GTA STRATEGIES

The Right Honourable Mark Carney, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
Ottawa, Ontario

Cc: Ministers responsible for International Trade, Foreign Affairs, Finance, Industry, Natural Resources, and Canada–U.S. Trade

October 25, 2026

Subject: Canadian Business Community Recommendations Ahead of the Canada–European Union Summit in Montréal — October 29–30, 2026

Dear Prime Minister Carney and Honourable Ministers,

As Canada prepares for the upcoming Canada–European Union Summit in Montréal, I would like to share some observations, concerns, and recommendations raised by Canadian business leaders during a recent consultation organized by GTA Strategies.

As a former Member of Parliament, former Toronto City Councillor, and now Principal of GTA Strategies, I have worked closely with Canadian businesses across numerous sectors for many years.

Recognizing the importance of the upcoming discussions with our European partners, my colleague Jeremy Beamer and I convened a virtual meeting with representatives from Canadian businesses and industry organizations to hear directly from those affected by the changing international trade environment.

Participants represented sectors including aerospace, defence, manufacturing, architecture, construction, critical minerals, engineering, and specialized industrial equipment.

While participants welcomed efforts to strengthen Canada's economic relationship with the European Union, they expressed several concerns that we respectfully ask you and your Cabinet colleagues to consider as you enter these important discussions.

1. Preserve Canada's Vital Trading Relationship with the United States

One of the strongest messages was that, while diversification into European and other international markets is important, the United States remains an essential market for Canadian businesses.

Participants emphasized that decades of integrated supply chains, customer relationships, and investment cannot simply be redirected to Europe overnight.

Businesses are concerned that ongoing tariffs, trade uncertainty, and disruptions to established markets could reduce investment, lead to lost contracts, and cause Canadian job losses.

Recommendation: Continue pursuing stable and predictable trading arrangements with the United States while developing new European opportunities. Diversification should complement, rather than replace, our existing North American trading relationships.

2. Address Tariffs and Restore Investment Confidence

Manufacturing representatives described the serious impact of tariffs on imported materials, including stainless steel, with one participant reporting tariffs reaching 50%.

These added costs are pressuring profit margins, competitiveness, and long-term investment decisions.

Companies are increasingly reluctant to purchase new equipment, expand facilities, or hire additional employees when future costs and market access remain uncertain.

Recommendation: Prioritize tariff relief, predictable trade rules, and practical support for businesses affected by trade disruptions. Canadian companies need confidence to continue investing and creating jobs.

3. Ensure Canada Benefits from Its Critical Minerals Resources

Representatives of the critical minerals industry stressed that Canada should not become merely a supplier of raw materials to European manufacturers.

Canada has an opportunity to develop domestic processing, refining, advanced manufacturing, and other value-added industries that create long-term Canadian employment and economic benefits.

Recommendation: Pursue Canada–EU partnerships that encourage investment in Canadian processing facilities, technology development, and value-added production rather than focusing primarily on raw material exports.

4. Improve European Market Access for Canadian Professional Services

Representatives from the architecture and professional services sectors expressed concern that Canadian firms do not receive sufficient assistance in promoting their expertise in European markets.

While reciprocal arrangements and cooperation agreements are encouraging, businesses need practical help to identify opportunities, navigate procurement systems, and compete with established European firms.

Recommendation: Strengthen government support for Canadian architecture, engineering, design, consulting, and other professional services seeking opportunities in Europe. Ensure that market access and recognition arrangements produce meaningful commercial opportunities in both directions.

5. Provide Practical Assistance to Businesses Entering European Markets

Several participants noted that expanding into Europe requires significant financial resources, time, and market knowledge.

For small and medium-sized businesses, the costs of participating in international trade shows, establishing distribution networks, meeting regulatory requirements, and developing new customers can be prohibitive.

Recommendation: Expand practical export-development assistance, strengthen Canada's Trade Commissioner Service, support participation in European trade missions and exhibitions, and provide accessible programs to help Canadian businesses establish a presence in European markets.

6. Support All Canadian Businesses Through Fair and Predictable Policies

Participants also cautioned against government policies that selectively favour certain companies or industries while unintentionally disadvantaging others.

They emphasized that Canadian businesses need fair competition, regulatory certainty, and an environment that encourages private-sector investment and innovation.

Recommendation: Establish transparent, accessible, and predictable policies that support Canadian competitiveness across industries, rather than relying exclusively on programs benefiting a limited number of selected sectors or companies.

A Message from Canadian Business Leaders

Prime Minister, our consultation sent a clear message.

Canadian businesses do not oppose expanding trade with Europe. On the contrary, they welcome new markets, stronger international partnerships, and opportunities for investment.

However, they ask the federal government to recognize the realities businesses face today: rising costs, uncertainty around U.S. trade, difficult investment decisions, and the significant time and resources required to enter new international markets.

They want a government that listens, provides practical assistance, protects existing commercial relationships, and creates conditions in which Canadian companies can compete and grow.

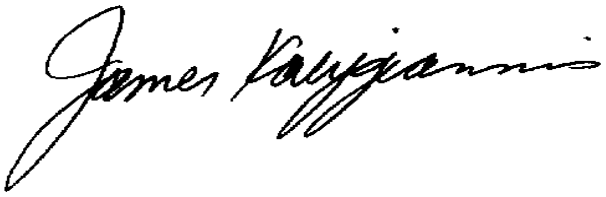
As you and your Cabinet colleagues meet with European leaders in Montréal, we respectfully ask that you keep these concerns and recommendations in mind.

These comments come directly from Canadians who operate businesses, employ workers, invest in our economy, and experience the consequences of international trade decisions every day.

On behalf of GTA Strategies and the participants in our consultation, thank you for your consideration, and I wish you success in your discussions with our European partners.

We would welcome the opportunity to provide further details or facilitate additional dialogue between government officials and representatives of the Canadian business community.

Yours sincerely,



Hon. Jim Karygiannis, P.C.
Former Member of Parliament
Principal, GTA Strategies
www.gtastrategies.com