



Celebrating
50 years: EU–Australia

Timeline

of EU–Australia relations: 1962–2012

1962

Australia's first Ambassador to the EEC, Sir Edwin McCarthy.



1978

The European Parliament's Committee on External Economic Relations releases a report on the state of the Australian–EC relationship.

Australian Minister for Special Trade Negotiations, Vic Garland, visits EC member governments for talks on access to the EC for Australian goods. An agreement is reached on the export of Australian steel products to the EC.

1980

A preliminary round of Ministerial meetings is held in Canberra.

Fifty years ago, the focus for the Europe–Australia relationship was trade. Today, the relationship includes cooperation in areas such as security matters, climate change, development aid, science and education.

Regular ministerial consultations alternate between Australia and Europe, and discussions go far beyond trade, to international hotspots such as Afghanistan, and North Korea. There is greater bilateral cooperation in international fora such as the UN and G20. As the relationship commemorates its 50th anniversary, the EU and Australia are negotiating a Framework Agreement which will bring all the elements of cooperation under one umbrella in the form of a legal, binding agreement.

1968

The EEC and Australia negotiate an agreement under GATT.

1974

European Commission Vice-President, Sir Christopher Soames, visits Canberra. Agreement on holding informal consultations at the official level. Australian PM Gough Whitlam visits the European Commission.

1976

Ministerial consultations begin.

1977

Australian PM Malcolm Fraser visits the European Commission and proposes regular high-level consultations. Minister for Special Trade Negotiations with the EC, John Howard, leads a delegation in talks with the EC.



1981

The Delegation of the Commission of the European Communities to Australia opens in Canberra. The first official Ministerial Consultations are held in Brussels.

1990

1982

A 30-year Agreement on Nuclear Transfers with the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) comes into force. Commission President Gaston Thorn visits Australia and officially opens the EC Delegation in the presence of Australian PM Malcolm Fraser.

1983

The second Ministerial Consultations are held in Brussels.

1984

Accreditation of the Delegation of the Commission of the European Communities to Australia is extended to New Zealand. The third Ministerial Consultations are held in Canberra.

1985

Australian PM Bob Hawke visits Brussels to meet the new President of the European Commission, Jacques Delors. The Minister for Primary Industry, John Kerin, has meetings in Europe on Australia's agricultural exports. Under the Andriessen Assurance, the EC undertakes not to supply subsidised beef in specified markets.

The fourth Ministerial Consultations are held in Brussels. The EC and Australia sign an arrangement to identify areas of cooperation in science and technology.

The EC and Australia agree to enhance their dialogue, with Ministerial meetings when necessary and with the EC Presidency Political Director every six months. The eighth Ministerial Consultations are held in Brussels.

1991

The ninth Ministerial Consultations are held in Canberra. The Agricultural Trade and Marketing Experts' Group (ATMEG) is revived. Agreements are made on: information exchange on the environment; and the set up of an EU-Australia Joint Group on Industrial Cooperation (JGIC).

Ministerial consultations are held in Luxembourg in June and in The Hague in September.

1992

In March, Ministerial discussions are held in Lisbon. The 10th Ministerial Consultations are held in Brussels, focussing on the Uruguay Round.

The European Business Cooperation Network (BC-NET) is extended to Australia.

1993

Ministerial Consultations are held in January in Copenhagen, and Brussels in September with the EU Presidency (Belgium).

1994

The 11th Ministerial Consultations are held in Canberra in February. The EC/Australia JGIC has its second meeting in March. Australian PM Paul Keating visits Brussels for discussions with Commission President Jacques Delors.

The EC signs a Framework Partnership Contract with Care Australia. The European Community-Australia Wine Agreement is signed. The EC-Australia Agreement on Scientific and Technical Cooperation comes into force.

1997

Ministerial consultations are held with the EU Presidency (Netherlands) in The Hague in January and in Kuala Lumpur in July. Discussions take place in Brussels between the European Commission VP Manuel Marin, and the Australian Foreign Minister, Alexander Downer, on the proposed Framework Trade and Cooperation Agreement. In March, Australia rejects the agreement and negotiations commence on a non-treaty status Political Agreement.

In June, the Joint Declaration on EU-Australia relations is signed. The 14th Ministerial Consultations are held in Brussels in September.

1998

The first Australia-EU Troika Talks on Asia are held in Brussels. Ministerial Consultations are held in London in January and Manila in July, including Australian, Austrian and UK Foreign Ministers and the EU Presidency (Austria).

In June, the 15th Ministerial Consultations are held in Canberra, with parallel Senior Officials' Meetings.



1986

Australian PM Bob Hawke visits Brussels. The fifth Ministerial Consultations are held in Canberra.

1987

The sixth Ministerial Consultations are held in Brussels.

1988

Commissioner Willy De Clercq and Australian PM Bob Hawke lead the seventh Ministerial Consultations in Canberra.

1995

PM Keating and Commission President Jacques Santer suggest that the EU and Australia develop a Framework Agreement. The 12th Ministerial Consultations are held in May in Brussels, with parallel Senior Officials Meeting and EU/Australia High Level Environment talks.



1996

Negotiations begin on the Framework Trade and Cooperation Agreement and Joint Political Declaration. The 13th Ministerial Consultations are held in Brussels. In September, Ministerial Consultations are held in New York with the EU Presidency (Ireland).

1999

The Mutual Recognition Agreement on Conformity Assessment, Certification and Markings between the European Community and Australia and New Zealand comes into force.

The second Australia-EU Troika Talks on Asia are held in Brussels. Ministerial Consultations are held in Bonn in February, and in Singapore in July.

The 16th Ministerial Consultations and Senior Officials Meeting are held in Brussels in July. An amendment to the 1994 Science and Technology Agreement expands the scope of EU-Australia cooperation.





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2000

Ministerial Consultations are held in Lisbon between the Portuguese Foreign Minister, Jaime Gama, and Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer, and in July in Bangkok.

The third Australia-EU Troika Talks on Asia are held in Brussels.



2001

The 17th Ministerial Consultations are held in Canberra between the EU Commissioner for External Relations, Chris Patten, Australian Foreign Minister, Alexander Downer, and Australian Trade Minister, Mark Vaile. The ANU Centre for European Studies at the Australian National University, Canberra is officially opened.

Meetings of the Joint Science and Technology Consultative Committee and the Forum for European-Australian Science and Technology Cooperation (FEAST). An EU High Level mission meets the Australian Environment Minister, Robert Hill, to prepare negotiations on climate change.

The fourth Australia-EU Troika Talks on Asia are held in Brussels. Ministerial Consultations are held in Stockholm in February and Hanoi in July with the EU Presidency (Belgium).

2002

The EU-Australia Consumer Protection Agreement is signed in Brussels.

Ministerial Consultations are held in Madrid in January and Brunei in July. The EC Environment Commissioner, Margot Wallström and the Australian Environment Minister, David Kemp meet in Brussels in February.

In April, the 18th Ministerial Consultations are held in Brussels between Commissioners Patten, Fischler, Lamy and Vitorino, and the Australian Deputy Prime Minister John Anderson and Minister for Foreign Affairs Alexander Downer and Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, Philip Ruddock.

The Australian PM John Howard meets with the Commission President, Romano Prodi, and the full Commission in Brussels in July. The European Commissioner for Trade, Pascal Lamy, visits Australia in November for WTO mini-ministerial summit and talks with the Australian Minister for Trade, Mark Vaile.

2003

Talks are held in Berlin between the Secretary-General of the Council of the EU and High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana, and the Australian Foreign Minister, Alexander Downer.



Australia-EU Troika Talks on Asia are held in Brussels. The Annual Agricultural Trade and Marketing Experts Group (ATMEG) and the 19th Ministerial Consultations are held in Canberra.

The second Senior Officials' Dialogue on Migration and Asylum is held in Brussels.

The fourth Conference of the Forum of European-Australian Science and Technology Cooperation (FEAST) and seventh Joint Science and Technology Consultative Committee are held in Canberra, together with high level environment talks.

2004

Ministerial Consultations are held with the EU Presidency in Dublin in January.

The European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, Poul Nielson, visits Australia in January. The inaugural Development Dialogue and the second Security Dialogue are held in Brussels in March.

The annual EU-Australian Senior Officials' Meeting is held in Brussels in April, along with an informal trade dialogue.

The 20th Ministerial Consultations are held in Brussels, with meetings between EU Commissioner for External Relations, EU Commissioner for Development Cooperation, Poul Nielson, EU Commissioner for Regional Policy, Michel Barnier, President of the Commission, Romano Prodi, EU Enlargement Commissioner, Günter Verheugen; and Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Alexander Downer.

2005

Ministerial Consultations are held in Luxembourg.

2006

The European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, Mariann Fischer Boel, meets with the Australian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade, Mark Vaile, and the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Peter McGauran, in Canberra.

EMERGING FROM THE ECSC TO THE EU

1952 — European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) comes into force

1958 — European Economic Community (EEC) comes into force

1965 — A treaty is signed merging the executive bodies of the three Communities (the ECSC, EEC and Euratom) and creating a single Council and single Commission. It comes into force in 1967.

1967 — The EEC becomes the European Communities

1993 — Treaty of the European Union comes into force and the EC becomes the EU.



2007

The Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth, Ján Figel', signs a Joint Declaration with the Australian Minister for Education, Science and Training, Julie Bishop in Australia.

In June, European Commissioner for External Relations, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, visits Australia.



2009

In May, European Commissioner for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs, Joe Borg, meets with the Australian Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Tony Burke, Minister for Environment, Peter Garrett, and Minister for Trade, Simon Crean.

European Commissioner for Energy, Andris Piebalgs visits Australia in May, and Commissioner for Internal Market and Services, Charlie McCreevy, visits in October.

2010

Australia joins the Asia-Europe meeting for the first time, and Prime Minister Julia Gillard attends ASEM.

Agreement between Australia and the European Union on the security of classified information signed 13 January (entering into force on 1 June 2011).

New Wine Agreement enters into force 1 September.

2012



The European Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science, Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, visits Australia for talks with the Minister for Science and Research, Senator Chris Evans, and with Australia's Chief Scientist, Ian Chubb.

2008



Australian PM Kevin Rudd visits Brussels. In October, the Partnership Framework is signed.

2011

European Commissioner for Trade, Karel de Gucht, meets Minister for Trade, Craig Emerson in Australia in March.

Australia and the European Commission agree on a pathway towards fully linking emissions trading systems. In September, PM Julia Gillard and EC President José Manuel Barroso hold bilateral talks in Australia, agreeing to expand and deepen global carbon markets.



In October, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and Vice-President of the European Commission, Catherine Ashton, attends the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Perth as a Special Guest of the Commonwealth Secretariat, holding ministerial meetings with Prime Minister Julia Gillard, Foreign Minister Kevin Rudd and Defence Minister, Stephen Smith.



The EU and Australia celebrate 50 years of relations.

Amendments to the Mutual Recognition Agreement signed (23 February) with amending agreement entering into force on 1 January 2013

Agreement between the European Union and Australia on the processing and transfer of Passenger Name Record (PNR) data by air carriers to the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service enters into force on 1 June 2012.

