



By: TA | AP Brief

Carney heads to Europe to strengthen EU ties



Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney is heading to Europe in the middle of a **trade war** with U.S. President Donald Trump, seeking a deeper relationship with the European Union that could give Canadians greater freedom to work and study there.

Canada will seek an arrangement that would allow Canadians to live and work in Europe without visas as part of a strategic partnership, according to a senior Canadian official familiar with the discussions.

The official said Ottawa is not seeking to replicate the arrangements Norway or Switzerland have with the EU and did not propose “associate membership,” a term used in a recent report. Canada instead wants a partnership tailored to its priorities, with investment at its core.

Roughly 70% of Canadian exports go to the United States. Europe is central to Carney’s effort to reduce that dependence.

Carney has ruled out **EU membership**, saying Canada instead wants “a unique alliance” with the bloc.

Canadian government officials have consulted provinces and labor groups but have not settled on what form the relationship should take. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the talks publicly.

The official said the goal is greater Canadian sovereignty, not less. “We’re not looking at giving up our rights to Brussels or anything like that,” the official said. “It’s quite the opposite.”

Carney’s Trump challenge returns to Europe

Carney will attend European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen’s State of the Union address Wednesday as a guest of honor before **addressing the European Parliament** on Thursday.

The trip puts him back on the European stage as relations with Washington reel from tariffs, threats and personal attacks since trade talks collapsed. His **Davos speech** in January drew a personal rebuke from Trump, and another forceful defense of middle powers could raise the temperature again.

Carney is also carrying to Europe a message that has won praise there but that European governments have been reluctant to follow: Middle powers should be willing to resist economic coercion and walk away from a bad deal.

Canada has retaliated against **U.S. tariffs** and rejected terms Carney says would weaken its sovereignty. Europe, by contrast, shelved retaliation and accepted a deal leaving most EU exports to the United States facing tariffs of up to 15%.

That choice is striking given the EU’s economic weight as the world’s largest trading bloc.

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At Davos in January, Carney urged middle powers to band together rather than bow to great powers. When countries negotiate alone with a hegemon, he said, “we negotiate from weakness. We accept what is offered.”

“This is not sovereignty,” Carney said. “It is the performance of sovereignty while accepting subordination.”

In a March European Parliament debate, French lawmaker Chloé Ridet said Carney had “said out loud what many Europeans think quietly,” while German lawmaker Tobias Cremer urged Europe to “show the same courage as the Canadians have done in this moment of rupture.”

Tobias Gehrke of the European Council on Foreign Relations said Europe accepted economic pain in hopes of preserving U.S.

support for NATO and Ukraine, but gained neither firm security commitments nor stable ties with Washington.

“European governments will be watching closely to see whether retaliation creates leverage or simply produces more escalation and an increasing bill,” Gehrke said.