

news release

Canada-Costa Rica Labour Agreement enters into force

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OTTAWA, ONTARIO - The Canada-Costa Rica Agreement on Labour Cooperation signed by the Minister of Labour, the Honourable Claudette Bradshaw, and former Costa Rican Labour and Social Security Minister Bernardo Benavides, comes into force today, November 1, 2002. The labour agreement is one of two parallel accords to the Canada-Costa Rica Free Trade Agreement signed by Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and former Costa Rican President Miguel Angel Rodriguez Echeverria on April 23, 2001, in Ottawa. A similar environment side-agreement was also signed.

"The Canada-Costa Rica agreement is another milestone in our efforts to protect workers' rights and promote core labour standards," said Minister Bradshaw. "We will continue to develop strong working relationships with other countries such as Costa Rica and the countries of the Americas."

The Canada-Costa Rica Agreement on Labour Cooperation commits both countries to the effective enforcement of domestic labour law related to principles and rights included in the 1998 International Labour Organization (ILO) Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. These principles include freedom of association and collective bargaining; the abolition of forced labour and child labour; and the elimination of discrimination in employment. The Agreement also includes a cooperative work program and a mechanism to allow the public to raise concerns about the effective application of labour law in the other country. This mechanism can lead to ministerial consultations and an independent third-party review panel.

For more information on the Canada-Costa Rica Agreement on Labour Cooperation and other background material, visit our Web site at labour.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca.

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See the attached [Backgrounder](#) for more details

FOR INFORMATION:

David Klug
Office of the Minister of Labour
(819) 953-5646

Linda Bergeron
Labour Communications
(819) 997-2508

BACKGROUND

THE CANADA-COSTA RICA AGREEMENT ON LABOUR COOPERATION

THE AGREEMENT

The Canada-Costa Rica Agreement on Labour Cooperation (CCRALC) is one of two parallel agreements to the Free Trade Agreement with Costa Rica; the other side accord addresses the environment.

WHAT IS IN THE AGREEMENT

The CCRALC highlights cooperation in labour matters and the effective enforcement of domestic labour law related to principles and rights included in the 1998 International Labour Organization (ILO) Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. These principles include freedom of association and collective bargaining; the abolition of forced labour and child labour; and the elimination of discrimination in employment.

The Agreement also includes a cooperative work program and a mechanism to allow the public to raise concerns about the effective application of labour law in the other country. This mechanism can lead to ministerial consultations and an independent third-party review panel.

The full text of the Agreement is posted at labour.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/pdf/pdf_e/costarica_english.pdf.

HOW THE AGREEMENT WORKS

The Agreement provides for a ministerial council that comprises Ministers responsible for labour affairs in both countries and a national point of contact in each country.

The parties under the Canada-Costa Rica Agreement on Labour Cooperation have undertaken six obligations:

1. **General Commitments:** each party shall ensure that its labour law embodies and provides protection for the labour principles and rights included in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.
2. **Government Enforcement Action:** each party shall promote compliance with and effectively enforce its labour law through appropriate government action.
3. **Private action:** each party shall ensure that persons with a legally recognized interest under its law have appropriate access to administrative, quasi-judicial or labour tribunals for the enforcement of the party's law.
4. **Procedural Guarantees:** each party shall ensure that its proceedings for the enforcement of its labour law comply with due process of the law.
5. **Publication:** each party shall ensure that its laws, regulations, procedures and administrative rulings of general application are made available.
6. **Public Information:** each party shall make available public information respecting its labour law.

Cooperative Work Program

The parties may develop programs of cooperative activities to promote the achievement of the objectives of this Agreement. In carrying out these activities, the Parties may cooperate through:

- ≍ seminars, training sessions, working groups and conferences;
- ≍ joint research projects, including sector studies;
- ≍ technical assistance; and
- ≍ other means to which the parties may agree.

APPLICATION OF THE AGREEMENT IN CANADA

An intergovernmental agreement concerning the CCRALC will be established to enable provinces and territories to participate in managing and implementing the bilateral agreement.