

Canada – Europe  
Parliamentary Association



Association parlementaire  
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## **Report of the Canada–Europe Parliamentary Association**

### **42nd Interparliamentary Meeting with the European Parliament's Delegation responsible for Relations with Canada**

**Normandy and Paris, France, Brussels, Belgium**

**From June 5 to 9, 2023**

# REPORT

From 5 to 9 June 2023, the Canada–Europe Parliamentary Association (CAEU) sent a delegation of five parliamentarians to Normandy and Paris, France and Brussels, Belgium. The delegation participated in ceremonies and activities commemorating the D Day landings on Juno Beach and the liberation of France during the Second World War; met with officials from the Canadian Embassy in France and French legislators; met with officials from the Canadian Mission to the European Union; participated in the 42nd Interparliamentary Meeting with the European Parliament’s Delegation for Relations with Canada; and had a meeting at the headquarters of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

The delegates were Francesco Sorbara, MP, President of CAEU; Hon. David Wells, Senator, Vice-President of CAEU; Hon. Percy Downe, Senator; Hon. Éric Forest, Senator; and Stéphane Bergeron, MP. The delegation was accompanied by the association secretary, Jessica Kulka, and an association adviser, B. J. Siekierski.

## **Participation in ceremonies and activities commemorating the D-Day landings on Juno Beach and the liberation of France during the Second World War**

At the invitation of Stéphanie Yon-Courtin, the chair of the European Parliament’s Delegation for Relations with Canada (D-CA) and a native of the Normandy region in France, on 5 and 6 June 2023, four members of the delegation participated in several ceremonies and activities commemorating Canada’s contributions to the liberation of France during the Second World War.

In chronological order, those ceremonies and activities consisted of:

- a guided visit of the Juno Beach Centre;
- a commemoration ceremony at Ardenne Abbey;
- a visit to the Memorial to Canadians in Rots;
- a dinner at Rots Castle;
- a ceremony at Canada House;
- the Juno Beach Centre International Ceremony;
- a lunch with local mayors; and
- a visit to the Bretteville-sur-Laize Canadian war cemetery.

### **A. A Guided Visit of the Juno Beach Centre**

Late in the afternoon on 5 June 2023, the delegation visited the Juno Beach Centre – “Canada’s Second World War museum and cultural centre,” in the town of Courseulles sur Mer in Normandy<sup>1</sup>. Nathalie Worthington, the Juno Beach Center director, gave the delegation a guided tour of the museum, which included explanations of detailed exhibits and the viewing of two short films. She told the delegation that the Centre welcomed its

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<sup>1</sup> Juno Beach Centre, [About Us](#).

one-millionth visitor in 2019 and that over one-quarter of all visitors to date have been under the age of 18.

## **B. A Commemoration Ceremony at Ardenne Abbey**

From the Juno Beach Centre, the delegation travelled to Ardenne Abbey – in Saint Germain-la-Blanche-Herbe – to participate in a ceremony commemorating the deaths of 20 Canadian soldiers who were executed there by the Waffen-SS in June 1944. Stéphane Le Helley, the mayor of Saint-Germain-la-Blanche-Herbe, greeted the delegation and delivered opening remarks, after which Senator Wells and Mr. Bergeron spoke and the delegation laid wreaths.

## **C. Visit to the Memorial to Canadians in Rots**

The delegation then proceeded to the commune of Rots, where they were greeted – at a memorial commemorating the 33 Canadian soldiers who died liberating the commune – by its mayor, Michel Bourguignon. Mayor Bourguignon delivered opening remarks, after which wreaths were laid. Senator Wells then read the names of the 33 soldiers and Mr. Bergeron read the Act of Remembrance.

## **D. Dinner at the Rots Castle**

That evening, the city council of Rots and several local mayors hosted the delegation for a dinner at Rots Castle – a large mid-19th-century building currently used as an event space.<sup>2</sup>

## **E. Ceremony at Canada House**

The following morning, on 6 June 2023, the delegation attended a ceremony at Canada House – the first house liberated by Canadian soldiers on D-Day – in the village of Bernières-sur-Mer.<sup>3</sup>

## **F. Juno Beach Centre International Ceremony**

The delegation then participated in an international ceremony commemorating the 79<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the D-Day landings and the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the Juno Beach Centre. Nathalie Worthington, the Juno Beach Centre director; Anne Marie Philippeaux, Mayor of Courseulles-sur-Mer; and Joya Donnelly, Minister Counsellor for Political and Cultural Affairs at the Canadian Embassy in France, all delivered speeches, and young Canadian guides introduced the Centre.<sup>4</sup>

The ceremonies were attended by, among others, Michèle Boisvert, the General Delegate of Quebec in France; Isabelle Brais, the wife of Quebec Premier François Legault; Vice Admiral Scott Bishop, Canadian military representative to the NATO; and Albert Fenton,

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<sup>2</sup> [Le Château de Rots](#).

<sup>3</sup> Veterans Affairs Canada, [Canada House](#).

<sup>4</sup> Juno Beach Centre, [Ceremony of the 79th anniversary of D-Day](#), News release, 6 June 2023.

a British veteran – attached to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Armored Brigade – who landed on Juno Beach on 7 June 1944.

Joined by Corinne Féret – the French Senator for the Calvados department in Normandy – the delegation laid wreaths at the “Remembrance and Renewal” memorial sculpture outside of the Juno Beach Centre.

### **G. Lunch with Local Mayors**

Several local mayors – including Anne-Marie Philippeaux (Courseulles-sur-Mer); Thierry Lefort (Douvres-la-Délivrande); Thomas Dupont Federici (Bernières-sur-Mer); and Philippe Chanu (Luc-sur-Mer) – then hosted the delegation, along with Isabelle Brais and Stéphanie Yon-Courtin, for lunch at a restaurant in Courseulles sur Mer.

### **H. Visit to the Bretteville-sur-Laize Canadian War Cemetery**

Before departing Normandy, the delegation and Ms. Yon-Courtin visited the Bretteville sur Laize Canadian War Cemetery in the village of Cintheaux, where over 2,800 Canadian soldiers who died in the Battle of Normandy are buried.

Marcel Jaeger, the mayor of Cintheaux, and Michel Le Baron, honorary president of the Juno Committee, greeted the delegation. In her remarks, Ms. Yon-Courtin observed that residents of Normandy have not forgotten the sacrifices made by Canadian soldiers and regularly pay tribute to the soldiers buried in the cemetery. Retired Canadian ambassador, Gabriel-M. Lessard, was also in attendance and paid tribute to the Canadian soldiers who lost their lives in the Battle of Normandy.<sup>5</sup> The delegation then laid wreaths.

## **Meetings in Paris at the Canadian Embassy, National Assembly and Senate**

### **A. Briefing at the Canadian Embassy in Paris**

On the morning of 7 June 2023, Association President Francesco Sorbara joined the delegation in Paris for a meeting at the Canadian Embassy. Vincent Garneau, Counsellor and Head of the Political Section; Frédérique Delaprée, Counsellor (Economic Affairs); and Cyrille Michel Sanchez, Head of Unit (Domestic Policy and Advocacy) briefed the delegation on the 2022 French presidential election; the 2022 French legislative elections; the upcoming French Senate elections, in September 2023; and the prospect of the French Senate ratifying the Canada–European Union *Comprehensive and Economic Trade Agreement* (CETA) following the National Assembly’s ratification in July 2019.

Mr. Garneau noted that Emmanuel Macron was the first French President to be re elected since Jacques Chirac over 20 years earlier, but that his parliamentary coalition had failed to secure a majority in the National Assembly elections that followed, complicating the implementation of his agenda. Nonetheless, despite ongoing protests related to his government’s pension reform policy, Mr. Sanchez observed that President Macron’s approval rating was slowly rebounding and that his political movement had effectively

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<sup>5</sup> Ouest France, [79e anniversaire du D-Day. Des parlementaires canadiens se sont recueillis à Cintheaux](#), 7 June 2023.

come to dominate the centre of the French political spectrum – reducing his main opposition to parties on the far left and far right. Neither Mr. Garneau nor Mr. Sanchez expected significant changes in the September 2023 Senate elections, owing to the way French Senate elections are conducted.

With respect to the status of the CETA ratification process in the Senate, Ms. Delaprée explained that the Senate has essentially set aside the agreement for the time being and that the principal objections remain related to myths about Canadian food safety and the proposed Investor Court System that would come into force once all EU member states ratify the agreement. Since there have already been significant gains through the provisional application of the agreement, Ms. Delaprée explained that the Canadian government has preferred to quietly advocate for ratification in the Senate.

## **B. Meeting at the National Assembly**

From the Canadian Embassy, the delegation went to the French National Assembly. Following a guided tour, the delegation and Ms. Yon-Courtin met with Members of the National Assembly (MNA), some of whom were also members of the France–Canada Interparliamentary Association and the France–Quebec Parliamentary Friendship Group. They included:

- Christopher Weissberg, an MNA from President Macron’s Renaissance political party who represents French citizens living in North America;
- Stéphane Travert, a Renaissance MNA who represents a constituency in the Manche Department;
- Arthur Delaporte, an MNA from the Socialist Party who represents a constituency in the Calvados Department; and
- Marie-Noëlle Battistel, an MNA from the Socialist Party who represents a constituency in the Isère Department.

Mr. Weissberg began the meeting by noting that the Canadian Parliament’s Canada–France Inter-Parliamentary Association had a successful visit in April. The conversation then turned to the ratification of CETA. Some of the MNAs explained that French beef producers, while concerned about increased imports of Canadian beef, were more concerned about the potential impact of a European Union (EU) free trade agreement with Mercosur – a trade bloc consisting of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay. They said that the discussions about CETA in France had tended to group these two trade agreements together.

Mr. Bergeron suggested that if France cannot support a free trade agreement with Canada, it might be difficult for it to support an agreement with any country and noted that Canada’s dairy and cheese producers have had their own concerns about CETA. Mr. Travert, who previously served as France’s agriculture minister, pointed out that the EU has been negotiating a trade agreement with Mercosur for 25 years and that it can be very difficult to convince French producers and consumers that foreign beef meets European standards.

Mr. Sorbara then asked about the views in France and Europe on artificial intelligence (AI). Ms. Yon-Courtin noted that Italy had blocked the AI chatbot Chat GPT over privacy concerns and said that the EU’s AI Act – which the European Parliament was on the verge

of adopting – would be the world’s first comprehensive attempt to regulate it. She said the Act tried to strike the right balance between promoting innovation and protecting the citizens of EU member states.

### **C. Lunch at the Canadian Embassy**

Following its visit to the National Assembly, the Canadian Embassy hosted the delegation for lunch. Vincent Garneau, Counsellor and Head of the Political Section, and Cyrille Michel Sanchez, Head of Unit (Domestic Policy and Advocacy) represented the embassy. In addition to the delegation, the lunch was attended by MNA Weissberg and Ms. Yon-Courtin.

### **D. Meeting at the Senate**

The delegation and Ms. Yon-Courtin were then given a tour of the French Senate and attended “les questions d’actualité au Gouvernement (QAG)” – described as the equivalent in the French Senate of Question Period in Canadian the House of Commons.<sup>6</sup> Following QAG, the delegation met with three French senators:

- Pascal Allizard, a Republican Senator who represents the Department of Calvados;
- Michel Dagbert, a Renaissance Senator who represents the Department of Pas de Calais; and
- Yan Chatrel, a Socialist Senator who represents French citizens living outside of France.

The meeting focused on the stalled ratification of CETA in the Senate. Senator Allizard, who served as the CETA rapporteur in the Senate, led the conversation and reiterated the concerns the delegation heard in the National Assembly about Canadian beef and Mercosur. However, he added that there were also concerns in France several years ago – when the prospect that the EU might implement a free trade agreement with the United States (the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership) seemed more likely – that CETA could serve as a Trojan horse, facilitating the adoption of the more impactful agreement with the United States (U.S.).

Finally, Senator Allizard warned that the Senate’s rejection of CETA would return it to the National Assembly, where there may no longer be support for the agreement.

### **E. Guided visit of Europa Experience**

The delegation concluded their time in Paris with a guided visit of Europa Experience – an immersive installation that shows visitors how the European Union (EU) works.<sup>7</sup>

### **Briefing at the Canadian Mission to the European Union in Brussels**

On the morning of 8 June 2023, prior to the 42<sup>nd</sup> Interparliamentary Meeting, officials at the Canadian Mission to the European Union in Brussels provided the delegation with a

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<sup>6</sup> French Senate, [Les questions d’actualité au Gouvernement](#).

<sup>7</sup> European Parliament, [Europa Experience Paris](#).

briefing on topics on the Interparliamentary Meeting agenda and responded to their questions.

The officials included:

- Rachna Mishra, Counsellor, Head of Political and Public Affairs Section, Mission of Canada to the European Union;
- Gizem Eras, Counsellor, Head of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Environment Section, Mission of Canada to the European Union;
- Karen Kennedy, Counsellor, Head of Commercial and Economic Section, Senior Trade Commissioner, Mission of Canada to the European Union;
- Veronica Coulter, Minister-Counsellor, Head of Migration Section, Mission of Canada to the European Union;
- Jarrett Reckseidler, Senior Political Affairs Officer, Mission of Canada to the European Union;
- Matthew John Cross, Political and Development Officer, Mission of Canada to the European Union;
- Olivier Mercier, Senior Policy Officer, Mission of Canada to the European Union;
- Aliénor Fagette, Trade Commissioner, Mission of Canada to the European Union; and
- Olivier Poulin, Counsellor, Head of Political Section, Joint Delegation of Canada to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Ms. Mishra began the briefing by telling the delegation that Canada and the EU now have 51 dialogues taking place under the Strategic Partnership Agreement and CETA and informed the delegation that the next Canada–EU leaders’ summit is likely to take place in the fall of 2023.

She also spoke about recent collaboration between Canada and the EU, highlighting the coordination of sanctions on Russian collaborators in Moldova and the impending announcement that European firefighters were being mobilized to help Canada tackle widespread wildfires.

In response to a question from Senator Wells, Ms. Mishra and Ms. Kennedy told the delegation that the EU’s 11<sup>th</sup> sanctions package – which it was in the process of adopting – was expected to include an anti-circumvention tool. Mr. Sorbara asked about Canada joining Horizon Europe – the EU’s key funding program for research and innovation – and was told that negotiations are ongoing.

The delegation also asked about EU–NATO collaboration, Canada–EU trade irritants, the EU’s Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, and Canada–EU cooperation with respect to migration and asylum.

Mr. Poulin told the delegation that the EU and NATO have very complementary mandates. However, he added that Canada is monitoring the EU’s ambitions to enhance its defence capacities and that it has concerns about overlap, since all but five EU member states are also members of NATO.

With respect to trade irritants, Ms. Kennedy noted that the EU continues to raise issues related to geographical indications, access to Canadian tariff rate quotas, and the actions

of provincial liquor control boards. She said the Government of Canada's position is that Canada has fully implemented the terms of the agreement.

Regarding the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) – a tariff on carbon intensive imports – the officials noted that the CBAM regulation came into force on 16 May 2023.

Finally, Ms. Coulter explained that the European Commission's Directorate-General Home, which is responsible for EU policy on migration, holds joint consultations with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and that they work together at a technical level. She added that a principal area of European interest is Canada's approach to resettlement.

## **42<sup>nd</sup> Interparliamentary Meeting**

Following the briefing at the Canadian Mission, the delegation proceeded to the European Parliament for the Interparliamentary Meeting (IPM). The meeting was chaired by Ms. Yon-Courtin and Mr. Sorbara and consisted of a briefing at NATO and panels on:

- Canada–EU Foreign and Defence Policy Cooperation;
- Canada–EU Cooperation on Energy Security and Critical Materials;
- CETA;
- the Regulation of Artificial Intelligence; and
- Disinformation and Foreign Interference.

In addition to Ms. Yon Courtin, the following Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) participated in the IPM:

- Javier Moreno Sánchez, Vice-Chair of D-CA, Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (Spain);
- Hildegard Bentele, Group of the European People's Party (Germany);
- Damian Boeselager, Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance (Germany);
- Ondřej Kovařík, Renew Europe Group (Czechia);
- Dorien Rookmaker, European Conservatives and Reformists Group (Netherlands);
- Edina Tóth, Non-attached Members (Hungary); and
- Javier Zarzalejos, Group of the European People's Party (Spain).

### **A. Panel 1: Canada–European Union Foreign and Defence Policy Cooperation**

The first panel, on Canada–EU Foreign and Defence Policy Cooperation, was led by Ruth Bajada, European External Action Service (EEAS), Head of Division for the United States and Canada and Urmas Paet (Estonia), Vice-Chair of the European Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee. Ms. Bajada began her opening remarks by echoing a line from European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen's address to the Canadian Parliament on 7 March 2023. Ms. Bajada said that "hard times reveal true friends" and highlighted the announcement that day that 300 firefighters from France, Portugal, and Spain had been mobilized to help address Canadian wildfires.



She then provided an overview of recent foreign and defence policy cooperation. She noted, among other things, the significant number of foreign policy dialogues under the Strategic Partnership Agreement, the coordination of sanctions, and Canadian participation in two EU Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) defence projects.<sup>8</sup>

Mr. Paet, who previously served as Estonia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, said that he wished all the EU's relationships could be like the one it has with Canada. He then focused his remarks on outstanding issues related to the war in Ukraine, including the use of confiscated Russian assets for the reconstruction of Ukraine and compensation of victims, measures to address the increase of exports from third countries to Russia, and the type of relationship the EU and Canada could have with Russia going forward if the existing political regime remains in place.

In a conversation that followed, Ms. Bajada and Mr. Paet were asked about the EU's policy regarding Taiwan, the concept of "de-risking" trade with China, European development spending in the Global South, European defence spending, and the implementation of sanctions.

Ms. Bajada and Mr. Paet explained that the EU has an economic and trade office in Taipei, but does not publicize it to avoid confrontation with China; that de-risking trade with China, as compared to "de-coupling," consists of continuing mutually beneficial, low-risk trade in goods and services while limiting trade in areas that pose strategic and national security risks; that there has been a major shift in European attitudes towards increased defence spending, but that defence spending is a competence of EU member states; that EU development spending is determined in seven-year budgets that are hard to effectively explain to countries in the Global South; and that EU Sanction Envoy David O'Sullivan, appointed in December 2022, is actively working to improve sanction implementation and to crack down on sanction circumvention.

## **B. Panel 2: Canada–EU Cooperation on Energy Security and Critical Materials**

The second panel was led by Peter Handley, Head of the unit for energy-intensive industries, raw materials and hydrogen in the European Commission's Directorate-General Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, and MEP Bentele, Shadow Rapporteur on the European Critical Raw Materials Act.

Mr. Handley began with an overview of the European Critical Raw Materials Act, which the European Commission proposed on 16 March 2023. He explained that the Act aims to achieve security of supply and contains a robust sustainability chapter. He then discussed the EU–Canada cooperation that takes place through the CETA Bilateral Dialogue on Raw Materials and the increased investments in Canada that have been facilitated by the EU–Canada Strategic Partnership on Raw Materials. He mentioned European Commission President von der Leyen's visit, in May 2023, to the Kingston lithium-ion battery recycling facility of Li-Cycle – a Canadian company – and noted that the company intended to develop a facility in Sardinia, Italy to produce critical battery materials.

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<sup>8</sup> European Union External Action, [Questions & Answers: Third States' participation in PESCO projects](#), 23 May 2023.

MEP Bentele, for her part, stressed the need to encourage domestic mining of critical minerals in Europe and said there are far too many bureaucratic hurdles. She said the EU Commission's 2030 benchmarks for strategic raw materials are bold – specifically with respect to domestic processing – but expressed a concern they could discourage international partnerships.

In the question-and-answer portion of the panel, the delegation asked about how the EU manages its competing priorities of security of supply and sustainability. Mr. Handley replied that, if forced to choose, the EU will have to prioritize the security of supply. He added that if the EU is “holier than the pope,” it will not get the resources it needs while countries such as China do.

### **C. Working Lunch with Director for International Affairs and Climate Finance at the European Commission**

Following the second panel, the IPM held a working lunch with the European Commission's Director for International Affairs and Climate Finance, Diana Acconcia.

Ms. Acconcia explained that the EU is not a major emitter of greenhouse gases and aims to be “climate-neutral” by 2050. A key step in building towards that goal, she said, is the EU's Fit for 55 package – a set of proposals to ensure the EU meets its target of reducing its net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030.

She also addressed the need to provide climate financing to developing countries, highlighting the Bridgetown Initiative and the upcoming French summit on finance and climate as important developments.

With respect to EU-Canada cooperation, she mentioned EU support of the Canadian Global Carbon Pricing Challenge initiative – an effort to expand the use of carbon pricing around the world – and said she looked forward to upcoming High-Level Dialogues on the Environment and Climate Change.

### **D. Panel 3: The *Comprehensive and Economic Trade Agreement***

Following the working lunch, the IPM continued in the European Parliament with a panel on CETA. The panel began with a presentation by Matthias Jorgensen, Head of the United States and Canada Unit at the European Commission's Directorate General for Trade.

Mr. Jorgensen began by noting that bilateral trade in virtually every sector, job creation, and people-to-people ties have all increased significantly since the provisional application of the agreement. He also highlighted the achievement of the Mutual Recognition Agreement concerning the professional qualifications of architects, which is expected to come into force later in 2023.

At the same time, he acknowledged that – from the EU's perspective – there are several current “irritants.” Those are: Canada's management of its cheese tariff rate quota system, administrative enforcement of Canada's geographical indications, and the discriminatory impact of Canada's luxury goods tax on imports of European motor vehicles and boats. He also expressed disappointment that Canada had taken the

decision, in August 2022, to not renew a temporary CETA procurement commitment with respect to the Canada Space Agency.

MEP Moreno Sánchez, the European Parliament International Trade Committee's permanent rapporteur for CETA, then reiterated the successes of CETA's provisional application while expressing his frustration that 10 EU member states had still not ratified the agreement. He suggested that more needed to be done to give the agreement "visibility" and that its positive impact – particularly with respect to job creation – needed to be better communicated. He then informed the delegation that he would be travelling later in the month to Ottawa and Montreal in his capacity as rapporteur and would be reporting his findings to the international trade committee.

In the question-and-answer portion of the panel, Senator Downe sought clarification regarding the potential impact on CETA's ratification of a member state parliament's rejection of the agreement, and Senator Forest asked for more details on the impact of the luxury tax. Mr. Jorgensen explained that in the scenario that an EU member state parliament rejected CETA, they would need to communicate that decision to the European Council, which would then need to decide if that decision was "definitive" and how to proceed. He said a scenario in which CETA's provisional application is reversed is very unlikely. Regarding the tax on luxury goods, he noted that 30% of European vehicle exports (over \$1 billion in goods) to Canada are affected.

#### **E. Panel 4: The Regulation of Artificial Intelligence**

The fourth panel was led by Lucilla Sioli, Director of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Industry at the European Commission's Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology, and Sophia Fallaha, Executive Director of the International Centre of Expertise in Montreal on AI.

In her opening remarks, Ms. Sioli said that recent breakthroughs in the development of AI have forced governments and regulators to act. She explained that the EU's approach – the Artificial Intelligence Act – which they hope to have finalized by the end of the year, is risk-based. That is, rather than attempting to cover everything, the Act imposes obligations on users and providers based on the level of risk posed by the AI they are using. She said Canada's legislative approach – in the Artificial Intelligence and Data Act – is similar.

Ms. Fallaha began her remarks by explaining that the International Centre of Expertise in Montreal on AI (CEIMA) is an international non-profit organization that was established under the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI). GPAI, she continued, is a multi-stakeholder initiative developed in the G7 and based on a shared commitment to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Recommendation on Artificial Intelligence. Both Canada and the EU are members.

Ms. Fallaha told the participants that CEIMA released a report in February 2023 that compared AI regulatory policy in five countries, but that there have been significant developments since. One of those developments, she said, is the progress of the EU's Artificial Intelligence Act. Once in force, she added, the Act could be the latest example of the "Brussels effect," which refers to scenarios in which multinational companies voluntarily choose to follow stricter EU rules to simplify their compliance procedures. She

agreed with Ms. Sioli that the proposed European and Canadian approaches to regulating AI are similar but described Canada's approach as more impact-oriented than that of the EU. In contrast, she described the current American and British approaches to regulating AI as light and sectoral.

Among other things, in the question-and-answer portion of that panel that followed, Senator Forest asked about the 22 March open letter, signed by AI researchers and executives, calling for an immediate pause for at least six months on certain training of AI systems; MEP Moreno Sánchez asked about efforts to address plagiarism in schools and universities; and Ms. Yon-Courtin asked about U.S. doubts with respect to the efficacy of regulation.

In response, Ms. Fallaha said that the open letter was intended to raise awareness and that the signatories knew the pause was unlikely to happen. She also highlighted the fact that software already exists to assess whether a text is plagiarized. With respect to American views on the regulation of AI, Ms. Sioli pointed out that states such as California are going beyond what the U.S. federal government is doing and could, as a result, contribute to the federal government changing its approach.

## **F. Tour of the European Parliament and Recorded Conversation on Canada–EU Relations in the European Parliament's Vox Box Studio**

Following the fourth panel, three members of the delegation – Senator Downe, Senator Forest, and Mr. Bergeron – were given a guided tour of the European Parliament. At the same time, Mr. Sorbara and Senator Wells participated in a recorded panel on Canada–EU relations with Ms. Yon-Courtin and Mr. Moreno Sánchez. The panel was moderated by Sarah Sheil, the Head of the Communication and Outreach Unit for the European Parliament's Directorate General for External Policies.<sup>9</sup>

## **G. Official Dinner in the European Parliament**

Later that evening, Ms. Yon-Courtin and Mr. Moreno Sánchez hosted the delegation for an official dinner in the Presidential salon in the European Parliament's Paul Henri Spaak building. Ms. Yon-Courtin and Mr. Sorbara both delivered remarks celebrating the IPM and Canada–EU cooperation.

## **H. Meeting at NATO Headquarters**

The following morning, on 9 June, the delegation and Ms. Yon-Courtin visited NATO headquarters in Brussels and met with James Appathurai, Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Emerging Security Challenges. Mr. Appathurai provided a short briefing before fielding questions from members of the delegation.

Mr. Appathurai told the delegation that NATO is currently seized with several issues. Those include a return, in the wake of Russia's full-fledged invasion of Ukraine, to its

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<sup>9</sup> European Parliament Multimedia, [Inter-parliamentary meeting of Delegation for relations with Canada](#), 8 June 2023.

original core mission of collective defence, strategic competition with China, and preparing for the future.

Regarding the first, he said that NATO now has a generational or long-term problem with Russia, which regularly and flagrantly violates international law. He noted that when he began at NATO, communication with Russia was frequent and productive, whereas the EU and NATO barely communicated at all. The reverse is now true. In addition to ongoing efforts to bolster NATO's Eastern Flank, he added that NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg has made increasing the Alliance's ammunition stockpiles a priority and wants members to send a clear signal to the defence industry about its production needs.

Regarding strategic competition with China, Mr. Appathurai noted that the West is playing catch-up when it comes to new critical technologies. He cited the Australian Strategic Policy Institute's Critical Technology Tracker, which shows China as leading in high-impact research in 37 out of 44 critical technologies ranging from robotics to AI, to quantum computing.<sup>10</sup> He added, however, that NATO members are responding and highlighted the work of the Alliance's Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (DIANA) and NATO's new US\$1 billion Innovation Fund.

With respect to future challenges, Mr. Appathurai mentioned energy security and climate change but also emphasized the need – in the wake of the Nord Stream pipeline sabotage – for the Alliance to turn its attention to the protection of undersea infrastructure. He said that US\$10 trillion of financial transactions are transmitted daily using undersea cables and that this infrastructure needs better protection.

Among other things, members of the delegation asked Mr. Appathurai when he expected Sweden would be able to join the Alliance, what he thought of China's intentions regarding Taiwan, and about internal threats to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Mr. Appathurai said that there is a tremendous amount of pressure on Türkiye to stop blocking Sweden's NATO membership and that he expected the issue would be resolved by the NATO Leaders' Summit in July. Regarding Taiwan, he said there are concerns that China is preparing to invade in 2027, but that the Chinese have been following Russia's struggles in Ukraine closely. Finally, Mr. Appathurai downplayed the likelihood of a change in Russian leadership. To the extent that there are internal threats to Putin, he said, they come from more extreme right-wing elements. There is a unique Russian mindset, he added, and a substantial number of Russians share President Putin's worldview.

## **I. Panel 5: Disinformation and Foreign Interference**

The delegation then returned to the European Parliament for the fifth and final IPM panel, which was led by Lutz Güllner, Head of Strategic Communications (Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference) at the EEAS, and MEP Javier Zarzalejos, Vice-Chair of the European Parliament's Special Committee on foreign interference in all democratic

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<sup>10</sup> Jamie Gaida, Jennifer Wong Leung, Stephan Robin and Danielle Cave, "[ASPI's Critical Technology Tracker - AUKUS updates](#)," *Australian Strategic Policy Institute*, 2 March 2023.

processes in the European Union, including disinformation, and the strengthening of integrity, transparency and accountability in the European Parliament.

Mr. Güllner told the delegation that his team consists of 40 people and works closely with Global Affairs Canada. He said his team analyses disinformation – what it prefers to call Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference Threats (FIMI) – using the scholar James Pamment’s ABCDE framework, which stands for Actor, Behaviour, Content, Degree, Effect. The framework is explained in detail in the EEAS’ first report on FIMI, from February 2023. The report, which analyzed 100 incidents between October and December 2022, found Russia – including its diplomats – to be the single largest source and spreader of manipulated foreign information.<sup>11</sup>

A recent example, he said, involved reports that a radioactive cloud was floating towards Europe after a Russian drone attack in Ukraine destroyed depleted uranium munitions supplied by the West. As is often the case, Mr. Güllner said this FIMI incident was not completely false. He said the reports contained elements of the truth, which were manipulated on social media and subsequently validated by the Russian Security Council Secretary. While Agence France-Press quickly fact-checked and disproved the reports, he added, fact-checking all information manipulation is impossible.<sup>12</sup>

Looking ahead, Mr. Güllner was not overly concerned about FIMI in the lead-up to the European Parliament elections in June 2024. A large-scale Russian interference campaign like that implemented in the U.S. ahead of the 2016 presidential election will not be tried again, he argued, because the EU is familiar with the strategy and prepared for it. However, Mr. Güllner added that they need to remain vigilant because Russian actors have begun to employ new tactics, such as cloning popular, credible news websites.

For his part, Mr. Zarzalejos summarized the ongoing work of the second special committee on foreign interference, which is building on the work of the first committee, which finished in March 2022. Mr. Zarzalejos listed the committee’s main areas of interest as:

- building EU resilience through situational awareness, media literacy and education;
- foreign interference using online platforms;
- critical infrastructure and strategic sectors;
- foreign interference during electoral processes;
- cybersecurity and resilience against cyberattacks;
- interference through global actors via elite capture, national diasporas, universities and cultural events; and
- deterrence, attribution and collective countermeasures, including sanctions.

While he said that the goal is not to establish a “Ministry of Truth,” he added – paraphrasing the late U.S. Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan – that people are entitled to their own opinions, but not their own facts.

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<sup>11</sup> European Union External Action, [1<sup>st</sup> EEAS Report on Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference Threats: Towards a framework for networked defence](#), February 2023.

<sup>12</sup> The European Newsroom, [Chart shows the effect of rainfall, not ‘radioactive cloud’](#), 6 June 2023.

The delegation then asked Mr. Güllner about, among other things, the threat of deep fakes, how China and Russia compare in their use of disinformation, and long term solutions.

Regarding deep fakes, Mr. Güllner said that, while not wanting to minimize the threat they could pose to laypeople, he had yet to observe their widespread use as an information manipulation tool. He said that China's tactics are different from Russia's in that they prefer to suppress voices – both in the country and in the diaspora – rather than add to them.

Finally, in terms of solutions, he stressed the need to stop focusing on “big bang” threats. He added that there is a need to concentrate, instead, on the constant threat, and to think in network terms, where everything is connected. Some state-controlled media outlets, like *RT*, he explained, have a disproportionate influence online, but that is largely because of social media platforms. Quoting the Nobel Laureate Maria Ressa, he said that “these platforms put their thumbs on the scale of distribution” and therefore play a critical role in spreading manipulated information<sup>13</sup>. Debunking and fact-checking alone, he added, can easily become politicized and are not a panacea.

## **J. Signing of Joint Statement**

Immediately after the fifth and final panel, Mr. Sorbara and Ms. Yon Courtin signed a joint statement, concluding the 42<sup>nd</sup> Interparliamentary Meeting.<sup>14</sup>

Respectfully submitted,

Francesco Sorbara, MP  
President, Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association

### **Travel Costs**

<b>ASSOCIATION</b>	Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association
<b>ACTIVITY</b>	42nd Interparliamentary Meeting with the European Parliament's Delegation responsible for Relations with Canada
<b>DESTINATION</b>	Normandy and Paris, France, Brussels, Belgium

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<sup>13</sup> The Nobel Prize, [Maria Ressa – Nobel Lecture](#).

<sup>14</sup> Canada–Europe Parliamentary Association, [42<sup>nd</sup> Interparliamentary Meeting with the European Parliament's Delegation responsible for Relations with Canada, News release](#), 9 June 2023.

**DATES** From June 5 to 9, 2023

**DELEGATION**

SENATE Hon. Éric Forest  
Hon. David Wells  
Hon. Percy Downe

HOUSE OF COMMONS Stéphane Bergeron  
Francesco Sorbara

STAFF Jessica Kulka  
Billy Joe Siekierski

**TRANSPORTATION** \$ 26,513.03

**ACCOMMODATION** \$ 15,592.64

**HOSPITALITY** \$ 0

**PER DIEMS** \$ 5,797.51

**MISCELLANEOUS** \$ 348.00

**TOTAL** \$ **48,251.18**