



**CANADA-EUROPE TRANSATLANTIC DIALOGUE:
SEEKING TRANSNATIONAL SOLUTIONS TO 21ST CENTURY PROBLEMS**

<http://www.carleton.ca/europecluster>

Research Themes

Thematic Research Group Five:

**The EU and Canada as Global Actors: International Conflict
Management and Security**

The intellectual focus. The growing importance of the European Union as a global actor is reshaping the international sphere. The move from a uni-polar to a type of multi-polar global system creates challenges but also opportunities for cooperation between the middle-power Canada and Europe in the international sphere, particularly (but not only) in areas where Canada's interests sometimes diverge from those of the United States (Croci and Verdun 2006). Important areas of current or potential cooperation include international conflict management (e.g., Afghanistan, the West Balkans, Sudan/Dafur), reinforcement of international law, promotion of human rights, and possibilities for generating multilateral or international regimes to address global security issues. The 2007 EU-Canada summit reinforced this cooperation through a commitment to deepening cooperation in crisis management through the Agreement on Establishing a Framework for the Participation of Canada in EU Crisis Management (*EU-Canada Summit Statement* 2007). While Canada-EU summits often set out ambitious goals for the relationship, the follow-through can be halting and inconsistent. As stated in the European Security Strategy, Canada is a 'strategic partner' for the EU, but it is not the only one (Mérand 2006). As the junior partner in a trilateral relationship involving the US, Canada, and Europe, Canada faces a risk of finding itself isolated or subject to the decisions of others. Furthermore, in the past Canada has often followed American initiatives in Canada-EU relations, rather than defining its positions and interests in a more proactive and independent manner. The end of the Cold War and 9/11 have also brought changes in the international system that have challenged the transatlantic partnership, both in substance and form (Long 2006, Lucarelli 2006, Kupchan 2004, Croci and Verdun 2006, Pentland 2003, Kaim, and Lehmkuhl, 2005). For example, the EU's European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) and its associated move into low level military missions seems to undermine or at least compete with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) as the transatlantic multilateral forum for addressing security concerns (Mérand 2005, 2006, Haglund 2000). While a member of NATO, Canada has not yet found a clear role for itself in relation to ESDP.

The EU is a complex entity, different from a traditional nation-state, with multiple and complicated modes of decision-making on foreign policy issues. Therefore, Canadian policy-makers require a deep understanding of EU processes in order to more effectively interact with the EU. This thematic group provides expertise of particular importance in three areas: (a) research on EU decision-making processes in the foreign policy area, and how they interact with decisions of EU member states; (b) research of European defence and security initiatives that could have the potential to marginalize Canada's role in Western alliance; and (c) research on EU policies in conflict management, to enable a better understanding of how Canada can effectively interface with and help shape responses.

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