangers, who are often drawn from the indigenous communities, the building of the Nanisivik Naval Facility and Deepwater Port in 2011 and the decision to procure 6–8 new ice-capable offshore patrol ships and a Polar icebreaker for the Canadian Coast Guard.

Ship and vessel procurements open up opportunities for commercial cooperation between Finland and Canada. Finnish expertise may be used in ship design and in the delivery of components. In addition, Finland has expertise in technology suited for the Arctic environment, for example, in machinery and equipment used in the mining industry, environment measurement technology and oil spill prevention and response in ice conditions. There

are also promising opportunities in research and innovation cooperation between the countries.

Objectives:

- To promote closer and wider cooperation between the EU and Canada in Arctic issues;
- To actively cooperate with Canada in strengthening and developing the Arctic Council;
- To seek Canada's support for the Commission's Arctic policy and the Commission's observer status in the Arctic Council;
- To promote cooperation related to Arctic expertise, research and trade with Canada in areas such as shipbuilding and environment technology; to highlight relevant Finnish expertise and know-how.

5.2. The UN

Canada has traditionally been a strong supporter of multilateral cooperation. It was one of the key players in the creation of the UN Peacekeeping system. Since the early 1990s, Canada has been in the vanguard of the development of peace-keeping and its more recent element, peace-building. Canada and Finland have traditionally agreed on several issues on the UN agenda and cooperation has been close. Canada has chaired the Working Group of the UN Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations since 1990. The Responsibility to Protect (R2P) norm, adopted by the UN at the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly in 2005, has been one of Canada's key projects. Other important themes for Canada include the strengthening of the rule of law, human-rights-based action and women's rights. Canada has assumed an active and visible role in the promotion of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (Women, Peace and Security). It initiated the Friends of Women, Peace and Security group, which it also chairs. Cooperation with Finland has been excellent.

In proportion to its GDP, Canada has always been among the major donors of humanitarian assistance, and it is known for its capacity to react rapidly to international issues.

If Finland gets a seat in the Security Council in 2013, cooperation with the often like-minded Canada will be important. Canada has held a non-permanent seat in the UN Security Council six times.

Objective:

- To cooperate actively in the UN in order to pursue the common goals, especially in questions related to peace and security.

5.3. Crisis management

Canada's most important foreign political, military and development political commitment in the past few years has been Afghanistan. Compared to any other single mission, Canada has lost the most soldiers (over 150 lives) in Afghanistan. Canada has decided to withdraw its combat units from Afghanistan, and started the withdrawal of its some 2 800 troops in July 2011. However, Canada will deploy 950 soldiers to training and support tasks and 45 to crisis management tasks, of whom some to the EU civilian crisis management operation. Sustained work in the UN and experiences in Afghanistan have made Canada a notable contributor to the development of comprehensive crisis management. It has, for example, been at the forefront of countries creating innovative financing mechanisms for security and development.

A Framework Agreement for the participation of Canada in the European Union crisis management operations was signed in 2005. For example, Canada has taken part in the EU civilian crisis management operations in Afghanistan, the Palestinian Territories, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the EU Election Observer Missions in Pakistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Aceh, as well as in the Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo. The Finnish Centre of Expertise in Comprehensive Crisis Management in Kuopio and Canada's Civilian Reserve CANADEM are exploring possibilities for cooperation in the models of recruitment, exchange of information and data processing systems. Moreover, opportunities for cooperation can be found within the NATO framework.

Canada's participation in the Libya operation gained nearly unanimous support in Parliament. Canadian Lieutenant-General Charles Bouchard has run the NATO operation since March 2011. Canada has participated in the operation with a considerable number of personnel and equipment.

Objectives:

- To enhance dialogue and cooperation with Canada in order to improve the comprehensive approach to crisis management;
- To foster cooperation with Canada in crisis management operations.

5.4. Human rights, democracy and equality

Finland and Canada largely share a common value base in the promotion of human rights, democracy and equality, and they have together advanced these issues especially on multilateral forums.

The position of the aboriginal communities is an important issue for Canada. The aboriginal peoples, that is, First Nations, Métis and Inuit, form the majority of the population in Northern Canada and represent 3.4 per cent of the country's entire population. Many improvements have taken place in the living conditions of the aboriginal communities recently, but Canada itself admits that there is still much to be done, particularly regarding social conditions and education. Land ownership issues and the use of natural resources are also causes for conflict.

Canada has not joined the ILO Convention 169 concerning the rights of indigenous peoples and voted against the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, adopted in 2007. However, Canada gave a statement of support on the Declaration in 2010. Finland aims to ratify the ILO Convention 169 during the 2011–2014 term of government. The Canadians are interested in the position of the Sámi people and Finland and Canada conduct regular dialogue on the position of minorities.

Objective:

- **To promote dialogue and cooperation with Canada on human rights questions, such as the improvement of the status and rights of indigenous peoples.**

5.5. Development policy

Canada is committed to attaining the UN's target level of 0.7 per cent of its GNI by 2015 as set out in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It estimates it will reach the target by 2019. In 2011, Canada's development assistance was about 0.33 per cent of the GNI. The aim is to maintain the assistance at the current level until 2014, and subsequently increase it in order to keep to the target schedule (0.7 per cent by 2019). ODA funding has been channeled to the following sectors: development aid, financial support, crisis and humanitarian assistance, and research.

Canada has halved the number of its development assistance recipient countries in the past decade. The cuts have affected Africa in particular. Ca-

nadians maintain that the intention is not to neglect Africa but to focus more actively on some countries. The Government is now preparing a new strategy for Africa. In recent years the focus has however shifted slightly from Africa towards South America and the Caribbean. The key priority is Haiti. Another central target of Canadian development cooperation in recent years has been Afghanistan. Its ODA funding has been a total of CAD 1.9 billion (about EUR 1.35 billion) in 2001–2010. Unlike other donors, Canada has discontinued its support to the Palestinian Territories through the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), referring to the risk of the funds falling into terrorist hands.

Canada has chaired the Food Aid Committee since 2010 and is currently leading the negotiations concerning a new Food Assistance Convention (FAC).

Objectives:

- To explore the prospect of development cooperation between Finland and Canada in certain geographical regions, such as the Caribbean, and to find out about possibilities of increasing co-operation with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), including humanitarian assistance;
- To strengthen the EU–Canada Strategic Partnership as a channel of development policy dialogue and influence; To enhance cooperation in themes related to development aid effectiveness, including donor country coordination and division of labor in partner countries;
- To seek closer cooperation in international development policy forums (the UN, development banks and OECD).

6. COMMERCIAL AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION BETWEEN FINLAND AND CANADA

Being a rich and developed economy, Canada offers diverse opportunities of cooperation for Finnish companies. The most promising commercial sectors are Arctic technology, energy, cleantech, forestry, nanotechnology, ICT-based services, mining and shipbuilding. Finnish companies are becoming more interested in doing business with Canadian companies: Canada rated high among the most interesting new markets in Finpro's survey of companies in the spring of 2011.

In bilateral trade, Finnish exports to Canada are on the increase. In 2010, the balance of trade showed a surplus of EUR 280 million: exports EUR 625 million (up by 37 per cent on the previous year), and imports EUR 345 million (up by 20 per cent on the previous year). The most important import and export products are machines, equipment and transport equipment as well as fuels and lubricants. Canada also exports several ores to Finland.

Companies' internationalization and export promotion are important objectives, pursued at the political level and fostered by the public authorities. A Finnish delegation led by the Minister of Economic Affairs visited Canada in February 2010. Innovation cooperation with the Province of Alberta was one of the outcomes of this visit.

Finnish companies face very few barriers to trade and investment in the Canadian market. Problems are mainly linked with Canada's high tariffs and complicated technical product regulations. For instance, the competitive capacity of the Finnish shipbuilding industry has suffered from Canada's high import duty on ships and vessels. Furthermore, import duties in certain motor vehicle categories have an adverse effect on Finnish export to Canada. Similarly, Canada's different technical product regulations and certification requirements have hampered for instance Finnish energy technology exports to Canada. In the CETA free trade negotiations the EU and Finland seek to eliminate these barriers to trade and investment in the Canadian market. The EU's intensified internal efforts to remove barriers encountered in third country markets (the so-called Market Access Strategy) also make it possible for the EU to intervene, in the event that a Finnish company encounters barriers in Canada. Issues relating to trade and investment barriers can be discussed during high-level meetings between Finland and Canada, as well.

Finnish companies' investment in Canada has traditionally exceeded Canadian companies' investment in Finland. Key sectors are forestry, the pulp and paper industry, chemical engineering and the IT sector. Canadian investment in Finland has been on the increase, especially in the mining sector. For example, in early 2011 Cameco Corp. made a EUR 45 million investment in the design and construction of a uranium extraction circuit for the Talvivaara Mining Company Plc in Finland. Other Canadian companies active in Finland include Agnico-Eagle Mines Limited (Kittilä gold mine), First Quantum Minerals (Kevitsa nickel-copper mine), and Bombardier, which has built a snow mobile production plant in Rovaniemi.

Objectives:

- To promote Finland's economic interests and Finnish businesses' unrestricted operation in Canada also via official contacts, and to be active both bilaterally and in the EU in removing barriers to trade and investment in the Canadian market;
- To profit from the Embassy of Ottawa's networks with the local authorities and the academic and business communities in the interest of Finnish businesses in order to identify and communicate opportunities for cooperation;
- To improve cooperation with different players in Canada – the Embassy, Finpro partner consultant and other consultant companies, chambers of commerce and honorary consuls – to intensify the activities promoting exports and internationalization based on the House of Finland concept;
- To take initiative in organizing effectively targeted exports promotion and internalization visits and events.

7. SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION COOPERATION

For Finnish universities, research institutes and companies it is of utmost importance to network with international partners and top experts. Canada invests heavily in research and development (R&D) and Finland is regarded as an interesting partner. Science, technology and innovation therefore form one of the most promising sectors for potential cooperation between the countries. In Canada, there is interest in cooperation at the federal as well as the provincial levels. For example, in early 2011, a delegation from the provinces of Alberta, New Brunswick and Yukon visited Finland to learn about the Finnish innovation system. Visits from other provinces are also being planned. Among the Finnish players, the Academy of Finland, VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland and the Finnish Funding Agency for Technology and Innovation (Tekes) have intensified their contacts in Canada.

A two-year project between Finland and the Province of Alberta will soon be launched. The aim is to initiate concrete innovation cooperation between Albertan and Finnish companies. The project will be carried out by the Province of Alberta (Alberta Innovates, Advanced Education and Technology Ministry of Alberta), VTT and Tekes. The project has attracted wide interest in other quarters in Finland, too.

Objectives:

- To make use of the networks of the Embassy of Finland in Ottawa with the local authorities as well as the academic and business communities;
- To enhance new contacts between Finnish and Canadian operators and promote mobility of researchers;
- To effectively identify and inform about opportunities of cooperation focusing on the great potential for research related to the Arctic and energy sector, materials research, nanoscience and wood processing technology. There is also interest in cooperation in health research;
- To make use of the opportunities opening up through the project started by the Finnish Meteorological Institute and Canada concerning Arctic weather and sea ice monitoring by means of satellite technology.

8. CLIMATE CHANGE, THE ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY

8.1. Climate issues

Canada has traditionally been a pioneer in international environmental policy matters; it has been particularly active in taking action against acid rain and ozone layer depletion. However, in the past few years, Canada has considerably changed its positions on climate change issues. In 2007, Canada abandoned its commitments to meet the targets of the Kyoto Protocol and, instead, announced an Action Plan called Turning the Corner. It is estimated that the Action Plan would produce only about half of the reductions set out originally in 2007. Canada has also announced that it will not take part in a possible phase II of the Kyoto Protocol. Canada has tied its policy to the USA's decisions and has not undertaken any binding measures to ambitiously limit its greenhouse gas emissions.

After the Copenhagen Climate Conference, Canada reduced its former target level of emissions, aligning them with those of the USA, which has not ratified the Kyoto Protocol. In practice this means a 17 per cent reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2020, compared to the 2005 level (that is, a 2.5 per cent increase to the 1990 level, while the Kyoto Protocol target level is a 5.2 per cent decrease). Canada does not have a national strategy which would help it attain the target level. However, even though decisions about binding action have not been made at the federal level, some provinces have set ambitious targets to cut emissions. Alberta, Quebec and British Columbia are levying a carbon dioxide tax. Furthermore, British Columbia and Quebec are planning an emissions trading system.

From the EU point of view, it is extremely important that Canada prepare a comprehensive and credible plan to reach its climate targets. More active measures would also give an important signal to emerging economies regarding Canada's willingness to mitigate climate change. In addition, the EU wants to encourage Canada to be a responsible energy producer, especially, as regards oil sand production. This can be fostered, for example, through intensified dialogue as well as R&D and European companies' investments in renewable energy. In multilateral climate funding issues Canada and the EU have held similar positions and this dialogue should be continued.

Objectives:

- To influence Canada in order to ensure that a binding and comprehensive international climate agreement can be concluded and to encourage it to strengthen its own efforts to fight climate change;
- To promote interaction and research cooperation in the energy sector, especially in areas like renewable energy, natural resources, climate change and the environment.

8.2. The environment

Finland's strong expertise in environmental issues is acknowledged in Canada. Key areas of interest in the cooperation between Finland and Canada include the protection of the Arctic environment and reduction of the adverse environmental effects of the oil sand industries. Approximately 95 per cent of Canada's oil reserves are in Alberta's oil sand deposits. The oil sand industry is a big polluter because oil sand extraction significantly contaminates the air, soil and water. Steps have been taken to limit the environmental damage caused by the process. Canada takes an interest in related environmental technology products and processes in which Finland has strong expertise. Kemira Water Solutions, Outotec and the University of Alberta have launched a research project in order to find solutions for hazardous wastewater management.

Objectives:

- To intensify cooperation promoting the introduction of technology solutions suited for the special conditions of the Arctic environment;
- To encourage Finnish companies to cooperate with Canadian actors in order to identify solutions that would reduce the environmental impact caused by the oil sands industries.

8.3. Energy

Canada has vast reserves of natural resources, of which oil, natural gas, minerals and metals and uranium are the most important. Despite its level of self-sufficiency, Canada is trying to limit the use of coal and petroleum in heat and electricity production. Interest in renewable energy is on the rise in Canada, while Finland already has considerable expertise, knowledge and technology in that area. Because of its availability, biomass has proved to be a worthwhile alternative in Canada, even if its share as an energy source

is still very modest. In the Province of Quebec, scores of bio-energy plant projects are underway. British Columbia is another forerunner in this area.

Canada is pursuing a decentralized energy production model and hence could benefit from Finnish heating and electricity solutions. Interest in district heating is also growing fast. For Finland, this opens up excellent prospects for commercial cooperation. The use of local raw wood can be increased by combining district heating with biomass energy. Power plants that produce electricity and heat in smaller cities and population centers, in particular, find this solution interesting and Finland has much experience in building them. Canada has not yet achieved sufficient know-how in this sector, which is why foreign partners are needed. Finnish companies could therefore succeed in Canada by providing comprehensive solutions, which include planning, the supply of facilities and hands-on training.

Thanks to Finland's good profile as a country with high technological expertise, the threshold to the Canadian market is low for Finnish companies. The Canadian Bioenergy Association CanBio and the Canadian District Energy Association have expressed their willingness to cooperate with Finland and to promote Finnish technology-based projects in Canada.

Objectives:

- **To support Finnish companies in their efforts to capitalize on the commercial opportunities in the energy sector, making use of Finland's well-known and positive image in Canada;**
- **To encourage Finnish companies to be active in seeking export and cooperation opportunities in the areas of renewable energy, decentralized energy production and district heating technology in Canada.**

9. COOPERATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND EDUCATION POLICY

9.1. Higher education

Higher education provides an important channel for increasing cooperation between Finland and Canada. The quality of higher education is high in both countries, and universities and colleges are already cooperating actively. It is crucial to further strengthen the partnerships between higher education institutions. The existing joint programs and cooperation structures should be used to enhance partnerships between higher education institutions and encourage mobility between students, teachers and researchers. Higher education institutions' own measures are critical in strengthening the strategic partnerships. Developing flexible solutions, such as opportunities for short-term exchange programs, is also important for increasing student mobility. Finland should also improve the entry services provided for foreign students in Finland.

One concrete example of such cooperation is the plan for a professor exchange program between Finland and the Province of Alberta, involving the University of Helsinki and the Aalto University in Finland and the University of Alberta in Edmonton and the University of Calgary in Canada. The Centre for International Mobility CIMO and the Fulbright Center also play an important role. Mobility is supported, for example, through the North2North program (a network of cooperation between higher education institutions in the Arctic). Cooperation is also funded via the EU–Canada program, about which information is available through CIMO.

Finland and Canada are starting negotiations on a youth mobility agreement, which is expected to significantly increase future student and youth exchanges between our two countries in the field of higher education as well as more broadly.

Objectives:

- To promote partnerships between Finnish and Canadian higher education institutions and to develop measures to support them;
- To try to increase Canadian students' mobility to Finland, also by means of short exchange programs and improved entry services;
- To ensure that the youth mobility agreement between our countries will soon be concluded and enforced.

9.2. Basic education and secondary education

Both Finnish and Canadian students have attained excellent results in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey, although partly for very different reasons. The Finnish basic education system is founded on a rather uniform demographic structure, while pupils in Canada come from very diverse ethnic backgrounds. Then again, other features are shared by the countries, such as sparse population, considerable distances and bilingualism. Finland and Canada have repeatedly been among the best OECD countries in literacy, mathematics and natural sciences ratings.

Despite its own excellent PISA performance, the Canadians have noted Finland's exceptional success and wish to learn more about the Finnish education system. From Finland's point of view partnerships with Canada offer interesting opportunities, as Canada has managed very well in its education policy, including resolving the challenges arising from its multicultural population and heterogeneous student backgrounds. In recent years, several schools, especially from the capital city area, have arranged visits to Canada mainly to learn from their experiences of multiculturalism.

Vocational education and training has become increasingly appealing among students in Finland and is now regarded as an option equal to general secondary education. In Canada, vocational education has not gained an equally distinct profile and the drop-out rate in secondary education is high. The high standard and close links to working life that characterize the Finnish system have attracted attention in Canada.

In cooperation with the Finnish National Board of Education and the Alberta Teacher's Association, the Centre for International Mobility (CIMO) has launched a teacher and expert partnership between the Province of Alberta and Finland. The project involves the exchange of principals and teachers from secondary level education. The participants represent both general and vocational education.

Objectives:

- To capitalize on the interest in Finnish basic and secondary level education so as to raise Finland's profile in Canada;
- To promote cooperation that is linked with research and the exchange of information and experiences on the challenges arising from multiculturalism in training and education;

- To conventionalize the network of cooperation between Alberta and Finland, and to extend the model to other Canadian provinces;
- To explore possibilities for increasing student mobility between Canada and Finland.

10. JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

10.1. Mobility of persons and goods

Canada and the USA have launched talks on the North American Security Perimeter. The goal is to harmonize the regulations applying to third country nationals' entry and immigration, the import of goods and cross-border movement in order to facilitate checks at the US–Canada border. However, this could lead to the introduction of a system similar to the Electronic System for Travel Authorization, used in the United States, and stricter border checks at Canadian harbors and airports, which would affect Finnish citizens, too.

For the moment, EU citizens who are nationals of the Czech Republic, Romania and Bulgaria need a visa to enter Canada. The EU considers that the visa requirement places these Member States in an unequal position and that the visa exemption should apply to all EU countries. Canada's immigration legislation has recently been revised and unfounded applications for refugee status can now be processed efficiently, which raises hope that the visa requirement may also be soon removed.

Objectives:

- To act in the EU to ensure that the planned North American Security Perimeter, between Canada and the USA, will not bring about unnecessary inconveniences for travel and the export of goods to Canada;
- To advocate the implementation of the EU's position, according to which Canada should apply visa exemption to all EU citizens without delay;
- To seek to ensure that the amended Agreement between the EU and Canada on the processing of Advance Passenger Information and Passenger Name Record Data (PNR) will be legally binding and will guarantee passengers' legal protection.

10.2 Immigration

Canada is known as one of the main destinations for immigrants, as well as for its long-term commitment to help refugees and persons in need of humanitarian assistance. For decades, Canada has pursued a consistent immigration policy, which encourages immigration and responds to the needs of the national economy. Canada receives about 250 000 immigrants an-

nually. The primary goal of the Canadian immigration system is to attract skilled labor. The largest category of immigrants is the so-called Economic Class, comprising 65 percent of the total number of immigrants. Labor immigration continues to increase.

Canada has, for the main part, been extremely successful in its immigration policy. Immigrants' children have access to good education and immigrants participate actively in political decision-making. In addition, Canada is also fully committed to the principle of equality. Immigration is generally considered to benefit the country's economy. All of the main political parties support multiculturalism and immigration, and also take different minority groups into account in their activities.

European countries could particularly pay attention to Canada's points-based labor immigration system, when considering ways to improve their own immigration systems. Also, Canada's proactive integration policies might provide useful examples of how to successfully combine public and private measures. It is also worth noting that, although Canada is officially a multicultural country, the immigrants' Canadian identity and the importance of citizenship are also stressed.

Finland has much to learn from Canada's immigration system. Finland can draw on the Canadian immigration policy experiences and use them as a foundation for discussion on the various aspects of immigration.

Objective:

- **To reinforce cooperation that aims at the exchange of information and experiences in issues related to immigration, including labor immigration, reception of asylum-seekers and the integration of immigrants.**

11. PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs' public diplomacy seeks to strengthen a positive image of Finland in Canada and to support the operational goals of the Finnish Embassy in Canada. Finland's key message is to portray Finland as a modern Nordic information and knowledge-oriented society and as a European country welcoming cooperation with Canada.

Promoting a topical picture of Finland in Canada is made easier by the fact that Finland is well known in Canada and people's concepts about it are generally fairly accurate: Canadians are aware that the level of education and technological expertise are high in Finland; Finland is a prosperous Nordic welfare state, not to mention that it is the home of excellent ice-hockey players. A large community of people with Finnish origin contributes to Finland being well known: most people know at least one Canadian-Finn.

In Canada, Finnish public diplomacy is carried out mainly through media exposure, supported by regular visits by reporters to Finland, and through the Massey College Journalism Fellowships, which take a group of senior journalists to Finland every year. Other public diplomacy tools are online communications, culture and visits by experts, which have recently focused on themes such as innovation policy and Finnish expertise in bioenergy. The importance of the cultural and creative industries' cooperation and business is on the rise. The Embassy, with its contacts, could have a significant role in supporting cultural export projects.

The Embassy of Finland in Ottawa also organizes cultural events in cooperation with other EU countries and as a part of Nordic and Nordic-Baltic cooperation. The mission also supports events by other organizers, who showcase various Finnish cultural activities. The focus has been on emerging areas in particular, such as video, circus and photographic arts. Furthermore, Finnish films have gained much exposure in Canada in various forums, such as the Toronto International Film Festival and the HotDocs documentary festival. Finland has also taken part in the EU film festival, which annually tours in Toronto, Ottawa and Vancouver. In the future, it would be important to identify how the Finnish-Canadian Grand Festival could be used in public diplomacy.

Objectives:

- To reinforce the brand image of Finland in Canada as an interesting and modern European state;
- To exert influence through public diplomacy specifically to attain the commercial-economic and innovation cooperation objectives outlined in this Action Plan.

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