**Long live Canadian public services!**

**Wednesday, June 8, 2011**

Strasbourg – Françoise Castex and the Public Services Intergroup are concerned about the trade agreement being negotiated between the EU and Canada.

Following today's adoption of a resolution on the trade agreement being negotiated between the EU and Canada, the Public Services Intergroup of the European Parliament is concerned about the precedent that this agreement would set if ratified under its present terms. For the first time, the European Commission in charge of negotiating the agreement wants all services included a priori. In other words, instead of specifying the services that come under the trade agreement—as permitted by international legislation—the Commission wants all services, including most public services, to be automatically covered by the Agreement, with the exception of those excluded by each Member State on a case-by-case basis, an approach based on a negative list.

**"Public services are not like other services; their exemption from international free trade agreements removes the risk of their being subject to international competition.The European Commission must respect this precedent to any international trade negotiation."**

In an internal working document, the Commission justifies this inclusion by the absence of a common definition of "public services" that are exempt under international trade regulations (GATS). **"The Public Services Intergroup has continually stressed the dangers inherent in the lack of clarity and regulatory certainty regarding public services.This is just another example."**

**"In negotiating free trade agreements, there are two essential elements: firstly, ensuring reciprocity, while of course respecting existing social and environmental legislation, because the EU must strive to achieve the same rights as those it offers to its trading partners; and, secondly, adopting a consistent, protective approach to services of general interest.But the agreement with Canada does not seem to meet these criteria, treating services of general interest only by default through the development of a negative list."**

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