



**2016/0195(NLE)**

20.10.2016

# **DRAFT OPINION**

of the Committee on Legal Affairs

for the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs

on the proposal for a Council decision on the conclusion of the Agreement between the European Union and the Government of Canada regarding the application of their competition laws  
(COM(2016)0423 – C8-0000/2016 – 2016/0195(NLE))

Rapporteur: Gilles Lebreton

PA\_Leg\_Consent

## SHORT JUSTIFICATION

In the current economic context, the protection of consumers and businesses from abuses of competition law is a particularly important goal. Systems of protection are well established at national level and, for some time, have been coordinated at European level, in the context of the single market.

Now, at a time when trade is increasingly globalised, the European Union considers that a system of protection against abuse of competition law which only operates at the level of the state, or even Europe as a whole, cannot be fully effective against transnational companies and the economic interests of large groups.

To ensure compliance with the law in a globalised economy, the EU considers it essential to ensure a certain level of international cooperation, particularly between competition authorities.

Trade between Europe and Canada is well established, reflecting their similar economies and cultures. It is against this background that an agreement between the European Union and Canada on cooperation between competition authorities has existed since 1999, and that agreement has proved its worth.

The functioning of the economy has changed considerably since 1999, and consequently the two parties have agreed to update the agreement. Parliament is now called upon to give its consent to the conclusion of this new agreement, which has nothing to do with CETA.

The new agreement incorporates and strives to improve on what was contained in the old agreement. Under the agreement, the competition authorities are required to give notification of decisions and investigations which might interest the other party, and in that connection to transmit relevant information. A system of formal consultation is established, with regular meetings between the two parties. The competent authorities must cooperate on certain investigations and coordinate any administrative decisions on competition which would be of interest to both Europe and Canada. In connection with the transmission of information held by the competition authorities, safeguards are in place to protect the confidentiality of such information.

The rapporteur considers that it is desirable to update this technical agreement, and therefore calls on Parliament to approve the agreement.

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The Committee on Legal Affairs calls on the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs, as the committee responsible, to propose approval of the Council decision on the conclusion of the Agreement between the European Union and the Government of Canada regarding the application of their competition laws.