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EU offers to make Canada its first 'associate member'

Trump sees 'hostile act,' while opposition warns Carney such a move needs Parliament's approval

Prime Minister Mark Carney joins British Prime Minister Andy Burnham at an Everton soccer match in Liverpool, England, on Wednesday. Earlier in the day, Mr. Carney was cheered at the European Parliament in France. PAUL ELLIS/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

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European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has called on Canada to become the European Union's first "associate member," a strong show of support for Prime Minster Mark Carney's bid to forge deeper ties with the bloc.

Ms. von der Leyen went further than expected with the offer Wednesday during her State of the Union address to the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France, particularly since Mr. Carney said Sunday, when the idea was first made public, that Canada is not seeking EU membership.

Mr. Carney was in attendance Wednesday and has been assiduously courting EU leaders in an effort to counterbalance continuing trade tensions with U.S. President Donald Trump, pushing the notion of a "unique alliance" with the EU.

Mr. Trump said late Wednesday that if Canada becomes the first associate member of the EU it would be a "hostile act," adding that if it is done with "bad intentions" he may respond with tariffs.

The novel category of associate membership is not mentioned in the founding treaties or legal framework of the EU, nor is it clear whether it would yield any quantifiable economic gains for Canada or require Ottawa to cede any sovereignty for moving into closer contact with the EU.

And Canada's opposition parties say any new alliance with the bloc needs the approval of Parliament.

Ms. von der Leyen told members of the European Parliament, "We want to bring the relationship with Canada to the highest level possible … we must urgently reimagine our partnerships. So I would like to work with you on opening the door for Canada to be the first associate member of the European Union."

That remark received prolonged applause, and Mr. Carney was invited to the podium to shake hands with the President.

Ms. von der Leyen told the MEPs that the EU wants to move from the existing Canada-EU trade treaty – the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, or CETA – and create "a common prosperity and economic security space."

▪ EU, A8

Creative confusion: Hammered by tariffs, the visual arts sector has been forced to find new ways to do cross-border business

JOSH O'KANE

Toronto art dealer Miriam Shiell decided this month not to send a Henry Moore sculpture to New York for potential buyers to scope out. Would it be hit by tariffs crossing the border? She didn't know, and she didn't want to take the risk.

For decades, art freely flowed across the Canada-U.S. border, but that ended once U.S. President Donald Trump began his second term last year. Now, 50-per-cent tariffs imposed Aug. 22 on Canadian products entering the U.S. cover a massive range of artwork, from paintings to sculptures to "collages and similar decorative plaques."

The new tariffs are cutting off a significant portion of Canadian art sales, according to artists, galleries, dealers, shippers and consultants, leaving them frustrated and confused. The result is the shrinking of a market that showcases homegrown ingenuity at the same moment Prime Minister Mark Carney is intensely pitching investing in Canada.

Everyone in the art market stands to lose income as both buyers and sellers wait out what they hope will be temporary trade measures, as turned out to be the case with a previous round of art tariffs last year.

Ms. Shiell had endless questions about the tariffs. Moore might have been British, but the sculpture would have arrived from Canada. "Is the definition of it that the artist has to be Canadian or the art has to be made in Canada?" she said. "It was just easier at this point to wait for clarity." She added: "It may come in a few weeks, or not at all. It may mean there's no sale."

U.S. Customs and Border Protection said in an e-mail Tuesday that the most recent round of tariffs covers goods with Canada as their country of origin. In other words, said Duncan Links, who oversees many cross-border shipments as the logistics manager of Museumpros Art Services in Toronto, with proper customs documentation, artworks should only face these tariffs if they were made in Canada.

Even then, it depends on who ships the art. Some multinational shipping companies automatically required tariff payments on all art during last year's trade barbs, said Mackenzie Sinclair, executive director of the Art Dealers Association of Canada. That doesn't bode well for artists and sellers hoping to get their works over the border with some kind of tariff exemption around their places of origin.

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Separation could cost Alberta up to $170-billion, report says

MATTHEW SCACE CALGARY

Abandoning Confederation and setting up a sovereign country would cost Alberta up to $170-billion over the first five years of independence and would devastate the economy of a shrunken Canada, a report commissioned by the provincial government estimates.

And even in the best-case scenario, the report says secession would provide only minimal economic gains for Alberta. In a more painful separation, wages would plummet, GDP would decline precipitously and government debt would balloon.

The province on Wednesday published the report, which was produced by an independent panel of experts at the University of Calgary's School of Public Policy.

The report provides a wide range of estimated costs to separation, painting one relatively rosy scenario in which Ottawa cooperates in negotiations and gives the province a favourable deal, and another in which Alberta and Canada enter hostile, prolonged talks that bring the country's economy to a standstill.

Alberta is currently in the midst of a heated campaign over provincial separation, with voters preparing to decide on Oct. 19 whether to remain in Canada or lay the legal groundwork for a second, binding referendum.

Support for separation in Alberta, estimated to be between 25 and 30 per cent, has remained steady for years.

▪ ALBERTA, A8

Judge's ruling keeps key Project South documents under wraps

MOLLY HAYES
COLIN FREEZE

Transcripts of key recordings that led to the Project South takedown will remain under a publication ban after an Ontario Superior Court judge ruled Wednesday that inflammatory comments attributed to a Toronto police officer charged in the corruption case would "deeply offend" the public and create an indelible impression on potential jurors.

The ruling is in response to an application by The Globe and Mail and other media outlets to make public more than 500 pages of court documents and warrant applications that were unsealed earlier this year. Those files include what are known as information to obtain documents, which investigators use to get judicial authorization to conduct searches and make arrests.

While much of the content of those documents was released in July, portions were placed under a publication ban as the Crown and media outlets argued over whether their release should be shielded to protect fair trial rights.

In a ruling on Wednesday, Justice Laura Bird maintained a publication ban on some of that material, including a verbatim transcript of conversations alleged to have taken place between Toronto Police Constable Timothy Barnhardt and an alleged organized-crime figure, Brian Da Costa.

▪ TRANSCRIPTS, A6

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