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Ministers Fast and Rojas Welcome First Meeting of Canada-Colombia Free Trade Agreement Joint Commission

Minister Fast to lead trade mission to Colombia to build on free trade agreement to create jobs and opportunities for exporters

February 28, 2014 - Ottawa, Ontario - Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada

The Honourable Ed Fast, Minister of International Trade, today welcomed Santiago Rojas Arroyo, Colombia's Minister of Trade, Industry and Tourism, to Ottawa to discuss recent progress in the Canada-Colombia relationship.

Colombia is Canada's fifth-largest trading partner in Latin America and an established market for Canadian businesses, and has been identified as a priority under Canada's Strategy for Engagement in the Americas and Canada's Global Markets Action Plan.

The ministers highlighted the recent opening of Export Development Canada's new permanent office in Bogotá. Minister Fast announced he will be leading a trade mission to Colombia later this year to continue to grow trade and investment opportunities. The ministers also took stock of the benefits of the Canada-Colombia Free Trade Agreement following the first meeting of the Canada-Colombia Free Trade Agreement Joint Commission, which is mainly in charge of supervising the implementation of the agreement. The *Annual Report Pursuant to the Agreement Concerning Annual Reports on Human Rights and Free Trade Between Canada and the Republic of Colombia* will be tabled in Parliament in May 2014. According to the Government of Colombia, more than 285 of the country's companies exported to Canada for the first time, providing Canadian consumers with more choices and lower prices.

The ministers also discussed the progress of the Pacific Alliance, to which Canada is an observer.

Canada has identified opportunities for increased commercial collaboration between Canadian and Colombian companies in the agriculture and agri-food, infrastructure, energy, oil and gas and mining and telecommunications sectors.



Photo: Minister Fast (right) and Santiago Rojas Arroyo, Colombia's Minister of Trade, Industry and Tourism.

Quick Facts

- The Canada-Colombia Free Trade Agreement came into force in August 2011.
- In 2013, bilateral trade totalled \$1.4 billion.
- Major Canadian merchandise exports to Colombia include agriculture and agri-food, advanced manufacturing, forestry products and fertilizers.
- The total stock of Canadian direct investment in Colombia reached almost \$1.8 billion at the end of 2012.
- Colombia is a founding member of the Pacific Alliance, to which Canada became the first non-Latin American observer country in 2012.

Quotes

"Building on the momentum provided by our free trade agreement with Colombia is part of the Harper government's pro-trade plan to create jobs and opportunities for our workers and businesses across the country. I will lead a trade mission later this year to continue to support and provide opportunities for our exporters in this important market. By deepening our economic ties, we are helping to create a more prosperous, secure and equitable society for the people of Colombia."

- *Ed Fast, Minister of International Trade*

Associated Links

- [Canada-Colombia Free Trade Agreement Comes into Force](#)
- [Canada-Colombia Free Trade Agreement](#)
- [Global Markets Action Plan](#)
- [Annual Report Pursuant to the Agreement Concerning Annual Reports on Human Rights and Free Trade Between Canada and the Republic of Colombia \(tabled 2013\)](#)
- [EDC opens representation in Bogota as Canadian companies ramp up interest in market](#)

Contacts

Shannon Gutoskie
Press Secretary
Office of the Honourable Ed Fast
Minister of International Trade
613-992-7332

Media Relations Office
Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada
613-995-1874
media@international.gc.ca
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