Relations EU/Canada

1996/2248(COS) - 28/02/1996 - Non-legislative basic document

OBJECTIVE: the aim of this communication is to assess the state of EU-Canada relations and to present proposals aimed at strengthening those relations in the light of the transatlantic partnership forged between the EU and the USA. SUBSTANCE: In its communication, the Commission makes a series of proposals aimed at giving a new direction to EU-Canada relations and which could be the subject of a policy declaration by the two parties and be accompanied by a plan of action to be adopted at the next EU-Canada Summit. Essentially, the Commission's proposals relate to the following: - foreign and security policy: in this area only matters of common interest would be dealt with (e.g. respect for human rights in the former USSR, strengthening of dialogue with the UN, development of the structures that safeguard the security of the continent, in particular NATO and OSCE); - trade, cooperation and investment: In the multilateral context, the two parties have committed themselves to supporting the WTO and an increasingly multilateral world trading system. Certain subjects of common interest could be addressed jointly: * working together for the completion of unfinished WTO business (in particular on public procurement), * conclusion of a multilateral investment agreement in the OECD, * addressing together in international fora the new issues on the trade policy agenda (trade, investment, the environment, competition and social issues). In the bilateral context, the bulk of the discussions must focus on clarifying the situation as regards the settlement of disputes. The EU and Canada must in particular commit themselves to developing more healthy patterns of bilateral trade, investment and technology transfer. A number of steps need to be taken to support this process, including: * more effective use of existing mechanisms to provide 'early warning' of trade and investment disputes, * a joint study on ways of facilitating trade in goods and services and reducing or eliminating tariff and non-tariff barriers, * development of regulatory cooperation and early completion of MRA negotiations, * joint contribution to a global navigation satellite system, * promotion of cooperation in areas of common interest in the employment and social policy fields, * ongoing negotiations on competition policy, mutual assistance on customs matters and veterinary equivalency. - other areas of cooperation, foremost amongst which are: science and technology, telecommunications, development of the Information Society, the environment, energy, industrial cooperation, statistics, combating the diversion of drugs precursor chemicals and fisheries (including the reopening of Canadian ports to EU vessels in accordance with the 1992 fisheries agreement). - justice and home affairs: in this field, the Commission anticipates increased cooperation in the fight against organized crime and drugs, as well as on matters relating to immigration and the right of asylum (including the smuggling of illegal immigrants). - strengthening of business links: the Commission advocates a strengthening of links between the two parties' citizens and business communities, in particular by means of stepping up cooperation activities, developing joint programmes in the context of the Information Society, discussions on regional development policies, increased contact between citizens, studying each other's systems of government and cooperation on the mutual recognition of university studies and degrees.