

Call for Applications

France–Canada Future Leaders Programme on Defence and Diplomacy Issues



Program Description:

This programme aims to deepen Franco-Canadian strategic exchanges, as well as dialogue with the broader Euro-Atlantic community, in a context marked by shifting security balances and the growing centrality of the Arctic in defence and sovereignty issues. In the face of the hardening of Russia's strategic posture, persistent U.S.–China strategic competition, and the proliferation of hybrid threats, Canada is called upon to strengthen its role as a northern power and to adapt its deterrence and cooperation tools. The 2027 edition of the programme focuses more specifically on three structuring pillars: (1) the development of minilateral cooperation formats as complements to existing multilateral frameworks; (2) Canada's role in Arctic and North Atlantic security, including through partnerships with European and Nordic allies; and (3) the capabilities, technologies, and industrial policies required to strengthen the sovereignty, resilience, and strategic credibility of Canada and its partners, with particular attention to artificial intelligence and emerging technologies applied to defence, notably their use in the Arctic environment. In connection with these core issues, other cross-cutting themes will also be addressed.

Building on the continuity of previous editions of the programme (2024, 2025 and 2026), this initiative seeks to consolidate a network of emerging leaders—primarily Franco-Canadian, but also from other countries within the Euro-Atlantic community—who will be encouraged to maintain regular exchanges on security and defence issues. The group, composed of approximately ten participants, will take part in two study visits of approximately five days each: one in Europe (France and potentially Belgium) and one in Canada (primarily Ottawa, Montréal and Quebec City). These visits will combine closed-door sessions (small-group workshops with political, military, diplomatic, academic, or industry stakeholders) and public-facing events (conferences and roundtables).

Selection Criteria:

Applications for this programme are open until **15 November 2026 (inclusive)**. Applicants are required to complete the application form below and attach a CV. The complete application must be sent by email to: info@forum-defense-strategie.org, bbp.francecanada@gmail.com.

The application form and preliminary programme are available on the dedicated Call for Applications page on the Defense and Strategy Forum (FDS) website.

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- As the programme aims to build a network of emerging leaders, it is exclusively open to candidates under the age of 40 as of **1 March 2027**.
- The programme is open to French or Canadian nationals (as well as Canadian permanent residents), and to nationals of other countries within the broader European and transatlantic community.
- As programme activities will take place in French and/or English, candidates must demonstrate excellent proficiency (C1 or C2 level) in at least one of the two languages, as well as very strong passive comprehension (oral and written) of the other.

Additional Information

- No specific professional background or academic field is targeted. The selection process will seek to ensure diversity of profiles within the cohort. Approximately ten participants will be selected.
- **The organising associations will cover the costs related to the programme's activities (transportation and accommodation) for all participants once their participation has been confirmed.** Active engagement in the programme is expected, including participation in both study visits and workshops, interaction with other members, and contribution to publications. Failure to meet these commitments may result in non-payment of the engagement, attendance, and publication award and may lead to exclusion from the programme.
- At the end of the programme, including completion of the publications mentioned below, an engagement, attendance, and publication award of **EUR 200** will be paid to participants, subject to compliance with the commitments outlined above.

The network's inaugural online meeting will take place in **mid-February 2027**.

Participant Contributions

As part of the programme, participants will be invited to contribute actively to collective outputs aimed at showcasing and disseminating the reflections developed throughout the exchanges. Following the programme, **three to four bilingual strategic briefs** will be published in **fall 2027 / winter 2028**. They will address the main themes explored throughout the programme, including Arctic security and Canadian leadership in the Arctic, minilateral cooperation formats, the protection of critical infrastructure and resources, as well as issues related to capabilities, emerging technologies, and artificial intelligence applied to defence. The specific topics will be defined and refined on the basis of the discussions and work carried out by participants throughout the programme.

These briefs will form the backbone of a collective publication aligned with the programme's themes. Speakers participating in public events will also be invited to submit a policy brief related to their presentation, which may be integrated into the collective publication. The briefs—and potentially the collective publication—are expected to be published and made available in both English and French.

Financial Contribution from Selected Candidates

Participation in the programme requires a financial contribution intended to cover part of the actual costs related to the organisation of the study visits, workshops, events, and associated outputs (transportation, accommodation, logistics, organisation of meetings, and publications).

- Once selected and notified, candidates will have **7 days** to confirm or withdraw their application.
- Once their participation has been confirmed, candidates will have **15 days** to pay the financial contribution by bank transfer. Failure to complete payment within this timeframe may lead to exclusion from the programme.
- Financial contributions are non-refundable.

Three categories of candidates are distinguished:

1) Candidates with student status (*Master's students, PhD candidates, and postdoctoral researchers*)

For candidates with student status, the financial contribution is **EUR 1,200**. This amount includes the EUR 200 engagement, attendance, and publication award, which will be paid back at the end of the programme, subject to compliance with the expected commitments.

2) Young Professionals

For young professionals who completed their studies in or after **summer 2016**, the financial contribution is **EUR 2,400**. This category is intended in particular to enable candidates in the early stages of their professional careers to participate under adapted financial conditions, whether they work in the public sector, private sector, academia, the armed forces, international organisations, or civil society. This amount includes the EUR 200 engagement, attendance, and publication award, which will be paid back at the end of the programme, subject to compliance with the expected commitments.

3) Professionals

For candidates who completed their studies before **summer 2016**, the financial contribution is **EUR 2,900**. This amount includes the EUR 200 engagement, attendance, and publication award, which will be paid back at the end of the programme, subject to compliance with the expected commitments.

This contribution remains below the actual cost of participation in the programme, with part of the expenses covered through the programme's own resources and the support of its partners.

Any request for additional information may be addressed to: info@forum-defense-strategie.org, bbp.francecanada@gmail.com.

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