



renew europe.

Strasbourg, 14 September 2026

M. Maroš Šefčovič
Commissioner for Trade
& Economic Security
Rue de Loi 200
1049 Brussels

Dear Commissioner Šefčovič,

Canada is rethinking its place in the world. The United States has chosen confrontation with Canada. Europe should respond with an embrace.

Prime Minister Mark Carney has made clear that Canada must diversify its economic and strategic relationships. This presents the European Union with an exceptional opportunity to deepen our partnership with one of our closest democratic allies.

Renew Europe welcomes the progress already achieved. CETA has helped increase trade in goods and services between the EU and Canada to approximately €130 billion in 2025, around 80 per cent more than in 2016. Canada also participates in Horizon Europe, has concluded a Security and Defence Partnership with the EU and has become the first non European country to participate in SAFE. Negotiations towards a Digital Trade Agreement provide further momentum.

Europe must now match Canada's ambition.

First, the Commission should work with the Council and the remaining member states to secure the full ratification of CETA. Almost a decade after the agreement was signed, its ratification remains incomplete in ten member states. This continued delay weakens the EU's credibility as a reliable trading partner.

Second, we call on the Commission to launch a CETA utilisation initiative, working with chambers of commerce, regions, smaller businesses and Canadian partners. Too many European and Canadian companies remain unaware of the opportunities available to them. The Commission should actively promote market access, identify remaining barriers and examine how the agreement could be expanded.

Third, the Commission should develop an EU Canada Investment Initiative. This could bring together the European Investment Bank, Canadian public investment institutions and private capital to support strategic projects in critical minerals, energy, clean technology, artificial intelligence, digital infrastructure and defence. A dedicated joint investment vehicle should be considered as part of this work.

Fourth, the EU and Canada should lead efforts to strengthen cooperation against economic coercion and politically motivated trade measures. Renew Europe has proposed exploring a NATO style trade defence pact among like minded democracies. We invite the Commission to examine the creation of an economic security compact through which participating partners could consult and

coordinate when one faces coercion, discriminatory tariffs or other politically motivated restrictions.

Finally, we call on the Commission to explore the establishment of a European Union Canada Strategic Association under Article 217 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

This new generation association could bring together trade and investment, digital markets, artificial intelligence, critical minerals, energy, research, universities, defence industry cooperation, foreign policy and mobility for workers, students and young people. It could consolidate the existing CETA and Strategic Partnership architecture while providing permanent structures for closer political coordination.

And as a symbol of this strengthened relationship, the EU could open the Erasmus+ to Canada as a third country associated to the Programme. This would be a tangible gesture that would be certainly welcome on both sides of the Atlantic.

This would not replace Canada's relationship with the United States. It would recognise that Canada and Europe need dependable partners that share their democratic values and strategic interests.

Our objective should be clear: to make Canada Europe's closest democratic partner outside our continent and to build an institutional relationship worthy of that friendship.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these proposals with you and look forward to learning how the Commission intends to strengthen the EU Canada partnership.

Yours sincerely,

Valérie Hayer

President of the Renew Europe Group



Hilde Vautmans

Renew Coordinator for the Committee on Foreign Affairs

Stéphanie Yon-Courtin

Member of the Delegation for Relations with Canada

Cynthia Ní Mhurchú

Member of the Delegation for Relations with Canada

Andreas Glück

Substitute member of the Delegation for Relations with Canada

Veronika Cifrová Ostrihoňová

Substitute member of the Delegation for Relations with Canada