



Topic Brief: Schuman Challenge 2026

Building a Stronger EU–Canada Security and Defence Partnership in a Changing Geopolitical Landscape

On 14 February, 2026, Canada and the European Union signed an agreement concerning the participation under the SAFE Instrument (Security Action for Europe).. This development reflects the shared ambition of the EU and Canada to deepen security and defence ties, in line with the Security and Defence Partnership signed at the Canada–EU Summit on 23 June 2025.

February 2026 also marks 50 years since the European Union Delegation to Canada opened its doors in Ottawa. Over the past fifty years, cooperation between the European Union and Canada has steadily expanded to include stronger security, defence, and resilience dimensions, reflecting a shared commitment to addressing emerging global challenges and strengthening their partnership in an increasingly complex world.

Participants are invited to develop a policy proposal that assesses the current state of cooperation between the European Union and Canada on security and outlines a concrete initiative or policy to strengthen this partnership in the years ahead.

Proposals must address at least two of the following thematic areas:

- Defence industrial cooperation,
- Transatlantic and Arctic security,
- Economic security (trade, supply chains and energy resilience),
- Digital and advanced technology security,
- Democratic resilience & hybrid threats.

The Task:

- Propose a joint EU-Canada initiative
- Make recommendations
- Use a specific example or case study

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Suggested Readings:

EU-Canada Documents:

1. European Council: “EU–Canada summit 2025: outcome documents” (June 2025)

[EU–Canada summit 2025: outcome documents - Consilium](#)

At the 20th EU–Canada Summit held in Brussels on 23 June 2025, leaders of the EU and Canada reaffirmed their strong political, economic and strategic partnership through the adoption of a joint statement and the signature of a Security and Defence Partnership (SDP).

2. Joint statement: Enduring Partnership, Ambitious Agenda (June 2025)

[Joint statement: Enduring Partnership, Ambitious Agenda | Prime Minister of Canada](#)

“Today marks a historic milestone as we, the leaders of the European Union and Canada, met to renew our enduring commitment and take a pivotal step to further reinforce the strategic partnership between the European Union and Canada. Our strong partnership is deeply rooted in trust and common values and shaped by a shared history of human connection and robust economic ties. Most importantly, our partnership is grounded in the core values we share: democracy, human rights, the rule of law, and open, rules-based markets. In a rapidly changing world marked by geopolitical uncertainty, shifting economic dynamics, and the accelerating impacts of climate change, this partnership is more important than ever.”

3. Security and defence partnership between the European Union and Canada (June 2025)

[Security and defence partnership between the european union canada](#)

The European Union (EU) is a strategic partner for Canada. The Canada-EU relationship is based on shared values, a long history of close cooperation, and strong people to-people ties. Our ever-growing relationship with the EU is the oldest formal relationship the EU has with any industrialised country, dating back to 1959.

4. Prime Minister Carney secures Canada’s participation in the European Union’s SAFE initiative

<https://www.pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2025/12/01/prime-minister-carney-secures-canadas-participation-european-unions>

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Canada signed a Security and Defence Partnership with the European Union (EU) earlier this year, and launched negotiations toward Canada’s participation in Security Action for Europe (SAFE), a key pillar of the EU’s Readiness 2030 plan. For Canada and the EU Member States who are NATO Allies, this will help deliver on defence capability targets more quickly and economically.

European Union documents:

1. European Commission: “EU Preparedness Union Strategy” (March 2025)

[Preparedness - European Commission](#)

The European Union is facing unprecedented threats – from geopolitical tensions and conflicts, cybersecurity and information manipulation risks, to climate change and increasing risks of natural hazards. To boost the EU's ability to anticipate, prevent, and respond to these threats, the Commission has presented the preparedness union strategy.

2. European Commission: “White Paper for European Defence – Readiness 2030” (March 2025)

[White Paper for European Defence/Readiness 2030](#)

The White Paper is a strategic policy document issued by the European Commission outlining how the European Union should strengthen its defence capabilities and defence industrial base by 2030 in response to the evolving security environment, particularly following the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

3. European Commission: “Joint Communication – Defence Readiness Roadmap 2030” (October 2025)

[Joint Communication – Defence Readiness Roadmap 2030](#)

The Roadmap sets out clear objectives and milestones to achieve defence readiness by 2030, as outlined in the White Paper for European Defence. Among its key proposals are four flagship projects: the Eastern Flank Watch, the European Drone Defence Initiative, the European Air Shield, and the European Space Shield.

Canada Documents:

1. Canada’s defence Industrial Strategy -Security, Sovereignty and Prosperity (February 2026)

[Defence Industrial Strategy](#)

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Canada's Defence Industrial Strategy will strengthen security, create prosperity, and reinforce the strategic autonomy.

2. Canada's defence strategy "Our North Strong and Free: a renewed vision for Canada's defence" (April 2024)

[Our North Strong and Free](#)

Canada's new defence policy, Our North, Strong and Free: A Renewed Vision for Canada's Defence, builds on the commitments of 2017's Strong, Secure, Engaged. As the world continues to evolve at an increasingly rapid pace, new threats such as changing climate, new challenges to global stability, and accelerating advances in technology are affecting the foundations of Canadian security and prosperity.

3. Prime Minister Carney addresses the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting "Principled and pragmatic: Canada's path" (January 2026)

[Prime Minister Carney addresses the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting "Principled and pragmatic: Canada's path"](#)

The official transcript of Prime Minister Mark Carney's address to the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, on January 20, 2026, titled "Principled and pragmatic: Canada's path". In this address, Carney declared the post-Cold War order over, calling for middle powers to unite against rising economic coercion.

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