



Canada-EU Integration Moves Forward, U.S. and NAFTA Next

After almost four years of negotiations, the Canadian government and the European Union are reportedly close to finalizing a controversial integration deal known as the “Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement” (CETA). President Obama announced earlier this year that his administration was also [pursuing a similar “free trade” package with the EU](#), which analysts say could pave the way for a “Transatlantic Union” encompassing all of North America and most of Europe.

According to experts, a North American Free Trade Agreement-EU super-bloc with power over national governments and economies on both sides of the Atlantic would become [the *de facto* regulatory regime for the entire planet](#). If the deeply controversial deals go through, the transatlantic entity’s combined GDP would amount to about half of the global economy, forcing companies all around the world to accept the bloc’s regulations or face exclusion from 50 percent of the world market.

The so-called “integration” schemes, however, are already facing fierce resistance, and that is expected to accelerate as talks go on. Among other concerns, critics in Europe, the United States, and Canada all worry that the plot would strip even more of what national sovereignty still remains. The unaccountable regime established under the agreements would inevitably seek to accumulate more power, too, opponents argue.

While the proposed agreements are currently focused mostly on “economic integration,” the EU and even NAFTA provide excellent examples of how “free-trade” regimes can quickly and quietly become burdensome political-integration experiments as well. The EU, for instance, began as a simple agreement between a handful of countries on coal and steel before gradually morphing into a “free trade” area. Today, the [Brussels-based EU regime imposes the vast majority of the “laws” governing Europe](#).

In [North America](#), meanwhile, NAFTA tribunals already overrule American laws and courts. Official U.S. embassy documents exposed by WikiLeaks also [confirmed that plans to erect a North American Union](#) between Mexico, the United States, and Canada have been in the works for years. The emerging NAU would be complete with its own single currency, and the formerly sovereign nations’ constitutions would become little more than historical relics.

The EU-Canada deal is close to being finalized, according to political leaders. While acknowledging that there were still some issues to be resolved, Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper [said](#) during a visit with the Socialist French prime minister last month that “considerable progress” had been made toward wrapping up negotiations. Recent news reports citing officials indicated the major “stumbling blocks” that remain include regulations on cars, agriculture, intellectual property for pharmaceutical products, and financial services.



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on April 3, 2013

“There remain some important issues to resolve, and obviously nothing is resolved until everything is resolved,” Harper said on March 14 as Socialist French Prime Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault was on an official visit to Ottawa. “Obviously, we will only sign a deal when we’re convinced we have a deal that is comprehensive and in the best interests of the Canadian economy.”

After missing multiple deadlines, negotiators for the EU and Canada are reportedly scrambling to get the controversial CETA deal sealed by this summer. According to some analysts, the real goal is to [facilitate and pave the way for a similar agreement](#) being pushed hard by Obama between the [super-state ruling Europe — widely viewed as illegitimate among Europeans](#) — and the U.S. government. Canadian officials hope to have CETA finalized before the intense U.S.-EU negotiations get in full swing. However, resistance is building fast, with more than 80 Canadian municipalities so far [passing resolutions](#) expressing concerns about the plan. “The voices of those most impacted by these deals are generally not heard in trade negotiations, which happen behind closed doors with no meaningful public participation,” [noted](#) Council of Canadians Chair Maude Barlow in a piece blasting the transatlantic scheme as a mistake. “The Canada-EU free trade talks are off limits even to Canadian parliamentarians. Still, opposition to the CETA is growing across the country.”

Opponents of the “free trade” agreements — critics call it “managed trade” [due to the thousands of pages of regulations involved](#) — come from all across the political spectrum. Indeed, much of the opposition is coming from forces typically associated with the political left. Among other concerns, Big Government advocates worry that the deals will give “Big Business” too much power. In a sense, at least, analysts say those concerns are justified: The negotiations appear to embody the merger of state and corporate power, with corporations [given wide leeway to challenge and sue governments](#) over policies they disagree with.

“The CETA threatens to privatize and deregulate many of our public services. In fact, everything could be up for grabs, including municipal water systems, electrical utilities — even our mail delivery,” [complains](#) a left-wing Canadian group known as [Stop CETA](#), which warns on its website that everything from jobs and government programs to the environment and farmers would be threatened by the controversial agreement. The group also claims Canadian culture and even indigenous peoples would be harmed by the deal.

“Under the CETA, our governments could lose the ability to protect and promote Canadian arts and culture! It could also affect our sovereignty,” the advocacy organization [continues](#) in a list of ten major issues it compiled to illustrate why the deal is “bad” for Canada. “If our governments, which we elect, can’t regulate on our behalf, or use our tax dollars to support our local economies when needed, all due to trade rules that put corporate rights first, then the CETA is actually a threat to our democratic system.”

On the other side of the political spectrum, critics worry about the threat to national sovereignty and political accountability that the deal represents. As humanity is [increasingly governed by unaccountable supranational bodies](#) and tribunals, conservatives and liberty-minded activists argue that imposing even more bogus “free trade” regimes is not the best way forward. Instead, opponents say it is past time to start abolishing such agreements and restoring national sovereignty while permitting real free trade.

Supporters of the deals, meanwhile — mostly Big Business, Big Government, politicians, bureaucrats, and the rapidly dwindling segment of the population that believes absurd political promises of “security” and “prosperity” — argue that the scheme would improve the economy and offer better jobs.



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On both sides of the Atlantic, mega-corporations and power-hungry officials are working hard to rally public support using typical, meaningless rhetoric.

“We look forward to concluding Canada-European Union (EU) Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) negotiations in a spirit of reciprocity and mutual benefit,” claimed Canada’s Harper and French Socialist Ayrault in a joint statement last month. “A CETA will create new opportunities for exchanges between our businesses and will contribute to employment growth in European and Canadian economies. It will strengthen investment and reinforce economic relations between the EU and Canada, and between France and Canada.”

At this point, it remains unclear whether the CETA will end up being approved, with some analysts insisting it is only a matter of time, and others arguing that the deal is already dead. If it fails, however, that will not be the end of the decades-old plot to create a “Transatlantic Union” — the [strategy will simply shift](#) toward creating what is known as the “Transatlantic Free Trade Area,” which could include Mexico, the U.S. government, and Canada.

In the United States, though, Obama [announced in February](#) that his administration would be pursuing a “free trade” deal with the EU, and Brussels bosses appear to be excited at the prospects. While organized labor has in the past been among the primary opponents of transnational regulatory regimes, U.S. unions are already lining up behind Obama’s proposed deal hoping to score European-style government favors for Big Labor.

Meanwhile, the president is also pushing the “[Trans-Pacific Partnership](#),” a similar “free trade” regime encompassing governments and dictatorships in the Asia-Pacific region, including the communist regime ruling over Vietnam. In North America, Obama is [unilaterally expanding NAFTA](#) even as North American governments continue to [pursue ever-closer “integration” largely in the shadows](#). The [United Nations and its machinations](#), of course, have the president’s full support as well.

Rather than creating more transnational entities with power over the United States and other sovereign nations, however, critics say it is time to start extricating America from the myriad arrangements it is already involved in: NAFTA, NATO, the United Nations, and more. If enough activists put pressure on Congress to halt the looming transatlantic and transpacific schemes, they can certainly be shut down. Whether that will happen, though, depends largely on how informed and concerned the American public becomes about the consequences — and how actively the opposition demands that the schemes be stopped.

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