

# European Union News

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### **CANADA'S TRANSPORT MINISTER MEETS EUROPEAN COMMISSION COUNTERPART TO ADVANCE CANADA-EUROPEAN UNION TRANSPORT ISSUES**

OTTAWA — The Honourable Lawrence Cannon, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, and Mr. Jacques Barrot, Vice-President of the European Commission responsible for transport, met in Ottawa this morning to discuss joint transportation initiatives between Canada and the European Union.

Understanding the importance of aviation relations for linking the economies and citizens of Canada and the European Union, Minister Cannon and Vice-President Barrot welcomed their leaders' Declaration at the Canada-European Union Summit on June 4, 2007.

"I am pleased that initial discussions have identified common ground in viewpoints and approaches," said Minister Cannon. "I look forward to continuing and expanding upon this positive dialogue."

At today's meeting, both parties reaffirmed their commitment to launch formal negotiations on a comprehensive air services agreement this fall. Minister Cannon and Vice-President Barrot updated each other on the work currently underway by officials in preparation for negotiations.

"Following our very successful EU-Canada Summit in Berlin on June 4<sup>th</sup>, I welcome the progress towards the beginning of negotiations on an Open Skies agreement," added Vice-President Barrot. "This will be a very important step in building a closer economic partnership between the EU and Canada."

Canada currently has bilateral agreements with 19 of the 27 European Union Member States. Under a Canada – European Union agreement, Canada's air transport relations with Member States would be governed by a single regime. The successful conclusion of a comprehensive air services agreement would provide a framework to further strengthen the bilateral aviation relationship.

These discussions are in line with the recently announced Blue Sky policy, which was developed to help Canada's air industry continue to contribute to our country's growth and prosperity. The new policy reflects the evolving nature of the global aviation market.

A proposed Aviation Safety Agreement (Treaty) to formalize Canada's relationship with the European Commission was also discussed. The Treaty, once in place, would promote cost-efficiency for the Canadian aerospace industry and avoid duplication of approval processes.

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