

OCTOBER 2026 NEWSLETTER



75 YEARS
Canada-Germany
A PAST OF PARTNERSHIP.
A SHARED FUTURE.

Looking Ahead to Fall 2026

As we head into the fall months, we are pleased to share our latest updates and insights. This edition highlights the recent activities and partnerships of Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, as well as the new momentum in Canada-EU relations following the announcement opening the door for Canada to become the EU's first associate member and Alberta's 10-question referendum on immigration, constitutional reform.

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Top News

- Announcement of Canada's Associate Membership in the EU
- Alberta independence referendum
- Welcoming Prof. Dr. Hans-Gert Pöttering and MEP Prof. Dr. Sven Simon to Canada





Dear friends of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation Canada,

Like the many families of the victims of the tragedy in British Columbia, we mourn the dead, and our thoughts are with the injured at the Wainwright military base.

Time is flying by! KAS Canada has already hosted numerous events from Victoria to Vancouver, Toronto and Ottawa, and from Montreal to Halifax. Our educational policy program schedule is packed through the end of the year. So far in 2026, we have focused on security and energy policy issues, as well as questions of social cohesion, with our partners to strengthen freedom and democracy. The 150th anniversary of Konrad Adenauer's birth and the 75th anniversary of the diplomatic partnership between Germany and Canada have provided us with an opportunity to reflect on our achievements and aspirations. New challenges posed by AI and cybersecurity, as well as economic resilience—including their risks and opportunities—have been at the forefront of our conferences and workshops and in our publications, which we have created in collaboration with distinguished scholars.

One recent example is the work of Elizabeth Anderson and Ambassador Eitvydas Bajarūnas, former Ambassador of Lithuania to the United Kingdom, Russia, and Sweden, who addressed the topic of cognitive warfare. Attempts by foreign—and mostly autocratic—countries to exert influence pose a real threat to the stability of free Western nations.

As a political foundation in Canada, our work is always focused on fostering open and transparent public dialogue on socially relevant issues. While we develop initiatives to stimulate debate in Canada, we do not propose specific legislative action. That is ultimately the sovereign decision of the Canadian government and its political leaders. Two examples clearly illustrate the importance of preserving Canada's sovereign rights:

First, the escalating trade war waged by the U.S. against Canada is hitting the Canadian economy at a time of global uncertainty. The consequences are already being felt, with a threat of significant job losses and a decline in economic strength within Canadian industry. Democracies around the world are under pressure from crises and wars, and Ukraine is defending our freedom in Europe against Russia's aggression. With approximately 2,600 Canadian soldiers in Latvia, Canada is making an important contribution to Europe's security. Canada stands side by side with our soldiers in the brigade currently being established in Lithuania. A few weeks ago, I visited this brigade as part of a staff conference organized by KAS Europe/North America. Should the security situation on NATO's eastern flank escalate further, the Baltic states would be particularly at risk.

As a middle power among Western democracies, Canada is increasingly aligning itself with Europe and Germany to protect and defend our shared values. Key to this Canadian "shrink the ocean" strategy are the existing CETA free trade agreement and Canada's security partnership with the EU. Canada is the only non-European country to date that has had the opportunity to participate in the so-called SAFE program since this year. This opens up new options for the military and security orientation of the NATO alliance. The U.S. contributes to this program, but it clearly intends to focus more strongly on its own interests and competition with China in the Indo-Pacific region as part of its national security strategy in the future. Therefore, Europe—and Germany in particular—will have to do more to ensure its own security and that of its allies. It will undoubtedly be able to do so in the coming years if it has proven, reliable partners such as Canada by its side.

A second example of rapid geopolitical developments is the current debate over Canada's potential associate membership in the EU. In September, Prime Minister Mark Carney addressed this issue in his speech to the European Parliament in Strasbourg under the umbrella term "New Alliance for Freedom, Security, and Prosperity." At the Canada-EU Summit in Montreal this week, these ideas will be fleshed out with concrete details and action plans to strengthen the partnership between Canada, Europe, and Germany. It is no coincidence that major Canadian companies recently participated in the German federal government's investment summit. Their presence demonstrates their interest in Germany as an investment destination, just as German companies are interested in expanding economic ties with Canada. All of these topics are addressed in various forms at our events.

We have followed the recent elections in Quebec and the referendum in Alberta with great interest. While voters in Alberta overwhelmingly voted to keep their province within Canada and rejected the idea of another referendum on secession, the situation in Quebec is different. The Parti Québécois's victory in Quebec shows that Canada's national unity is still being called into question there. However, the specific causes of such aspirations vary. It remains to be seen whether this issue will be pursued further in Quebec in the coming years, during what are already challenging times for Canada as a whole.

Today, I'm looking back on a few KAS highlights. These include our second security conference on the Arctic in Whitehorse, Yukon, featuring high-level security experts in September; our second Couchiching Conference in Toronto with our long-standing partner, the Canadian International Council (CIC), focusing on the theme "International Disorder: Analyzing and Sharing Thoughts on Current Geopolitical Shifts and Developments Related to Alliances, Economic Relations, Technological Power, and National Security in Canada"; and our full-day conference at Carleton University in Ottawa on "Canada-Europe

Cooperation on Security: Opportunities and Challenges,” in early October. We are also looking forward to the Montreal International Security Summit this week, in collaboration with the Montreal Institute for Global Security (MIGS).

While in Ottawa, Prof. Dr. Günter Krings, MdB—the Deputy Parliamentary group leader of the CDU/CSU in the German Bundestag and a member of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS) Executive Board—participated in our conference. Together with Prof. Dr. Dr. Nils Ole Oermann (Leuphana University of Lüneburg and Oxford University), another German expert, Prof. Krings delivered a fascinating presentation on digital platforms. We are already looking forward to welcoming our next guest from Germany on October 26 and 27. Thomas Röwekamp, a member of the German Bundestag and chair of the Defense Committee, will participate in our conference on the topic "Security and Defense in the Age of AI: Risks, Rivalries, and Resilience."

Last but not least, Michael Gahler, a high-ranking representative of the EPP and MEP, will be a guest at the 2026 Kingston Security Conference at Queen's University. The topic is "Transformative Technologies—Reshaping Defense and Security." However, before that, in mid-November, we will examine the U.S. midterm elections with our KAS Research Chair representative, Prof. Daniel Stockemer. In Calgary, as part of a collaboration with the German Canadian Business Association (GCBA), we will explore energy and resource security, which is undoubtedly a challenge for businesses across Canada.

As you can see, we're quite active. Please support us by stopping by. None of this would be possible without my team, which has expanded and revitalized since then. Thank you, team! With Ursulla Verrillo as our new program manager, we've gained a valuable asset. Carmen Trimbuch, an all-around administrator, enhances and enriches our KAS-Canada team, as does our newest addition, Miguel Perez. Along with our accountant, Vishwas Pareek, and our intern, Marie Wellstein from Munich, they work to ensure that KAS Canada offers a diverse range of high-quality topics for debate on issues that affect you—shaping the future with courage and optimism in challenging times.

Yours,
Bernd Althusman

PAST PROJECTS AND EVENTS

- On **July 23, 2026**, KAS Canada welcomed German author **Michael Kleeberg** to Toronto for an evening on **literature, history, and transatlantic relations**. Drawing on Ernest Hemingway and his novel *Achilles in Taormina*, Kleeberg highlighted the role of cultural exchange in strengthening Canada-Germany relations.
- The **visit of Professor Dr. Hans-Gert Pöttering**, Representative for European Affairs of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung and Former President of the European Parliament, and **Prof. Dr. Sven Simon**, Member of the European Parliament and Chair of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs, to KAS Canada in Ottawa from **September 9–13, 2026**, focused on Canada-EU relations amid geopolitical shifts and uncertainty. They met with key political and institutional actors to discuss transatlantic cooperation and shared challenges.
- On **September 22–23, 2026**, KAS Canada, the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada (APF), and Pendulum Geopolitical Advisory co-organized the **conference “Confronting Hybrid Threats in the Arctic: Foreign Information Manipulation and Civilian Resilience.”** in **Whitehorse, Yukon**. Participants included policymakers, diplomats, military representatives, journalists, and Indigenous representatives from across the Arctic security and policy community. Discussions focused on geopolitical competition, Arctic defence, foreign information manipulation, and the role of local media in protecting Northern communities. A diplomats’ roundtable explored opportunities for closer international cooperation, while a tabletop exercise focused on strengthening civilian preparedness. Key takeaways included the importance of trusted information, Indigenous and Northern community involvement, and stronger coordination between Canada and its Allies to address both military and hybrid threats.

CONTINUE

- From **October 1-3, 2026**, we were pleased to welcome **Prof. Dr. Günther Krings, Deputy Chair of the CDU/CSU Parliamentary Group in the German Bundestag**, and **Prof. Dr. Dr. Nils Ole Oermann, professor at Leuphana University and Oxford**, to Ottawa. Both participated in our conference **“Prosperous, Secure and Sovereign Together: Making Canada-Europe Economic Cooperation Stronger!”** on October 2, 2026, co-organised with Carleton University. The conference brought important German and European perspectives to discussions on Canada-EU relations, bringing together academics, policymakers, politicians, and business leaders to explore closer cooperation in economic security, supply chains, critical minerals, energy, defence, and digital and technological sovereignty.
- On **October 7, 2026**, KAS Canada and CIC hosted the **Annual Couchiching Conference in Toronto**, discussing global geopolitical shifts, security, technology, and economic resilience. Experts highlighted the importance of stronger Canada-EU cooperation and alliances between like-minded democracies.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- From **October 26 to October 29, 2026**, **KAS** will be welcoming **MdB Thomas Röwekamp**, Chairman of the Defence Committee of the German Bundestag, for a two day conference cohosted by **MIGS** and KAS in Montreal, followed by discussions and events in Ottawa together with the **CIC**. During this week, the topics of **“Security and Defence in the Age of AI”** and **“The Transatlantic Tilt”** will be discussed, analyzing the current geopolitical security environment involving Canada, Germany, and Europe.
- On **November 11, 2026**, **Prof. Daniel Stockemer, KAS Research Chair**, will be leading a roundtable event at the **University of Ottawa** on the 2026 US midterm elections, which will take place on Tuesday, November 3, 2026, are among the most **consequential elections in the U.S.** recent history. The results will shape the political environment for President Donald Trump's final two years in office. This roundtable will discuss three fundamental questions about the **midterm elections** that are important to Canadians: **(1)** Will the US continue the slippery slope toward autocracy? **(2)** Will the results of the midterm elections change the United States’ aggressive policy toward Canada? **(3)** Will these elections have any impact on Donald Trump’s foreign policy?
- On **November 12, 2026**, the **German Canadian Business Association**, in cooperation with **KAS Canada**, will hold an event in **Calgary, Alberta**, to spark discussion on the topic, **"Critical Raw Materials as Part of the National Security Strategy for the Canadian and German Economies."** We will host experts and researchers as panelists and speakers to discuss where Canada and Germany stand on security architecture after 75 years of relations.
- From **November 18 to November 20**, **KAS Canada** will be making part of the **2026 Kingston Security Conference** on the topic **"Transformative Technologies–Reshaping Defense and Security"** at **Queen’s University**. The speakers and panelists will discuss the current era in which emerging technologies are disrupting societies and transforming the nature of war. Consequently, the security and defense sectors must adapt. Advances in artificial intelligence, quantum technologies, cyber capabilities, digital infrastructure, and algorithms are changing the way states defend themselves and carry out operations.

VISIT OF PROF. DR. HANS-GERT PÖTTERING TO OTTAWA

It was a great honour to welcome Prof. Dr. Hans-Gert Pöttering, Representative for European Affairs of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung and Former President of the European Parliament, and Prof. Dr. Sven Simon, Member of the European Parliament and Chair of the European Parliament's Committee on Constitutional Affairs, to KAS Canada in Ottawa from September 9–13, 2026. The visit focused on the future of Canada-EU relations in times of geopolitical shifts and uncertainty, bringing together European and Canadian perspectives on shared priorities, transatlantic cooperation, and the challenges facing democracies.

The first day started with a meeting at the Parliament with Steve Outhouse, Chief of Staff to the Opposition Leader, discussing Prime Minister Carney's first year in office and current political challenges. During a working lunch with key actors from business and academia, the U.S. tariff measures and their impact on the Canadian economy were discussed. After that they met with Israeli Ambassador Iddo Moed and EU Ambassador Geneviève Tuts for exchanges on current geopolitical developments, the Canada-EU partnership, and shared international challenges.

The day concluded with a lecture at the University of Ottawa on "What's Next for Canada and Europe's Relationship in the Face of US Economic Attacks?". The subsequent discussion with participants also addressed the election in Saxony-Anhalt, the AfD's electoral success, and how Germany is responding to the party's growing political influence.

CONTINUE

The second day focused on transatlantic security and democratic resilience. Highlights included an exchange with Isabelle Poupart, Director General for European Affairs at Global Affairs Canada, on Canada-Germany cooperation within NATO and the G7, followed by a working lunch with Dr. Monika Meents, Deputy Ambassador at the German Embassy in Canada, on strengthening bilateral cooperation in foreign policy, security and economic affairs.

The day continued with a conference at the Global Centre of Pluralism on the topic “Constitutional Rights in Europe: Challenges and Perspectives – Common Future for Canada and Europe”. The discussion brought together European and Canadian perspectives on constitutional rights, democratic values, and the future of Canada-Europe relations.

The visit stood firmly under the theme of strengthening German, European, and Canadian relations. Across the various meetings and discussions, there was broad recognition that closer cooperation between Canada and Europe is particularly important against the backdrop of the current geopolitical situation and growing pressure on the rules-based international order. Just days after the visit, this shared understanding was further underscored at the European Parliament, when Commission President Ursula von der Leyen proposed opening the way for Canada to become the European Union’s first associate member, while Prime Minister Mark Carney addressed the European Parliament the following day and welcomed the ambition for a deeper Canada-Europe partnership. The developments highlighted the growing strategic importance of closer cooperation between Canada and Europe across defence, energy, critical minerals, technology, trade, and economic security, as well as the shared commitment to democracy and a rules-based international order.



Welcome to Ottawa Prof.
Dr. Hans- Gert Pöttering



Meeting with H.E.
Ambassador Genevieve Tuts



Public Lecture at the University of Ottawa



Discussing the consequences of the US tariffs



Discussion on the EU-Canada relations



Meeting with Director to Ministry
of Foreign Affairs Isabelle Poupart



Discussion on constitutional rights



Panel Discussion at the Global Centre of Pluralism



DISCUSSION ON CANADA BECOMING AN ASSOCIATE MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN UNION



Amid geopolitical tensions, economic uncertainty, and growing dependence on major powers, Canada and the EU aim to strengthen their strategic partnership. On 16 September 2026, President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen proposed the “associate membership” for Canada. Prime Minister of Canada Mark Carney welcomed the idea, however, he emphasized that Canada is not seeking full EU membership, but rather a special status. This could cover a deeper cooperation in defence, energy, AI, trade, and research. The legal framework remains undefined, with further discussions expected at the EU–Canada Summit in Montréal on 29–30 October 2026.

Conservative opposition leader at the Canadian Parliament Pierre Poilievre supports trade and defence cooperation with Europe but warns against compromising Canadian sovereignty through EU laws, taxes, or immigration rules. He also criticizes the lack of clear conditions. Among provincial premiers, David Eby (British Columbia) supports the initiative to diversify export markets, while Christine Fréchette (Québec) calls for provincial involvement in relevant negotiations. Tim Houston (Nova Scotia) also supports closer ties while emphasizing sovereignty. The other provincial premiers have not yet issued public statements on the proposal.

The German government supports closer cooperation with Canada but questions the term “associate membership” so far. On 16 September 2026, spokesperson Stefan Kornelius stated that Germany is open to new partnership models but believes the terminology should be reconsidered. Germany has not explicitly endorsed the proposed model.

The EU–Canada Summit in Montréal on 29–30 October must be awaited to learn more about the details and potential structure of the proposed membership.



DISCUSSION ON ALBERTA'S 10-QUESTION REFERENDUM

Monday, October 19, 2026, was an important day for Canadian politics, sparking a more serious discussion about the unity of the confederation regarding the province of Alberta. For many decades, the independence of Quebec has been a popular topic among Canadians. However, Québec referendums have concluded with the democratic decision of citizens to remain part of Canada. Today, however, the talk has also focused on Alberta, following several discussions about the separatist movement among citizens and politicians.

Alberta has shared different perspectives with the federal Canadian government regarding issues such as energy, resources, and sovereignty. After Premier Danielle Smith took power, she offered citizens a historic 10-question referendum so they could analyze and vote on matters regarding immigration, public services, the constitution, and, of course, a possible separation process, even though she opposed separation. Half of the questions discussed immigration, making it a focal point of the current social situation in the province.

The government's management of the referendum has been criticized, as First Nations consultation was not carried out at the time, which breaks with legal matters for a proper separation process. These issues are directly related to Prime Minister Mark Carney's campaign for unity, as he has discussed the potential effects of Alberta's separation on the country and the province. So, what actually happened with this referendum?

Despite the efforts of groups such as Stay Free Alberta and the Alberta Prosperity Project to promote the province's separation, the results of over 1.8 million votes demonstrated that Albertans still want to remain part of a united Canada. With around 76% of voters opposing separation, this issue is now a thing of the past.

Thoughts by:

Marie Wellstein, KAS Canada Intern & Miguel Perez, Project Coordinator

Our Canada Office, based in Ottawa, was established in 2019, promotes multilateral cooperation as well as exchange between Canada, Germany and Europe on the most important global challenges of our time, especially in the areas of security, technology, climate change and migration.

As the first Chancellor of the newly-formed Federal Republic of Germany from 1949-63, Konrad Adenauer changed the face of post-war German and European history more than any other individual. Adenauer's experiences during the Second World War made him a political realist and he focused his attention on promoting the idea of pan-European cooperation. Our foundation is based on his values.

"When the world seems large and complex,
we need to remember that great world ideals all begin
in some home neighbourhood."

Konrad Adenauer

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