



CANADA-EUROPE TRANSATLANTIC DIALOGUE:
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Research Report

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**Comparing Modes of Governance in Canada and the European Union:
Social Policy in Multilevel Systems**

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The June 2013 issue of the *Canadian Public Administration* (CPA) journal, published by the Institute of Public Administration of Canada and guest-edited by CETD lead investigator Amy Verdun and Postdoctoral Fellow Donna E. Wood of the University of Victoria, features the theme: Comparing Modes of Governance in Canada and the European Union: Social Policy in Multilevel Systems. The journal will be available open-source until December 2013; [accessible here](#).¹ Both a [preview of the June 2013 issue](#)² and [key messages from the research](#)³ are available online.

Despite their differences, Canada and the EU face similar challenges in coordinating social programs across governments, regions and civil society. Our CPA contributors demonstrate a fascinating story of different trajectories at play – especially over the past fifteen years – with Canada on a decentralizing bent and the EU moving in the opposite direction, building a pan-European dimension to social policy that did not previously exist. The EU has accomplished this by using innovative governance

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approaches and techniques seldom used in Canada. Examining how the EU governs social policy in their complex multilevel system provides an opportunity to reflect on intergovernmental relations and social policy coordination in Canada, and a way to think about how we might improve social discourse and policy-making in Canada, as well as international networking and exchange on both sides of the Atlantic.

A series of workshops were held in 2013 to present the results from the journal's eleven contributors. For more information on these workshops, visit the CETD [event page](#).⁴ Most of these workshops were in Europe. Plans are underway to offer workshops in six Canadian cities (Vancouver, Edmonton, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal and Halifax) between March and June, 2014.

You can also read a [commentary by Dr. Wood](#) on this subject.⁵ In February 2013 she was in Bolzano Italy as the federal scholar in residence at the EURAC Institute for Federalism and Regionalism.⁶ Her research findings comparing Canadian and EU approaches to governing employment policy have now been [published online](#) in the European Autonomy and Diversity Papers (EDAP No. 06/2013) series.⁷

PhD Candidate and CETD intern, Ivan F. Dumka, has also assisted with the dissemination of this research. In June 2013 he presented at the European Social Observatory in Brussels, Belgium. A [podcast of his address](#) is available from the European Social Observatory website.⁸ Ivan has also written a CETD [commentary](#) on how the research was received in Europe.⁹

The CPA publication represents the culmination of three years of research by Dr. Wood and Dr. Verdun, supported through the [“Democratic Deficit” and Policy Coordination in Multilevel Systems](#) thematic research stream of the Canada-Europe Transatlantic Dialogue. The research started in 2010 with a [review of the existing Canadian and European literature](#).¹⁰ Then, in 2011, two policy briefs were written to provide preliminary assessments on the [key similarities and differences between Canada and the EU](#), and the [idea of Canada using EU governance ideas in the labour market policy field](#).¹¹

This was followed by a conference held at the University of Victoria on October 14-15, 2011, entitled [“Comparing Modes of Governance in Canada and the European](#)

Union: Social Policy Engagement across Complex Multilevel Systems”.¹² The research outlined in *Canadian Public Administration* is an outcome of that conference.

¹ <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/capa.2013.56.issue-2/issuetoc>.

² http://labs.carleton.ca/canadaeurope/wp-content/uploads/sites/9/Canadian-Public-Administration_June-2013_Vol-56-No-2_teaser.pdf.

³ <http://labs.carleton.ca/canadaeurope/wp-content/uploads/sites/9/Comparing-Modes-of-Governance-Key-Themes.pdf>.

⁴ <http://labs.carleton.ca/canadaeurope/cu-events/policy-workshops-on-governing-the-social-dimension-in-canadian-federalism-and-european-integration/>.

⁵ <http://labs.carleton.ca/canadaeurope/2013/hello-world/>

⁶ More information on Dr. Wood’s residency:

<http://www.eurac.edu/en/research/projects/ProjectDetails.html?pmode=4&textId=6629&pid=10009>.

⁷ http://www.eurac.edu/en/research/institutes/imr/activities/bookseries/edap/Documents/2013_edap06.pdf.

⁸ <http://labs.carleton.ca/canadaeurope/2013/podcast-governing-the-social-dimension-in-federal-systems-coordinating-governments-regions-and-stakeholders-in-times-of-austerity/>.

⁹ <http://labs.carleton.ca/canadaeurope/2013/commentary-governing-social-policy-in-multi-level-systems-emerging-literature-and-critiques-of-social-policy-in-the-eu-and-canada-by-ivan-f-dumka/>.

¹⁰ http://labs.carleton.ca/canadaeurope/wp-content/uploads/sites/9/Canada-EU_Annotated_Bibliography_Dec-2010.pdf.

¹¹ <http://labs.carleton.ca/canadaeurope/2011/policy-brief-governing-canada-and-the-eu-key-similarities-and-differences-by-amy-verdun-and-donna-wood/>; <http://labs.carleton.ca/canadaeurope/2011/policy-brief-using-european-governance-ideas-to-open-up-canadian-federalism-the-case-of-labour-market-policy-by-donna-wood/>.

¹² <http://web.uvic.ca/jmc/events/sep2011-aug2012/2011-10-modes-of-gov/>.