TRANSCRIPT OF THE BRUCEL PODCAST

SUBSERIES ON EUROPEAN STRATEGIC AUTONOMY

Guest: Thomas Verellen
Topic: EU-Canada Relations

Merijn

Welcome everyone to a new episode of the Brucel Podcast. I am Merijn Chamon. I'm professor of EU law here at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel. And today we have the first episode of a special series within the Brucel Podcast, a series dedicated to European strategic autonomy as part of a Jean Monnet chair that was awarded by the European Commission. Our topic in this sub-series is European strategic autonomy in a shifting multipolar world. And today we are very happy to welcome Thomas Verellen. Thomas Verellen is a professor of EU law at Utrecht University and at the Université Libre de Bruxelles, and he's a specialist on EU law in general, EU external relations law, and the external relations of Canada and comparative federalism.

Thomas, thank you very much for accepting the invitation to have this conversation today about EU-Canada relations and the importance of these relations for European strategic autonomy.

Thomas

Thank you very much for having me.

Merijn

We're recording this podcast a couple of days after the EU-Canada summit in Montreal at the end of October 2026.

We thought this was a nice occasion to reflect a bit on where this relationship EU-Canada is going, and how it fits in this broader debate that at least in the EU we're having, where we're trying, as the title of our subseries says, in a context

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where the multipolar world order seems to be shifting, how as Europeans we can acquire strategic autonomy?

Canada seems a natural ally. It is of course not a European country, and we'll get to that in our conversation. It's not a European country, but of the non-European countries, and Thomas correct me, or let me know if, you have a different opinion, but of all the non-European countries out there in the world, Canada is probably the most European.

So it does seem for us a natural ally. I'm also reminded of the speech by the Prime Minister of Canada, Carney, in Davos in January of this year, so January 2026. He called on the middle powers, of this world today to team up, and to form a bloc, to form an alliance, against the greater powers or to form an alliance to keep their autonomy, so the autonomy of these middle powers.

And then in the European Union, we had a significant development or at least,, something that caught many people's attention in September 2026 when in her State of the Union speech, Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, proposed the idea of associate membership for Canada. Now it's unclear where this idea of associate membership is going, because not all Member States are in favor of it, and we'll, get back to that issue, of the idea of associate membership for non-European countries.

But, Thomas, let me first ask you, what do you think is the main take-away from the summit that we Europeans had with our Canadian friends, at the end of October? What is your main takeaway?

Thomas

Thanks, Merijn. So the summit that was held in Montreal, in the province of Quebec in Canada on late October, is something the Europeans and the Canadians do regularly in the context of their bilateral relationship.

The fact itself that such a summit happens is not new, but the context in which it happens and the agendas that both parties are pursuing a lot has changed in recent years. And it's perhaps useful to first take a step back to kind of sketch how exactly or how dramatic the changes have been.

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For Canada, which is of course, a neighboring country to the United States, they have been confronted with a changing foreign policy of the United States, which moved from approaching Canada as its closest ally towards a policy of, frankly, hostility towards Canada, going as far as to threaten annexation and turning Canada into the 51st US state That demeanor has led to a quite significant reorientation of Canadian foreign policy.

For a few decades, Canada went all in on the Canada-US relationship with deep economic integration. Think of the NAFTA trade agreement, but also complete reliance on the United States where it comes to North American security. That is now shifting, and Canada has realized that it needs to look for new friends, and it is doing so all over the world.

The current Canadian federal government led by Mark Carney, a liberal government, got elected on a platform of making this shift happen. And so Canada's changing posture towards the European Union should be seen in that light of what is frankly perceived as an existential threat to Canada's sovereignty.

So in response to US policy, Canada looks across the Atlantic, as I mentioned, not only across the Atlantic, but perhaps primarily to the other side of the Atlantic for new friends. Which brings me to the EU and the EU-Canada relationship, which has a long history. Canada has been a member of NATO, as are most EU Member States.

The relationship has had an important commercial dimension. Think of the CETA Trade Agreement that exists between both parties, and we'll get back to that later, which is still provisionally applied. So all of that existed, but there's been a real effort, by Canada's federal government to get as close as they can get to the EU without becoming a member of the EU, Canada not being a European country, as was mentioned earlier.

So there is that drive on the EU side, or on the Canadian side rather, but also on the EU side, the EU also is confronted with a changing United States. The United States is no longer a reliable partner where it comes to trade, where it comes to, security. So the EU too is looking for new friends, and then Canada and the EU seem they seem made for each other. There are lots of complementarities between both economies. They share values. So there is a lot to be said for a closer relationship between the two. Coming to the summit which took place about a month after the State of the Union address by Ursula von der Leyen in the

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European Parliament, there was a lot of hype around this summit and this had to do also with the door that Commission President von der Leyen opened to Canada to become the EU's first associate member, which then led to the question, what is, associate membership?

And I'm sure we'll, we'll get back to that as well. There was a hope or an anticipation that that question would be answered to some extent by, this summit, one month later. I'm not certain that it has. Well, I'm convinced this question hasn't been answered. The notion of associate membership does not appear in the joint statement that has been published.

It's not clear at this point whether this will materialize further or not. So there was a lot of hype towards this summit, a lot of plans, a lot of ideas. What are the actual accomplishments? There are a few tangible accomplishments. A digital trade agreement. The negotiations towards a digital trade agreement have been concluded.

A second-generation competition, agreement has been concluded, or at least the negotiations towards such an agreement. Something that is, I think, important is that there is an agreement between Canada on the one hand and the European Investment Bank on the other. A word on what this means.

Canada is a vast country with, huge amounts of, natural resources, including many critical raw materials. Canada wants to export those materials. It also wants to process those materials within its border and then export processed, goods. Europe wants those materials to reduce its dependency on primarily China.

So there's been a big push towards collaboration in the field of critical raw materials. The EU has adopted its Critical Raw Materials Act, which allows the Commission to designate projects both within and outside the European Union as strategic projects. There are several such projects or candidate projects in Canada.

This deal with the European Investment Bank will make it easier to finance building mines, building processes, processing facilities, and so forth. So I think that's an important accomplishment of this summit. There's also collaboration on AI and computing where Canada can participate in EU programs.

There will be more collaboration between the Canadian Border Guard and Frontex. So there's a series of sectoral agreements that have already been reached.

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But the goal is to continue negotiating to give further shape to this what's called by some associate membership or others, this alliance of the future. And those negotiations, they will continue for, years to come, my guess would be.

Merijn

Right. Thank you. That's very interesting also, as you said in this joint statement by both parties at the conclusion of their meeting in Montreal. If you read that, and I invite the listeners, to go ahead and look up this joint statement, it indeed covers almost any and every area of possible cooperation. So in that sense this idea of associate membership, regardless whether it exists and, we'll get back to that, as you said even if we don't call it associate membership, there doesn't seem to be an area of cooperation that is not yet envisaged between both parties. That leads me to my question, does it in the end matter how we call this relationship? Whether we call it associate membership or not, if we're already cooperating on all these areas in a, depending on the area, rather deep and comprehensive way. Does the name of the animal make a difference?

Thomas

Well I think the Canadians would, respond to that question by saying, "No, it doesn't matter. It's an issue of semantics. What matters is the content." And the content is, as mentioned, further cooperation, a deepening of the relationship in various sectors.

And then whatever package of agreements and deals they eventually get to, I suppose that could be called associate membership. I think the Canadians, they are focused on that content and not so much in the categories, and particularly because the category seems politically fraught. Perhaps we can talk about how this notion entered into, into discourse on the EU side. It appeared in the State of the Union speech of Ursula von der Leyen. Many Member States were, not aware that it would be included. Several Member States opposed the term, which made the relationship with Canada suddenly politically controversial, which it perhaps shouldn't have been.

So the Canadians, I don't think like the term very much. They've never applied for membership. They never will. The prime minister himself uses this term that you mentioned earlier, Canada is the most European of the non-European

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countries, but it's still a non-European country. I tend to agree with that assessment that the term complicates more than that it helps things forward.

It reflects a little bit of the EU's classic integrationist discourse, with concentric circles and how close does Canada want to get or is it able to get to the core. Whereas Canada more envisages a relationship between sovereign partners, because ultimately this is also what this friendship, this alliance for the future is about for Canada.

I mentioned it, Canada's fraught relationship with the United States. Canada wants to protect its sovereignty, and it's looking for other partners with which it can bolster its own sovereignty and that of its partners. Membership implies pooling sovereignty, sharing sovereignty and that's not exactly what Canada is looking for.

Merijn

I think this is important to point out to our listeners. Because it can be more than semantics if it becomes part of political symbolism. And here it's also important, I think, especially for those listeners that are wondering why these people bother so much about the term associate membership?

Because if, one were to look in the EU treaties, which is the basic document spelling out how the EU should function, of course it has a procedure that allows you to become a member of the EU. That's Article 49 TEU. But there is no legal category of associate membership. On the other hand, there is the idea of an association, so a non-EU country can be associated with the EU. If it's a European country, it can ask to join the EU, but there is no such thing as associate membership. And then, as you said, Thomas, a number of people were caught By surprise by the suggestion of Ursula von der Leyen in her State of the Union. , And it wasn't received very well. As you just said, also the Canadians, they're not really, asking for an associate membership. It confuses a bit how they can pursue their interests. Which makes me wonder, if we bring it back to this idea of strategic autonomy and this idea that we need more partnerships and strong partnerships to achieve strategic autonomy, to strengthen ourselves against the bigger players like China and the US, these episodes where Ursula von der Leyen or the Commission plays a bit *cavalier seul*, how helpful is this for us Europeans in achieving strategic autonomy? Do you have an opinion on that?

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Thomas

My answer would be that I don't think it is very helpful. I tend to agree with the Canadian assessment here that the term confuses things, obscures things, and this is a bit of a distraction ultimately because there are several files on which further collaboration is possible. Instead, time is, and energy is spent on, discussing legal categories that, as you mentioned, currently don't even exist. So I don't think it contributes much, certainly not to the EU's own pursuit of strategic autonomy. To the contrary, I would say, because it makes it harder to reach agreements with the partners, even with partners like Canada, with whom the EU shares so many values and that is and could become an even stronger partner moving forward.

Merijn

Talking about all these, possible avenues for strengthening our relationship with Canada, one thing that you already mentioned but that to me stands out is this idea of, deepening or strengthening our trade relationship, which we of course already have. It's for the greatest part based on the CETA trade agreement.

And again, for the listeners, the EU and Canada negotiated a trade agreement in the 2010s. It was finalized, the negotiations, in 2016. But then it was a bit tricky to have the agreement concluded, or it still is because, again, purely technically in a legal sense, the agreement has not entered into force yet.

But it is, again, a legal technique, it is provisionally applied, which essentially in practice means the same thing, but it puts the trade relationship which we have with Canada on a bit less of a secure footing. So for legal certainty, it is preferable that this agreement would formally enter into force.

Today, that is not the case yet. Why? Well, because when the EU concludes trade agreements, often these agreements, they are not technically an agreement between the EU and Canada. It is an agreement between the EU together with all its Member States and Canada, which means that every Member State, in addition to the EU, in addition to Canada, needs to ratify this agreement.

And as our listener can imagine, it takes some time for the EU and the 27 Member States to go through this ratification process, which in some Member States is much more politically contentious than in others. So just before recording this podcast we looked up the state of play of this ratification, and we saw that the

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latest Member State that has now ratified the CETA agreement is Slovenia after the change in government there. They notified that the internal process of agreeing to this trade agreement was completed in the beginning of November 2026. But there are several Member States including Belgium that have not gone through the whole approval procedure internally, which means that this agreement with Canada, a very important agreement that has increased trade between the EU and Canada a lot still remains merely provisionally applied, and this already for almost 10 years.

At least to me, but I might be naive, it came a bit of a surprise that you have a joint statement now where both partners say, "Well, we want to even deepen this cooperation," the current cooperation, which is still not firmly approved by all Member States.

And again, that makes me wonder how is this perceived from the Canadian side? Because the Canadians, as you said, they're also looking for partners. They feel the pressure of the US, they probably want to diversify. And in that sense, the EU is an interesting partner. But how does this affect, from the Canadian perspective, our European credibility if almost 10 years after we have signed off on this agreement, we still cannot tell the Canadians, "Okay, on the EU side, we now completely approve this agreement, and this is fixed in law." I can imagine that , the Canadians are sometimes a bit frustrated with how we function in the EU and, what does that mean also then for our ambition to strengthen a partnership and to be more strategically autonomous. What's your take on that?

Thomas

I would say from a Canadian perspective that the perception is double. On one hand, there is bewilderment. I should add that for many Canadians, it's not clear how the EU is structured, what the EU is. It's not a state. Then what is it? Is it an international organization?

How does it work? What exactly is the relationship between the Member States of the EU and the EU institutions? What is the difference between the Commission and the Council? And then there's also this European Parliament. The understanding of how the EU is structured and how it works is perhaps a bit limited.

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But this is the case for many of the EU's partners. The EU is a very complicated beast. So on one hand, bewilderment as to how this is possible, because when we talk about CETA, Canada negotiated a trade agreement with the European Commission, and then at the very end of these trade negotiations, a decision was made, and this was not clear throughout the negotiation process, that this agreement would become a mixed agreement, meaning that all the Member States need to ratify it in addition to the EU itself.

So this came as a big surprise to Canada back, as of now, ten years ago. And yeah bewilderment is the term here. At the same time, Canada is itself a federal system and a very decentralized system. So Canada knows very well how these dynamics work and how important it is to have all the members of the federation on board.

So during those CETA negotiations, for the first time in Canada's history, Canada's provinces were directly involved in the negotiations on issues that fall within provincial exclusive jurisdiction, precisely to ensure that when the time to ratify comes, that all provinces are politically committed to doing their part.

So unlike in the EU, where a mixed agreement needs to be ratified by the EU and the Member States, in Canada, ratification can happen by the federal level of government alone. But legislation is also needed to implement parts of that agreement, so you do need the provinces to be on board as well. So Canadians know and are not surprised and have understanding for those type of dynamics as well.

Merijn

For this reason also, I'm very happy that you're here, Thomas, because you of course have an intimate knowledge of Canadian federalism, how it works internally.

If I understood you correctly, if you compare how CETA is managed in Canada compared to in the EU. In the EU, we turned it into a mixed agreement, as you said, which basically means that the EU has to approve and then all the Member States on their own also have to approve.

I I understood you correctly, that is not the case in Canada. The provinces are not formal parties to this agreement. That would be the mirror image of what we're doing in the EU. Did I understood you correctly that also for the approval on the

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Canadian side, the provinces do not have a veto on the conclusion, but you'd need the provinces afterwards in the implementation.

So the Canadian provinces can create a problem for their own federal government if in the implementation stage of the agreement, they refuse to adopt the necessary legislation or to amend existing legislation and then they would create a problem for their own federal government. That's how it works on the Canadian side.

Thomas

Yes, that's right. So indeed, provinces are not parties to CETA. They're not direct partners in the same way that EU Member States are parties to CETA on the EU side. But at the same time, Canadian federalism is structured in such a way that only the federal government can make treaties, but the power to implement treaties remains divided.

So depending on the subject matter that is covered by an international agreement, you may or you may not require provinces to undertake legislative action, especially in a system which traditionally is considered a dualist system. So to make treaties legally binding within the domestic legal order, you need legislative action.

That division that exists internally, certain issues are federal jurisdiction, other issues are provincial jurisdiction, that continues to play where it comes to the implementation of treaties, which is a point in which Canada is different from the US, where they do have that general power to implement treaties.

Merijn

Right. Bringing our discussion back to specific areas where we cooperate, you already mentioned this cooperation in critical raw materials. How does this work more concretely?

We as Europeans, we will diversify where our much needed critical raw materials come from. We want to become less dependent on China. But if you have knowledge on that, because it's also quite technical, I imagine, how realistic is it to diversify? I imagine that this also requires some investment in infrastructure on the Canadian side to make sure that their critical raw materials reach us in the EU.

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Thomas

Yeah, absolutely. That's a huge challenge. Canada is a huge country. The distances are, are vast. It is a country that is not at all densely populated so that also poses challenges. There are lots of natural resources, but they're often hundreds if not thousands of kilometers away from major population centers, so huge logistical challenges.

You also have the issue of federalism there where it comes to critical raw materials. The permitting is primarily a provincial issue, so you do need provinces to collaborate. But going back to the logistical point as I mentioned earlier, Canada's economy is closely integrated with that of the United States.

So supply chains, trade flows, they tend to go north-south. Meaning provinces will have close relationships, trading relationships, economic relationships with their US neighbors directly to the south often more so than with their neighbors to the east and the west, the neighboring provinces.

So for Canada to now try to reshift or reorientate those trade flows and those relationships and those supply chains is a huge challenge. And you see that, well, I think primarily with oil and gas, where you have the province of Alberta, which has enormous oil and gas supplies in the north of the province.

It's a never-ending discussion within Canada on whether or how to build pipelines going east and west. There is one pipeline going to the Pacific Ocean. There are now discussions on building a second pipeline. You need the agreement of the province of British Columbia to do that, but they have traditionally been opposed. You also need the involvement of First Nations in Canada, which need to be consulted and that need to ultimately also agree to those projects. Getting oil and/or gas from Alberta to the Atlantic coast of Canada, which is thousands of kilometers away requires a pipeline to be built across multiple provinces or terminals to be built on the Great Lakes or even north at the Hudson Bay.

This is all very complicated. So there's a big demand for critical raw materials and also LNG, so liquified natural gas, which was also mentioned in the joint statement that was adopted. But it will take a long time for this to materialize.

I mentioned the agreement with the European Investment Bank, so capital is being mobilized to get projects going. Within Canada, there's also a bill pending

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in Parliament, that establishes what's called the Major Projects Office, which a little bit like the strategic projects that we have on the EU side , under the Critical Raw Materials Act, which allows for faster permitting, which makes it easier to mobilize capital. Environmental impact assessments would be to the opposition of many also, and arguably also for good reason, are criticized because they weaken environmental standards. But there is legislative change happening on the Canadian side as well to get those projects off the ground.

And so what type of projects perhaps? So think of mines, but also processing facilities, infrastructure to get those materials from where they are mined and processed to ports to then be exported.

Merijn

That's very interesting and hearing you talk I'm starting to realize that it's not just a matter of saying, "Well, let's, now cooperate on critical raw materials and the Canadians will ship us some nice critical raw materials that we can use."

I mean, the infrastructure needs to be there. I'm wondering also in light of what you said in the beginning of our conversation, the Canadians realize that the US becomes a liability, and they want to diversify. The Canadians are, in that sense, in a much more vulnerable position, even more vulnerable than we are because they are much more dependent, I assume, on the US economy than we are.

I assume that the sense of urgency in Canada is there, that something needs to be done. In Europe, we also see a sense of urgency, but it varies, I have the impression. We're recording, as I said, this podcast, mid-November, so it's a week after the midterms in the US. Given that huge investments are required to set up a partnership in the end in areas such as critical raw materials, huge amounts of resources will have to be invested.

Do you think that there's a risk that the momentum can fade away because the Canadians now look at what is happening in the US and they could start betting on the US getting a new leadership in two years, a much more friendly Congress, much more friendly president, and then everything will return to normal? In the EU, I assume some people are also hoping for that. But if that is the case, then of course the momentum could slip away to make these big investments what do you think is the risk of that momentum slipping away?

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Thomas

I think an important fact to keep in mind is that of geography, that Canada is a neighboring country to the United States. It shares, a continent-wide border with the US. I don't know the exact numbers but if I recall correctly, over 65% of Canada's external trade is with the US.

At the moment, the vast majority of that trade is still taking place on preferential terms under the CUSMA agreement. This is the former NAFTA agreement, which will be negotiated in the near future. Ultimately, Canada has to make an agreement with the United States. There's no way around it. So if you look at Canada's relations with other jurisdictions, they cannot be understood in isolation from Canada's relationship with the US. The entire warming of relationships, all the projects that Canada is undertaking with the EU they could, to some extent, also be understood as a way to hedge against the US, but also to build leverage in Canada's trade negotiations with the United States.

Two days after the Montreal summit there was news reporting saying that the negotiations with the US had resumed. The American President came out saying that they're close to reaching an agreement, which then was contradicted by the Prime Minister of Canada. But those negotiations are ongoing, and somehow an agreement will have to be found. The discussion in Canada after the midterms is now one of: should we make an agreement now with the current administration and perhaps lock in some level of tariffs, which seems inevitable under the current administration? Or should we sit out the current president and hope for a return to normal, which is always the big hope in Canada, that it would be possible to go back to the pre 2016 period.

Those discussions are ongoing. Will they affect what is happening with the EU? That's difficult to predict. I do think that the ambition of Canada to diversify is really sincere. This is also older than the current predicament that Canada now finds itself in with the United States. When NAFTA was negotiated in the 1990s, before that, a bilateral trade agreement with the US, you had these same discussions that Canada should not sell itself out to the US and become so dependent. It should instead diversify trade. So that ambition to diversify trade has always been there, but as we discussed, the logistics of it are so challenging in such a huge country. Will it impact the momentum? That we can only speculate. I do think the ambition to diversify is real.

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I think also when you talk about critical raw materials, there will be competition. Like the EU is not the only trading partner that wants access to Canadian critical raw materials. The US also wants those materials. Will the EU have the ability to get the materials, the volumes, et cetera, that it wants when it is competing with US capital? That also remains to be seen.

Merijn

This is all hugely interesting and I'm looking at my papers and we had a number of other potential topics to discuss, but I'm afraid we'll have to wrap up. I'm wondering now for you, in the near future what is the main topic that you're interested in, in seeing how it will further develop? We just discussed the critical raw materials. Is it that topic that you think we'll need to watch out for in our EU-Canada relations? And of course, I'm asking from the perspective of strategic autonomy for the EU. What do you think is something to look out for?

Thomas

Well, the critical raw materials are very important, but it's not the only element. I think another issue that we should look at, and this is where the relationship could be very beneficial, is collaboration in multilateral fora. Canada and the EU partnering within wider fora to get things done that align with their values, which is already happening to some extent.

The notion of associate membership has been used, but the term that the Canadians actually prefer is that of an alliance for the future, which they see as something that is not limited to Canada and the EU, but that is open to other like-minded parties. And you can think of Australia, New Zealand, Japan, kind of the traditional US allies really.

Collaboration with those jurisdictions is something that Canada is looking at. You see this in the field of trade, where Canada has been pushing for a closer connection between the European Union on the one hand and the Pacific Trade Agreement, the CPTPP, which is quite a difficult term. It's a free trade area consisting mainly of countries that neighbor the Pacific Ocean, but also since 2024, the UK, which is also looking for new trading partners. Canada tries to be a bridge between those two. There has been some talk about: could the EU perhaps join the CPTPP and thereby form a trading bloc that would encompass a large part of global trade, not including the US, not including China.

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Membership will not happen, but there is closer collaboration happening. So in the field of trade, this is something that I find very interesting, and I'm curious how this will develop further. Also, within the United Nations, at the last meeting of the United Nations General Assembly, there has been an initiative that involved Canada and the EU, but also Brazil, Kenya, other states partnering up to defend multilateralism.

And I think that here there's an important role for both Canada and the EU to, and this connects also to strategic autonomy, partner in defense of their shared values and to defend also the multilateral structures that are under threat or perhaps even to set up new ones. Ultimately, this is the best way for middle powers like Canada, but also the EU to defend their own national interest and to defend their own strategic autonomy.

The EU, if you look at it as a club of small and middle powers, has a lot to gain from continuing to invest in multilateralism. So I think the path towards strategic autonomy runs through collaboration with like-minded countries like Canada to restore multilateralism. Canada alone won't be enough, but there are other partners out there.

We would be mistaken to think that we live in a world in which might makes right and international law doesn't mean anything at all anymore. There are many partners out there that I think could be rallied in support of an effort to revive multilateralism.

Merijn

I think this is a very nice idea to close our discussion because indeed in strategic autonomy, our discussions are often the policy discussions about things like the critical raw materials or defense and spending and military capabilities, energy independence, so material conditions.

But a huge asset of strategic autonomy for the EU indeed will lie almost inevitably in ensuring that multilateralism and the rules-based international order keeps functioning. That is an important intangible asset which we should not forget about when our discussions are often about these tangible assets.

So thank you very much, Thomas. I think we had a very nice discussion. I would have enjoyed discussing further with you, but we have a time limit on our podcast.

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I would just like to tell the listeners that Thomas is working on these questions that we've discussed. As I said in the beginning, an expert on EU external relations and, relations with Canada.

So if you're interested in those topics have a look also at his website. It's www.thomasverellen.com, where you can keep track of his latest work. And with that, I would like to close this podcast, again thanking the generous support of the European Commission, because this podcast is part of a Jean Monnet project.

And I'd like to thank you again, Thomas, for having this nice discussion.

Thomas

Thank you very much, Merijn. It was fun.

Merijn

Thanks. Hear you next time for a new podcast.

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