

Minister Champagne welcomes modernized Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement

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Canada's relationship with Israel is based on strong economic, cultural and social ties. Israel is a long-time trading partner, and Canada's free trade agreement with Israel has contributed to better opportunities for businesses and economic prosperity for hard-working Canadians.

Today, the Honourable François-Phillippe Champagne, Minister of International Trade, and Eli Cohen, Israel's Minister of the Economy and Industry, announced the signing of the modernized Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement (CIFTA). Minister Champagne underlined the importance of the agreement as an engine of growth and prosperity for both countries.

Canada and Israel have modernized the original CIFTA to include progressive elements, such as dedicated chapters on labour, the environment, trade and gender, and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), as well as provisions on corporate social responsibility. New provisions will also help to make the dispute-settlement mechanism more efficient, effective and transparent.

The modernized CIFTA also includes further tariff reductions and eliminations for agricultural and agri-food products, which will provide improved access for Canadian exporters to the Israeli market. Better access for service suppliers in sectors where Canadians excel will help create more opportunities for established and first-time exporters and generating new jobs at home.

Quotes

"A strengthened economic partnership with Israel will help create better market access opportunities for Canadian businesses and eliminate tariffs in many sectors. New progressive elements on gender, on small and medium-sized enterprises and on corporate social responsibility, as well as labour and environmental protections, will help ensure that the benefits that flow from trade are more widely shared. Today's signing of the modernized Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement marks another milestone in our growing trade relationship while contributing to the growth and prosperity of both countries."

- *François-Phillippe Champagne, Minister of International Trade*

"In 1997, Israel became the third country to sign a free trade agreement with Canada. Since then, the trade between Canada and Israel has increased significantly. Today we are witnessing a historical step in the trade relations between the two countries with the signing of the upgraded agreement. The upgraded free trade agreement between Canada and Israel will open new opportunities for Israeli exports to this significant market."

- *Eli Cohen, Minister of the Economy and Industry of Israel*

Quick facts

- The original Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement came into effect on January 1, 1997.
- Since 1997, Canada's two-way merchandise trade with Israel has more than tripled, reaching \$1.7 billion in 2017.
- Canada's agriculture and agri-food exports to Israel, including lentils, chickpeas and canola seeds, totalled \$56.8 million in 2017.
- The inclusion of progressive elements, including chapters on labour, environment, gender and SMEs, is a first for Israel in a free trade agreement.