

**Response to the On-line Discussion on the Promotion of Canadian Culture and  
Knowledge Abroad  
Policy Research Division, Foreign Affairs Canada  
June 29, 2005**

Over the last few weeks policy planners at Foreign Affairs Canada (FAC) have reviewed comments submitted by Canadians during the recent eDiscussion on [Showcasing Canadian Culture and Know-how Abroad](#).

Many government departments are involved in the promotion of Canadian culture and expertise internationally, including International Trade Canada, Canadian Heritage, the Canadian International Development Agency and the Department of National Defence. The text below describes some of the government's activities in this regard, with a focus on those administered by FAC.

**Canada-US cultural relationship and shared expertise**

Along with Canada's multi-ethnic roots and linguistic duality, the close ties between Canada and the United States were identified as an inherent aspect of Canadian culture. Indeed, Canada maintains a unique relationship with its American neighbour that goes beyond its diplomatic contacts and trade agreements. As described in the [International Policy Statement](#), Canada is working to better communicate its ideas, culture and innovations throughout the US, in part through the strengthening of our public diplomacy capacity. Aimed at a broad array of actors in the US, public diplomacy will enhance cultural exchanges and shared expertise between the two countries through various initiatives. These include conferences, cultural events, trade shows, encouraging university exchanges between the two countries and facilitating reciprocal visits of opinion leaders. Similarly, the United States, Canada and Mexico have created the Web site [Panoramas: The North American Landscape in Art](#) to promote North American culture and exchanges between the countries.

**Canada's involvement abroad**

*"Recent years witnessed a relative decline in the attention Canada paid to its international instruments, as priority was given to getting our domestic house in order. Our diplomatic network, our foreign and trade policy capacity, our defence capabilities, and our commitment to development suffered. (...) Today, Canadians enjoy a robust economy and sound public finances. (...) Canada has the means and the will to reinvest in our international role."* Canadian International Policy Statement, Overview, p.2

Participants lamented the reduction of Canada's role in the world over the past few years. In response to this decline, IPS outlines a framework for the renewal of Canada's international commitment, including greater assistance for country reconstruction and peacekeeping missions. Canada's important contribution to the recent elections in Ukraine is a good example of this, as is the deployment of the Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) to Sri Lanka. In addition, Canada's long-term commitment in

Afghanistan demonstrates the Canadian government's desire to share our expertise internationally while projecting Canadian culture through our various international activities.

### **Enhancing and supporting Canadian culture**

The promotion of Canadian culture and know-how abroad is an important goal of Canadian foreign policy. To this end, several initiatives have been created, including the [Arts Promotion Program](#), which is run by Foreign Affairs Canada and provides international visibility for Canadian artists, while strengthening economic, political and social ties that serve Canada's broader international interests. Administered by Canadian Heritage, with support from International Trade Canada, the [Trade Routes](#) program is designed to help Canadian exporters of art and culture take full advantage of international business opportunities.

While warning against excessive protectionism, one participant advocated greater support for Canadian cultural industries. Recognizing the importance of protecting Canadian cultural products, Canada is involved, along with 134 other countries, in creating a [Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions](#). One of the goals of this project, initiated by UNESCO, is to determine the right of every country to adopt policies and measures to protect and promote its own forms of cultural expression to preserve international cultural diversity while respecting international trade agreements.

### **Partnerships between countries**

Participants encouraged the government to think and act in new and innovative ways to promote Canadian culture and know-how abroad. For example, it was recommended that Canada create television partnerships with other countries to highlight Canadian culture for citizens of partner countries. The [partnership](#) among Canada, France, the French Community of Belgium, Switzerland, Senegal, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire and the Government of Quebec in forming [TV5](#), the world's largest television network, is succeeding admirably in this role. In addition, Canada has agreements for co-productions with Great Britain and France (for films and television) and Italy (for films, television and the new media). Participants also suggested the creation of joint cultural internet sites. The Canada-France 2004 web site, created by the two countries to showcase their common roots and to celebrate the 400th anniversary of Canada-France relations, is one example of such an initiative.

### **A matter of education**

As some participants have commented, not only is Canada succeeding in promoting its culture abroad, it is also learning about other cultures in order to enrich its own. It is in this spirit that the Department of Foreign Affairs has created numerous exchange and bursary programs to support cultural exchanges. For example, the [Youth...on the Move!](#) site and the [International Youth Programs](#) and [Young Professionals International](#) provide

Canadians with opportunities to engage in studies, internships and work abroad. Moreover, the Department promotes international studies by promoting [scholarships](#) to Canadians planning to study abroad and foreign students wishing to study in Canada. These initiatives place value on incorporating a better understanding of other cultures by Canadians and enable foreign students to discover the wealth of Canadian culture.

## **Conclusion**

FAC would like to thank all participants for their thoughtful comments as part of the eDiscussion on Showcasing Canadian culture and know-how abroad. We look forward to your participation in future eDiscussions on this site and encourage you to consult the following resources:

[Canada Council for the Arts](#)

[Canadian Heritage](#)

[Industry Canada](#)

[Canadian International Development Agency](#)

[Department of National Defence](#)

[International Trade Canada](#)