



Belgian Days CETA Panel

Speaking Notes for Warren Everson

May 11th, 2016

King Edward Hotel

Please Check Against Delivery

Dignitaries

- The Honorable Michael Chan, MPP, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade
- H.E. Pieter De Crem, Federal State Secretary for Foreign Trade, Belgium
- H.E. Marie-Anne Coninx, Ambassador, Delegation of the European Union
- H.E. Raoul Delcorde, Ambassador of Belgium to Canada

On your panel:

- Ms. Helen Angus, Deputy Minister, Ontario Ministry of International Trade
- Mr. Patrick Bohan, Director of Supply Chain Solutions, Halifax Port Authority
- Paul Lalonde, Partner, Dentons (Moderator)

Speaking Notes

Thank you for your kind introduction.

Goeiemorgen

Merci de votre invitation aujourd'hui. Je suis très heureux d'avoir l'occasion de m'adresser à vous.

To repeat Dawn's point, exports are critical to Canada. Just now they represent the major potential source of growth in our economy.

Canada and Belgium have economies that are both highly dependent on trade. We are two nations connected to the world economy, and we produce far more goods, and far more services, than we can possibly use in our own borders. For both our countries, trade is in our blood, in our livelihood.

When I look at Belgium, I look at a nation that I want to improve trade with. From your highly developed transport infrastructure to your famous "*Sillon industriel*", you have carved out a unique leadership role in European trade. We certainly want to contribute to that, and also, to profit from it.

Some voices, including mine, have urged Canada to focus on new trade ties with Asia. But I recognize that volume is just as important as percentage. The growth statistics in Asia are remarkable, but a 7% increase on a small base provides no more advantage to Canada than a small increase in an enormous base.

And enormous is the word to describe our ties with Belgium and Europe.

That's why CETA is a good deal for Canada, for Belgium and for the rest of the EU. Already, the EU is Canada's second most-important trading partner. In 2013 Canada exported some \$49.2 billion to the EU in goods and services, and imported a total of \$62.5 billion.

This is in addition to foreign direct investment. The value of EU holdings in Canada reached \$191 billion in 2013, and Canadian FDI in the EU was up to \$187 billion.

And all of that is before CETA.

This agreement could boost trade from Canada to the EU by up to 20%, according to some studies. This could lead to the creation of 80,000 jobs just in Canada.

The EU could enjoy an increase of over 24% of its exports to Canada, representing a \$25 billion dollars, or 17 billion Euro.

It's easy to quantify the anticipated gains of a trade agreement. But in this audience we should also remember its geo-political significance

Canadians look with consternation at the fearsome pressures on the European community today – the upcoming Brexit vote, the crisis of refugee populations from Africa and the Mid-East, the disaffection of “stateless nations” within Europe.

We worry about the deconstruction of the European community and the resulting “G-Zero” world, to quote Ian Bremmer.

CETA is both the best gesture we can make towards a unified Europe, and – to the degree it adds prosperity – the answer to many of these problems.

The CCC has been a consistent promoter of the CETA.

Our role is a mixed one. We seek to be knowledgeable about the substance of policy, but also to be informed about political realities. We are, above all, an advocacy organization.

As a person who cut his teeth on the Canada/US Free Trade debate, I know firsthand about the paranoia and confusion which can arise around a major trade agreement. That was an explosive debate in Canada.

CETA, by contrast, has seemed to live a charmed life. On Parliament Hill and across the country, support seems strong. Those voices raised against it, on behalf of a region or industry, have not captured public sympathy. I believe the Canadian side can ratify the treaty.

I have a pet theory I will share: trade agreements go better if there is a scarier one in the wings. So, the Europeans were distracted during our negotiations by the TTIP negotiation with the Americans. In Canada, the concerns over the Trans Pacific agreement have overshadowed the CETA.

To get TPP ratified, we may have to launch a challenging negotiation with China.

And if we hear talk of a Free Trade negotiation with Mars and Jupiter, we will know the WTO is ready to launch a new global round.

In seriousness, and in closing, let me say the CETA represents an historic opportunity for Canada and for Europe. This is a modern agreement, relevant to many issues affecting trade today. It should launch a new era of growth in our relationship.

Thank you.

Useful information

- Canadian exports to Belgium amounted to CAD 3.5 billion in 2014 (rank 4 in the EU).
- It is important to note that the port of Antwerp is a major point of entry for Canadian goods in Europe. Belgium also serves as a point of entry to Europe, as 70% of Belgium's trade is conducted with its European Union (EU) partners.
- Belgium-Luxembourg was the 14th export destination of Canada's trade in services with CAD 892 million (2014).
- Belgium-Luxembourg ranked at the 19th position regarding services imports for an amount of CAD 770 million (2014)

- The Belgian Canadian Business Chamber (BCBC) is based in Toronto and works to foster contacts and relationships for our members who share an interest in developing business and trade opportunities between Canada and Belgium.