

## The EU in Canada

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### Building that other transatlantic bridge

**OTTAWA** - As Canada continues to develop its close alliance with the European Union, university students are expressing a growing desire to learn more about this strategic relationship.

Majors in EU studies are on the rise at Canadian universities, indicative of a peaked interest among students in policy-making processes and diplomatic relations between the two entities.

"Students are intrigued by the EU – it's a system that is so large, yet generates so much positive influence worldwide," explains Terri-Ann Priel, acting head of the political and public affairs section at the European Commission Delegation in Ottawa.

"The EU has developed into a fascinating organization like no other. The systems used in the European Union to achieve the goals of unity, free trade and movement of people can serve as examples for other parts of the developing world. And its emphasis on human rights, the rule of law and democratic processes are things we have in common with Canada, that are important for the Canadian public as well."

There are four European Union Centres of Excellence in Canada that are granted funding from the European Commission in Brussels. These include Carleton University in Ottawa, Dalhousie University in Halifax, the University of Toronto and the University of Montreal/McGill University in Montreal.

The aim of these centres is to integrate existing research and teaching activities on the European Union at these universities, while recruiting internationally recognized scholars as Canada Research Chairs in European and EU Studies, offering EU-related classes and promoting academic and wider public interest in EU matters.

Additionally, there are four universities in Canada that are affiliated with the Jean Monnet Program, aimed at promoting European integration studies, teaching, research and awareness in 60 countries on five continents. These include the University of Guelph, Université de Montréal, McGill University and the University of Victoria.

In the western part of the country, there is also an Institute for Austrian and Central European Studies at the University of Alberta.

At the graduate level, students may earn a Master of Arts in European Studies at the University of British Columbia, or either a Master of Arts in Central-East European and Russian-Area Studies or a Diploma in European Integration Studies, offered by the Institute of European and Russian Studies at Carleton University. The Diploma can be completed in conjunction with a graduate degree in a variety of programs at Carleton University.

Since 2006, Carleton University has served as a network coordinator for all four EU Centres of Excellence in Canada. Funding from the EU has been integral to its success, says Dr. Joan Debardeleben, the Associate Director of the Institute of European and Russian Studies at Carleton.

“The EU funding helped launch new courses as well as the diploma program, has brought visiting European professors to teach, and has helped to support student research as well as a range of guest lectures and conferences. The teaching programs are an established part of the university's offerings, which we consider to be of very great importance in training young people who will work in a whole range of fields where relations with the EU are important to Canada.”

One programme that enables Canadian university students to work and study in the EU is the European Union Study Tour and Internship Program, now in its fifth year. Meetings are arranged with politicians, NGOs, and representatives from a variety of European institutions; following the study tour, students then have the opportunity to participate in an internship program with the institutions of the EU.

The field of European studies in Canada has been evolving “quite nicely in the past 10 to 15 years,” says Dr. William Schmidtke, associate professor in political science and the Jean Monet chair for European history and politics at the University of Victoria.

“It's an established, independent field of studies that has attracted scholars, students and funding from the EU. It holds components of research, teaching, and collaboration and supports transatlantic mobility where many students partake in exchange agreements to study and work in member states.”