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Eurovision 2027: Is Canada singing its way into the European Union?

As Canada joins the Eurovision Song Contest amid high-level Canada-EU summit talks, historical patterns show that despite shared values and current geopolitical romance, economic momentum between the partners rarely translates into long-term integration.

By [Petra Dolata](#), [University of Calgary](#)*

Officials are meeting this week for the [21st Canada-European Union Leaders'](#) Summit.

It comes only a month after European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen [offered Canada associate membership](#), although Politico has reported [the offer has been rescinded due to objections from countries that include Germany, Greece and France](#).

Prime Minister Mark Carney countered von der Leyen's counter by proposing [deeper and integrated ties](#) between Canada and the EU.

Now, all eyes are on Carney, von der Leyen and EU Council President António Costa, who are meeting in Montréal to discuss strengthening ties.

The talks [follow a series](#) of [milestones](#) in the relationship between the transatlantic partners, including the [announcement in July](#) that Canada was joining the Eurovision song contest. It's the first country to do so since Australia entered in 2015.

Eurovision is held every year in May, with member countries submitting one original song. Over the years, the event's format

has changed from an exclusive jury vote to a viewer televote and today's combination of both.

Sometimes, voting [can become political](#), with viewers voting according to their [geopolitical preferences](#) or diaspora communities casting ballots for their former home countries regardless of the quality of the performance.

This may be good news for Canada, which is currently basking in European affection. The current [geopolitical romance](#) between Canada and the EU could help a Canadian song win. It wouldn't be the first Canadian win, though. [Céline Dion took home the prize in 1988](#), representing Switzerland.

Uranium fears in the 1950s

The EU and Canada are clearly getting closer. But will historians look back at Eurovision and other developments as the beginning of comprehensive Canada-EU integration? Probably not — and history shows why.

A look at the history of Canada-EU relations reveals a shared interest in deeper integration that has rarely materialised into anything concrete.

More than half a century ago, a couple of years after the 1957 [Treaty of Rome](#) had established the [European Economic Community](#) and [the European Atomic Energy Community](#), Canada was the first industrialised country to sign an agreement with the latter organisation. In October 1959, Canada became a signatory to the [Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy](#) deal.

At the time, Canada was worried about losing the United States as a major export market for its uranium. That's because the U.S. had only agreed to a supply contract until 1962, expecting much lower demand for Canadian uranium after that.

Prime Minister John Diefenbaker, who wanted to diversify Canada's trade relations and revive imperial links with the United Kingdom, [looked to Europe for future uranium markets](#).

He added Germany and Italy to the list of countries to buy Canadian uranium. Canada also tried to ensure these new customers would only use the uranium for peaceful purposes.

To do so, Canada considered an agreement with the European Atomic Energy Community, of which both West Germany and Italy were member states, as the best option. For its part, the

organisation believed the agreement with Canada not only provided access to Canadian uranium and civilian nuclear technology but also gave it international visibility.

But in retrospect, beyond scientific collaboration, [not much else was achieved](#). Canada had already lost the race to the U.S., whose aggressive export policy led to Western Europe adopting American nuclear technology.

Nixon-Trudeau tensions

Diversification away from the U.S. was also behind the [1976 framework agreement for commercial and economic co-operation](#), which Canada signed as the first industrialised country with the [European Community](#), which later became the European Union.

Canada was surprised by U.S. President [Richard Nixon's 1971 announcement of a new economic programme](#) that abolished the conversion of gold to American dollars and terminated fixed exchange rates.

Richard Nixon and Pierre Trudeau talk in Trudeau's office in Ottawa in this April 1972 photo. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Chuck Mitchell

Canada hadn't been warned about the immediate imposition of a unilateral 10 per cent surcharge on imports, and it wasn't exempted. In response to these Nixon shocks and fuelled by long-simmering anxieties about Canadian independence, [the Liberal government under Pierre Trudeau proposed a third option](#) to reduce dependence on the U.S. and actively seek new partnerships, mostly with Europe.

As they did in the late 1950s, the Europeans were receptive to Canadian advances because they wanted [access to Canada's energy resources](#). This was especially true in the wake of the 1973 oil crisis, which had not only caused Western European countries to desperately search for oil supplies outside the Middle East and the Soviet Union but also led to [their heightened demands for uranium](#) as nuclear power programmes ramped up to provide alternative energy.

But the framework agreement between Canada and European countries never realised its full potential. Instead, [Canada deepened its relations with the U.S. and signed a free-trade agreement in the 1980s](#).

Can momentum be sustained?

Today, Canada faces another trade crisis with the U.S. Canadian

oil and gas is in high demand, even in a decarbonising Europe that's cut off from Russian supplies.

In addition, the [current nuclear renaissance](#), the combined result of climate change action and fossil fuel geopolitics, has made Canada's uranium a highly sought-after resource.

No wonder the EU and Canada are seemingly moving closer. But will the rhetoric around [middle power solidarity](#) and common values be enough to sustain the momentum?

Europeans and Canadians have always seen each other as friends, and Canada's Eurovision participation will only cement that war relationship. But historically, closer ties have not led to deeper integration in the long run.

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