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## Canada as a Trading Partner and Ally of Europe – Current Problems and Challenges in Transatlantic Relations

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**CANADA AS A TRADING PARTNER AND ALLY OF  
EUROPE: CURRENT PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES IN  
TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS**

**Abstract**

Canada's link to Europe has always been very strong. It is based on historical developments such as demographics as well as cultural and language ties. Most events on the Old Continent had implications in Canada as Europe was a part of Canadian political space. Canada was among the initiators and founding countries of North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in 1949 and Canadian troops were present in Western Germany till the end of the Cold War. Since 1945 Europe has become progressively more institutionalized, and the government in Ottawa deals directly with the major European multilateral organizations instead of particular countries. The aim of the article is to analyse the main problems in the relations between Canada and Europe / European Union and to present the crucial moments and the most important fields of cooperation since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In the article a lot of attention is paid to several steps and initiatives taken by Ottawa since the beginning of the crisis in Ukraine. As more than 1 million people of Ukrainian roots live in Canada, the territorial sovereignty and freedom of Ukraine is fundamental not only for international security in Ottawa's understanding, but for other reasons, including political and humanitarian, as well.

**Résumé**

Le lien entre le Canada et l'Europe a toujours été très fort. Il est basé sur les développements historiques et démographiques ainsi que sur les liens culturels et linguistiques. La plupart des événements sur le Vieux Continent ont eu des répercussions au Canada vu que l'Europe était une partie de l'espace politique canadien. Le Canada a été parmi les initiateurs et les pays fondateurs de l'Organisation du Traité de l'Atlantique Nord (OTAN) en 1949 et les troupes canadiennes ont été présentes en Allemagne de l'Ouest jusqu'à la fin de la guerre froide. Depuis 1945, l'Europe est devenue de plus en plus institutionnalisée et le

gouvernement d'Ottawa s'adresse directement aux grandes organisations multilatérales européennes à la place des pays en question. Le but de l'article est d'analyser les principaux problèmes dans les relations entre le Canada et l'Europe / l'Union européenne et de présenter les moments cruciaux et les domaines les plus importants de la coopération depuis le début du XXI<sup>e</sup> siècle. Dans l'article, on accorde beaucoup d'attention à des mesures et initiatives prises par Ottawa depuis le début de la crise en Ukraine. Comme plus d'un million de personnes d'origine ukrainienne vivent au Canada, la souveraineté territoriale et la liberté de l'Ukraine sont fondamentales non seulement pour la sécurité internationale dans la compréhension d'Ottawa, mais aussi pour d'autres raisons, aussi bien politiques qu'humanitaires.

Canada's link to Europe is based on historical developments including demographics, as well as cultural and language ties. In colonial times, the territory of present-day Canada was settled by the Europeans – first the French, then the British. After 1763, that land became a part of the British Empire. Today, though an independent state, Canada still has exceptionally close relations with the United Kingdom due to Canada's status as a Commonwealth nation and its recognition of a common head of state. Historically, most events in Europe had implications for Canada as Europe constituted part of Canadian political space. Canada's commitment to the Old Continent predates the formation of NATO in 1949, but was confirmed by Canadian participation in the two world wars and assistance in rebuilding the societies and economies of Europe after the World War II. In fact, Canadian troops were present in Western Germany until the end of the Cold War. Prior the World War II, the Canadian link to Europe consisted mainly of bilateral relations with particular countries. However, since 1945, Europe has become progressively more institutionalized, and the government in Ottawa has more often dealt directly with the major European multilateral organizations.

The aim of this article is to characterize and analyse the relations between Canada and Europe / the European Union since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The complicated situation in Eastern Europe, in regard to the Ukrainian crisis and the conclusion of negotiations on the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) and the Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) by Canadian and EU leaders, have made recent times exceptionally challenging for transatlantic relations and have deeply engaged Ottawa in European matters.

## CANADA AND EUROPE – HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

In 1976, the European Economic Community (EEC) and Canada signed a Framework Agreement for Commercial and Economic Cooperation, the first formal agreement of its kind between the EEC and an industrialized third country. The goal of the agreement was to strengthen relations and contribute to international economic cooperation (“Framework Agreement for Commercial and Economic Cooperation”). The same year the Delegation of the European Commission to Canada was opened in Ottawa. In 1990, Canadian leaders and their European partners adopted a Declaration on Transatlantic Relations, extending the scope of their contacts and establishing regular meetings at the Summit (with the Prime Minister of Canada and the President of the European Council and the President of the Commission), and Ministerial level. The most important common goal was to cooperate:

to support democracy, the rule of law, and respect for human rights and individual liberty; to safeguard peace and promote international security, especially by cooperating with other nations of the world against aggression and coercion and other forms of violence by strengthening the role of the United Nations and other international organizations (...), pursue policies aimed at achieving a sound world economy marked by sustained economic growth with low inflation, a high level of employment (...), to promote market principles, reject protectionism and expand, strengthen and further open the multilateral trading system (“Declaration on Transatlantic Relations”).

The event of a great importance was signing Joint Political Declaration on EU-Canada Relations at the Ottawa Summit in 1996, whereby a Joint Action Plan identifying supplementary particular areas for cooperation was adopted. In that document, collaboration on the former Yugoslavia and common assistance initiatives in support of the new democracies in Central and Eastern Europe were declared. Additionally, both parties expressed criticism of the United States policy towards Cuba, as Washington had imposed an economic embargo on Cuba: “In addition to the common approach between the European Union and Canada in combating secondary embargoes, we will work together under the Action Plan in order to avoid unilateralism” (“Joint Political Declaration”). It was the first time when the leaders of Canada and the European Union jointly opposed American unilateralism.

At the Ottawa Summit in December 2000, at the time of the implementation of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), now named the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), Canada supported the activities of the EU for the common defence and expressed its willingness to participate in the EU crisis management missions. The leading role of NATO in mutual defence was

confirmed and the development of the relationship between the two organizations was announced (“EU-Canada Summit, Ottawa, 2000”).

## **NEW CHALLENGES IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM**

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 prompted the collective condemnation of Canada and the EU. In the joint statement signed at the EU-Canada Summit in Ottawa in December 2001, the undersigned declared their determination “to work even more closely together in the fight against terrorism in all its aspects, in close contact with the United States and in support of multilateral efforts” (“EU-Canada Summit, Ottawa, 2001”).

As Canada was extremely critical of American unilateralism in the conflict in Iraq, and the transatlantic rift between Washington and so called “Old Europe” (Germany and France) was a fact, the relations between the EU and Canada became closer. At the Ottawa summit in 2004, the European and Canadian leaders agreed to new parameters for the relationship. The Partnership Agenda, which highlighted respect for multilateralism, as well as historical and cultural ties as the foundations of the partnership, committed the leaders to strengthening the contacts at the political level in order to:

- advance international security and effective multilateralism
- further global economic prosperity
- deepen cooperation on justice and home affairs
- address global and regional challenges
- foster closer links between the people of the EU and Canada (“EU-Canada Partnership Agenda”).

The following years brought other declarations specifying the program of cooperation. In 2005, an agreement establishing a framework for Canada’s participation in the EU crisis management operations was signed. Since then, Canada has been a regular contributor to the EU’s CSDP/ESDP missions: EU Police Missions in Afghanistan (EUPOL Afghanistan – Canadian troops left Afghanistan in March 2014), in the Palestinian Territories (EUPOL COPPS – Canadian participation since August 2008) and in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUPM – the mission ended in June 2012), EU Election Observer Missions (EOMs) most recently in Pakistan in 2013, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the EU Rule of Law Mission (EULEX) in Kosovo, together with, inter alia, the United States. Canada has been asked to participate in some new missions, as well – in the Horn of Africa, Niger, South Sudan and EU Training Mission in Mali (“EU-Canada Relations”). The 2008 EU-Canada Summit declaration emphasized that cooperation in civilian and military crisis management is a key part of developing mutual approaches to regional issues.

That agreement mandated regular consultations between the EU Institutions and Canadian crisis management unit – the Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force (START).

## **PROBLEMATIC ISSUES IN THE EU-CANADA RELATIONS**

### **Kyoto Protocol**

In 1997, at the Kyoto meeting, Jean Chrétien, the Liberal Party Prime Minister, negotiated an obligation to reduce Canada's annual emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG) by 6% below their 1990 levels. The goal was to be achieved by 2008-2012. From the very beginning, it was obvious that Canada had set itself a difficult task. When the United States abandoned Kyoto in 2001, Canada became the only nation in the Americas considering the adoption of a binding emissions-reduction obligation. Prime Minister Chrétien officially ratified the Kyoto Accord in December 2002. In two years, emissions of GHG like carbon dioxide, commonly considered as a cause of global warming, were 27% above 1990 levels, instead of 6% below. As the European Union has always been a strong enthusiast of the Kyoto Protocol, the relations with Canada became cooler and Ottawa cancelled EU-Canada Tampere Summit in 2006. In 2007, the Conservative Minister of the Environment, John Baird said that Kyoto target on greenhouse gases was unreachable (Palmer). And, on December 13, 2011 the Environment Minister of Conservative government, Peter Kent announced Canada's withdrawal from the Kyoto Protocol blaming his Liberal predecessors for not making attempts to reduce the pollution of the environment. He stressed there would be no success in that matter without India and China (responsible for the highest GHG emission rates) included in the Kyoto Protocol.

### **The Arctic**

Another problematic question to the EU-Canadian relations is the Arctic. There is an ongoing tension over the EU ban on the import of seal products (announced in 2009). This was thought to be a motivating factor in Ottawa's efforts to block the EU's attempts to join the Arctic Council as a permanent observer. At the 2013 Ministerial Meeting in Kiruna, Sweden, the EU requested observer status but it was not granted. On May 15, 2013, after the beginning of Canada's chairmanship in the Arctic Council, *The Globe and Mail*, reported:

It was evident that Canada blocked admission of the European Union over its ban on imports of seal meat and fur. Ms. Aglukkaq makes no secret of the fact that she regards the EU ban as an offensive bit of unfair interference by arrogant southerners in the lifestyle of her people, calling it a “huge, huge issue” (Koring).<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, Canada is against granting non-Arctic states permanent observer status in the Arctic Council. Ottawa is not willing to consider the opinions of so many players.

However, the European leaders are hoping to gain observer status soon as the EU-Canadian agreement which allow the Inuit to resume the exportation of seal products was announced on October 10, 2014. It is believed that the deal will “break the ice” in transatlantic relations.

## NEGOTIATING CETA

### The launch of negotiations

One of the most crucial moments in the relations between Canada and the European Union came when a declaration marking the conclusion of negotiations on the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) was signed on September 26, 2014.

The idea of closer economic partnership and the liberalization of the bilateral trade had appeared in 2007. The Canada Europe Roundtable for Business (CERT), founded in 1999, has been a principal backer for a free trade agreement and is supported by more than 100 Canadian and European chief executives (“Declaration in Support”). CERT is co-chaired by former Canadian trade minister Roy MacLaren, and Bill Emmott, former editor of *The Economist*. As a prelude, Canada signed a free trade agreement with the smaller European Free Trade Association (EFTA – Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Lichtenstein) in Davos, in 2008. The agreement is aimed at eliminating all tariffs on goods.

At the EU-Canada Summit on May 6, 2009 in Prague, the leaders of the European Union and Canada “announced the launch of negotiations towards a comprehensive economic and trade agreement” (“EU-Canada Summit Declaration”). In October 2011 nine official rounds of negotiations were completed, with significant progress made in all sectors. Negotiations moved into a more intensive and focused phase. Both sides wanted a

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<sup>1</sup> Leona Aglukkaq, the chair of the Arctic Council, then the Conservative Health Minister, Nunavut’s sole MP, the Environment Minister since July 15, 2013.

comprehensive agreement, with a highest degree of liberalization of trade in goods and services, that goes far beyond the World Trade Organisation commitments. In 2010, Finn Laursen forecast that if the negotiations “should fail, there is not only the danger that Canada will become more and more dependent on trade within NAFTA but it will increasingly turn its attention to East Asia and other emerging economies” (236).

### **Some statistics**

To aid in understanding the present state of EU-Canadian trade relations, it is useful to examine certain statistics:

- In 2013, Canada was the EU’s 12th most important trading partner, accounting for 1.7% of the EU’s total external trade (to compare – the U.S. is on the top with 14.2%). The EU was Canada’s “number two” most important trading partner, after the U.S., with 9.8% of total external trade of Canada in the same year.
- The value of bilateral trade in goods between the EU and Canada was €58.8 billion in 2013. What dominates in the EU’s exports of goods to Canada and constitute an important part of the EU’s imports of goods from Canada are machinery, transport equipment and chemicals.
- The value of bilateral trade in services between the two partners amounted to €26.9 billion in 2012. Examples of often traded services between Canada and the EU are transportation, travel, insurance and communication.
- The investment relationship is very important as well. In 2011, European investors held investments worth more than €258 billion in Canada while Canadian direct investment stocks in the EU amounted to almost €142.6 billion (“Countries and regions: Canada”).

### **Expected effects of CETA**

The agreement on the key elements of CETA was reached on October 18, 2013. The conclusion of the negotiations was announced, and the agreement was officially presented on September 25, 2014 by Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, the President of European Commission Jose Manuel Barroso and the President of European Council Herman Van Rompuy during the EU-Canada Summit at the Royal York Hotel in Toronto. The next day the entire text of CETA was published on the EU’s official website.

In the declaration by the President of the European Commission and the Prime Minister of Canada one can read that the successful conclusion of



negotiations for CETA, “a 21st century, gold-standard agreement”, is the beginning of “a new era in EU-Canada relations” (“Declaration by the President”). This is the first agreement that the European Union signed with a G-7 country. Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper called the trade agreement “an historic win for Canada.” On his official website one can read:

The elimination of approximately 98 per cent of all EU tariff lines on the first day of when the Agreement comes into force will translate into increased profits and market opportunities for Canadian businesses of all sizes, in every part of the country. (...) The Agreement will provide Canada with preferential market access to the European Union’s more than 500 million consumers. Canadian workers in every region of the country – including in sectors such as fish and seafood; chemicals and plastics; metal and mineral products; technology; forestry and value-added wood products; automotive; advanced manufacturing; and agriculture and agri-food – stand to benefit significantly from increased access to this lucrative 28 country market which currently generates \$17 trillion in annual economic activity (“Canada reaches historic trade agreement”).

CETA is “expected to increase two-way bilateral trade in goods and services by 23% or €26 billion, fostering growth and employment on both sides of the Atlantic” (“Declaration by the President”).

### **Problematic issues**

However, there have been some controversies since the beginning of the CETA negotiations which delayed the conclusion of the agreement. Generally speaking, agriculture has been a challenging and problematic area, especially regarding Canada’s access to the European markets for beef and pork, and Europe’s access to Canadian markets for cheese. The EU expected the import of Canadian meat, but wanted only hormone-free which would mean the higher costs of the production. Further, the deal allows European cheese producers to more than double their shipments into Canada. The dairy industry, concentrated in Quebec and Ontario, had a near-monopoly on cheese sales (more than 90%). Thus, Canadian meat producers and the dairy farmers were in opposition (Iverson).

With regard to another trade sector, some provinces served notice they would seek compensation for changes to patent rules on brand-name pharmaceuticals that would delay the introduction of less expensive generic versions by up to two years. Prime Minister Harper promised that the government would provide compensation for the cheese producers and Canadian health care sector (Fekete).

Additional concerns and criticism appeared in Canadian provinces during CETA negotiations. There was a threat that “(...) the Canada-EU agreement will have far greater impacts on provincial sovereignty, as well as on policy flexibility at all levels, including municipally.” (Trew) There are many questions in public debates about how the pact will change Canadians’ lives in the future which remain unanswered. A good example can be found in an article by Yves Engler who argues that CETA gives multinational corporations much power and the government did not “consult the people about their priorities in trade agreements.” (Engler) This is probably the consequence of a lack of transparency, which have undermined CETA project. The Canadian government does its best to reduce criticism towards CETA by disseminating informational brochures and countering myths about CETA on a dedicated website. Both the brochures and the website outline the benefits of the deal for Canadian citizens, business and provinces (“Canada-European Union”). The agreement is expected to come into force in 2016, after translation of CETA text into all EU languages and ratification by 28 EU members and all Canadian provinces (“EU-Canada Comprehensive and Economic Trade Agreement”).

## **CETA BENEFITS**

Undoubtedly there are many CETA benefits for both sides. Canada is among the most advanced non-European partners with which the EU has ever negotiated a trade agreement. With CETA, Canada will be the only G-7 country and one of the few developed countries in the world to have preferential access to the world’s two largest markets, the EU and the United States – comprising more than 800 million of the world’s most affluent consumers. For the EU, Canada – being “a like-minded partner” with a sizeable market and its natural resources – is a good destination for European investments (“EU-Canada Comprehensive and Economic Trade Agreement (CETA)”). This country has economic stability with GDP of \$1,788 billion in 2014 (“Report for Selected Countries”) which gives 11<sup>th</sup> place in the world (“World Development Indicators”).

In October 2013 the most influential American news sources, after the Associated Press, informed that: “Harper has said that a free trade deal between his country and the European Union could help the EU establish a beachhead as they embark on separate free trade talks with the U.S. If the U.S.-EU trade deal is reached, it could be the world’s largest free trade pact.” (“Europe hopes to conclude”) CETA is a precursor for another major trade deal – the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), which is currently being negotiated between the European Union and the United States. Trade negotiations with the U.S. are in an early stage but the fact of the CETA

talks have concluded will probably accelerate their progress. Although Steve Verheul, Canada's Chief Negotiator for CETA, says that TTIP negotiations will be more difficult regarding the huge size of American economy, and its potential impact on Europe's industry and agriculture.<sup>2</sup> As Maya Rostowska from the Polish Institute of International Affairs observes, CETA can be a good lesson for TTIP, in both positive and negative meanings (Rostowska 6). It is also suggested for Brussels to "pursue the CETA strategy of including « hooks » [that will allow the two transatlantic deals to be linked – M.M-K] in its other trade agreements with North America." (Brudzińska and Rostowska 2) For Canada, the agreement gives an alternative and a hope that it can diversify its trade away from the United States.

## **CANADA-EU STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT**

In 2014, another agreement was struck which would strengthen bilateral relations between Canada and the European Union. On September 8, 2014, John Baird, the Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Catherine Ashton, the Vice-President of the European Commission, announced the end of the negotiations on the Canada-EU Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA). In the Joint Statement by Canada and the European Union one can read that the agreement

outlines our many shared and long-standing values, and the objectives which we are working towards together – such as freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law, international peace and security and effective multilateralism. It consolidates our cooperation on energy, sustainable development and the environment, and opens new opportunities on research and innovation ("Joint Statement by Canada and the European Union").

The SPA is a background for stronger future relations and cooperation between Canada and EU members at the bilateral and multilateral levels. As European Council President Van Rompuy indicated, closer collaboration would be significant and beneficial in facing the pressing challenges, including the situation in Ukraine.

## **CANADA'S SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE**

It is a difficult task to analyse in detail all the steps and initiatives which Ottawa has taken since the beginning of the crisis in Ukraine. Canada is

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<sup>2</sup> Steve Verheul gave a public lecture at the Polish Institute of International Affairs, in Warsaw, Poland on January 27, 2014 (Rostowska, "Umowa handlowa").

deeply engaged in supporting Ukraine to restore political and economic stability and to implement democratic reforms. The Canadian government condemned aggressive Russian policy and the illegal military occupation of Crimea. As more than 1 million people of Ukrainian roots live in Canada, the territorial sovereignty and freedom of Ukraine is fundamental not only for international security in Ottawa's understanding, but for other reasons, including political and humanitarian, as well.

### **Sanctions**

After Russia was isolated politically by its expulsion from the G-8 (the G-7 Summit took place in Brussels in June 2014 instead of the G-8 Summit in Sochi), other reactions to the situation in Ukraine have included the imposition of economic sanctions and travel bans against Russian and Ukrainian individuals responsible for the ongoing crisis. In spring and summer 2014, Canada, in close coordination with partners in the United States and Europe, introduced economic sanctions against a broad range of entities of various Russian sectors such as arms, energy and finance (Russian banks). New export restrictions on technologies used in Russia's oil exploration and extractive sector were announced on December 19, 2014. All those measures caused economic instability in Russia, including high interest rates and a sharp drop in the value of the rouble, giving the Western leaders hope that the Russians soon would demand a shift in foreign policy of the Kremlin. As Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs, John Baird said:

Russians are paying for their leader's reckless aggression (...) The rouble's dive should be enough to give President Putin and his backers pause. If he wants to turn his economy around, he must pull out of Ukraine and he must return Crimea, and he must respect the international order that makes us a family of nations (qtd. in Galloway).

### **Canada's commitment to NATO**

Facing the crisis in Ukraine, Ottawa is providing reassurance to NATO members in Central and Eastern Europe by deploying Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) units and staff to promote security and stability in that region. After Russia's aggression against Ukraine Canada suspended all planned actions together with the Russian military. Twenty Canadian operational planners have been sent to NATO's Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe in Belgium to plan functions and monitor events in Eastern Europe. In May

2014, Canada deployed six CF-18 Hornet fighter aircraft together with 200 support staff to Campia Turzii, Romania to conduct multinational training exercises as part of Canada's commitment to its NATO Allies ("Canada supports NATO"). In the same month, 50 Canadian soldiers were sent to Poland to conduct training together with the American and Polish allies and, in June, 125 Canadian soldiers participated in Saber Strike 2014, an exercise led by the U.S. in Poland and the Baltic Republics. In October 2014, HMCS *Toronto* joined Reassurance NATO Operation to conduct training exercises and force integration activities in the Eastern Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea region. Of great importance is the fact that Canada is providing \$1 million to the NATO Trust Funds to support Ukraine in modernizing its armed forces. What is more, the NATO Centres of Excellence: Cyber Security, Energy Security and Strategic Communications were provided with \$3 million (\$1 million for each) from Canada to help deter Russian operations in Eastern Europe ("NATO security initiatives").

### **Canada's direct support for Ukraine**

During the first official visit to Canada of Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko, on September 17, 2014, the agreement on the provision of Canada's \$200 million loan to Ukraine to promote economic and financial reforms was reached. Additionally, then Prime Minister Harper declared \$3 million to support international partners in providing medical attention, food, safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene, shelter, emergency child protection, and emergency response and preparedness to help the Ukrainians living in areas affected by violence ("PM welcomes successful visit"). It is worth mentioning that in July 2014, Minister of International Trade Ed Fast announced \$19.6 million in Canadian support for a seven-year project Horticultural Business Development to train horticultural farmers to improve agricultural practices and help to develop Ukraine's agricultural sector ("Minister Fast").

Beyond its actions within NATO, Canada provides military assistance to support the Ukrainian Armed Forces. In August 2014, non-lethal military supplies were sent to Ukraine, such as: helmets, ballistic eyewear, protective vests, first aid kits, tents and sleeping bags. In November 2014, Canada donated further military gear which included tactical communications systems, ordnance-disposal equipment, tactical medical kits as well as winter coats and boots. On December 8, 2014, during his official visit in Kiev, the Canadian Minister of National Defence Rob Nicholson, announced that Canada would send soldiers to Ukraine to train the military police there (Chase).

## Canada's cooperation with Poland

Due to the country's geopolitical location, the situation in Ukraine is very important for Poland and its security. Facing the crisis in Ukraine Canada and Poland began to cooperate closely and the good bilateral relations became even better. In 2014, the highest Canadian officials visited Poland: Prime Minister Stephen Harper in June, Governor General David Lloyd Johnston in October, Minister of Foreign Affairs John Baird in April and Minister of National Defence Rob Nicholson in December. Most of the official statements during those visits concerned the situation in Ukraine and the perspectives of Polish-Canadian cooperation towards the events in the region ("Governor General's first official visit to Poland"). In this context, the fact of great importance is the Canada-Poland Statement of Principles for Coordinated Engagement on Ukraine, signed by John Baird and his Polish counterpart, Radosław Sikorski, on April 24, 2014. This agreement is to guide cooperation in Canadian and Polish efforts to support democracy, human rights, economic growth and the rule of law in Ukraine. Moreover, Baird declared that Canada would contribute \$9.2 million to joint Canadian and Polish projects that strengthen democratic development in Ukraine such as the Poland-Canada Democracy Support Program for Ukraine for the years 2014-2017 which will work with Solidarity Fund, and Support for Grassroots Democracy project of the European Endowment for Democracy for the years 2014-2019. At the press conference in Warsaw Baird stressed that "Canada and Poland stand shoulder to shoulder in the face of Russia's cynical aggression" and emphasized the importance of the partnership with Poland "on a coordinated approach in support of Ukraine's future as a sovereign, unified and prosperous European state, free of Russian interference and threats." ("Canada and Poland") After a call for NATO to establish a greater presence in Eastern Europe by the Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk during the meeting with Stephen Harper on June 4, 2014, the Canadian Prime Minister announced "the increased military cooperation between Poland and Canada", which meant his country's plans to send more soldiers to that region which would be executed e.g. in Saber Strike 2014 joint exercise in June ("PM delivers remarks").

It is clear that Canada is going to intensify its actions if the Kremlin would not change its aggressive policy. As Stephen Harper stated in an opinion-editorial, entitled "Our duty is to stand firm in the face of Russian aggression," published in *The Globe and Mail* on July 25:

Russia's aggressive militarism and expansionism are a threat to more than just Ukraine; they are a threat to Europe, to the rule of law and to the values that bind Western nations. Canada will not stand idly by in the face of this threat. (Harper)

## CONCLUSION

Having such a powerful neighbour as the United States, Canadian leaders see that the cooperation with the European Union provides an alternative for the Canadian economy and trade. Supporting NATO measures regarding the crisis in Ukraine seems to be a kind of continuation of Canada's traditional peacekeeping policy. On the other hand, through showing respect for multilateralism and the principles of international law, as well as by having its economic stability, Canada impresses many European leaders as an attractive trading partner and trustworthy ally.

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