



Australia and the European Union: an agenda for cooperation

Australia and the European Union: an agenda for future cooperation

The 1997 Joint Declaration on Relations between Australia and the European Union formalised our commitment to enhanced cooperation across a wide-ranging agenda. At our consultations in Brussels in April 2002, we agreed to take stock of developments in our relationship since the signing of the Joint Declaration and to identify priorities for future cooperation.

Our review reveals that, under the Joint Declaration, we have achieved a dynamic work program and intensified exchanges between Australia and the European Union to flake progress on a diverse range of common interests (the details are set out in a separate stocktaking document). These have included establishing dialogue processes on trade and economic matters, strategic issues, immigration and asylum, environment policies and initiating bilateral cooperation projects in education and science and technology. We have also created a framework for frank but constructive consultations in areas where we have diverging assessments and perspectives.

The increasing breadth of our engagement and heightened cooperation has reflected the further integration of the European Union and its enhanced role in economic policy, foreign and security policy and on justice and home affairs issues.

We reaffirm our determination to build upon our partnership to meet the challenges of an increasingly interdependent world. The objectives set out in the Joint Declaration remain a sound and enduring foundation for enhancing our bilateral relationship and pursuing cooperation in the international environment. In particular, we have identified the following areas as high priorities in our cooperative agenda over the next five years:

Security and Strategic Issues

Noting the success of the first Australia-European Union strategic dialogue in 2002 and, in light of a volatile global environment, we will increase sharing of our assessments on international and regional security developments, including through high-level exchanges on strategic issues. We will devote particular attention to:

intensifying cooperation on counter-terrorism and critical infrastructure protection, including by exchanging information on international terrorist networks and protection of information infrastructure, and by supporting counter-terrorism capacity-building in the Asia-Pacific region;

enhancing our dialogue on non-proliferation and export control issues, particularly with respect to regulating trade in dual-use items and on our respective engagement with countries of concern;

developing police cooperation, including exploring the possibility of bilateral cooperation between Australian law enforcement authorities and Europol.

Trade

We commit to resolving outstanding issues in our bilateral Wine Agreement.

We will co-operate on progressing the WTO Doha Development Agenda and resolve in particular to progress issues of mutual benefit. Notwithstanding differences in some areas, we will continue in our joint efforts to ensure an ambitious approach overall. We will continue to work closely together with the aim of concluding successfully these negotiations.

As to developing countries, we will work together

to implement and promote policies to grant duty- and quota-free market access for least-developed countries;

to assist these countries with access to affordable medicines; and

to deliver technical assistance and capacity-building activities;

We will focus on resolving differences on bilateral agriculture and trade issues, including SPS matters, through intensified consultations, particularly the Agricultural Trade and Marketing Experts' Group.

The two sides will work together constructively on internal and international regulatory frameworks (such as the Office International des Epizooties, the International Plant Protection Convention and the Codex Alimentarius).

Regarding the Mutual Recognition Agreement between us, we will work together to simplify the operation of the Agreement and to remove existing origin restrictions.

Education and Science and Technology

Having successfully initiated the first Australia-European Union pilot project on higher education cooperation, we have agreed that a second pilot project be established on a similar matching-funding basis when the necessary funding procedures will have been finalized. Following on from the pilot projects and building on the existing cooperative relationship, we will consult further on the best means to consolidate our partnership in prioritizing education and research linkages in the longer term

We will also seek to broaden opportunities for students to participate in exchanges, including exploring Australia's participation in Erasmus World when adopted.

We will develop an action plan designed to stimulate collaborative Australia-European Union scientific and technological projects within the European Union's Sixth Framework Program for Research. This will include practical initiatives such as:

promoting awareness of science and technology (S&T) collaboration through (1) a major annual S&T event; and (2) information sessions throughout Australia on the Sixth Framework Program and how Australian researchers can become involved;

facilitating joint S&T projects by conducting joint thematic workshops in areas of mutual interest such as (1) end-use energy efficiency programs; (2) beef production - management systems and quarantine; (3) nanomaterials for personal and resource security; (4) sustainable land transport; and (5) information society technologies, as proposed to DG Research; and

an evaluation to assess the outcomes and benefits of joint participation in the Fifth Framework Program for Research.

We are committed to make optimal use of the Forum for European-Australian Science and Technology cooperation (FEAST) as a key vehicle in this process.

Transport

We will develop arrangements between the Australian Global Navigation Satellite System Coordination Committee and the European Commission to enable cooperation associated with the Galileo Satellite Navigation project, including:

- a framework for ongoing cooperation with the Galileo Joint Undertaking;
- on-ground infrastructure in Australia;
- the potential for industrial co-operation;
- scientific and commercial Galileo applications;
- associated industry research and development;
- cooperative research in the field of the radiofrequency spectrum, including research into mitigation of signal interference;
- standards.

We will increase cooperative activity in the fields of Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) and sustainable transport strategies.

We will cooperate closely on transportation, including the aviation liberalization agenda in multilateral fora such as the International Civil Aviation Organization, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development and the World Trade Organization (General Agreement on Trade in Services) and by working towards a bilateral agreement on relaxing ownership and control rules, inward investment opportunities, and opportunities to develop intermodal services in our respective markets.

With a view to facilitating possible later informal exchange of information and opinions on the basis of a 'correspondence group', we will exchange details of headquarters' officials responsible for different aspects of maritime, aviation and land transport security.

Environment

On the basis of the existing framework of cooperation, we will continue to collaborate on climate change. In particular, specific attention could be given to:

- technology development and deployment;
- climate science, impacts and adaptation;
- harmonisation of emissions monitoring, reporting, verification and certification procedures; and

evolution of mitigation commitments.

We agree to improve mutual understanding of our respective approaches to environment protection and on how our approaches impact on international policy setting and our respective and joint interests.

We will seek opportunities to cooperate on environmental priorities and programs, including in the broader Asia-Pacific region.

Development Cooperation

We will pursue opportunities for further collaboration in our development cooperation programs in areas of mutual interest, including through:

assisting the recovery and nation-building processes in East Timor (particularly over the next three years) and in the Solomon Islands;

gearing programs to build good governance and economic growth in nations in the Pacific, particularly PNG; and

providing support and funding for the Asia Pacific Leadership Forum on HIV/AIDS and Development.

Migration and Asylum

We will enhance our exchange of information and cooperation on approaches to manage the challenges posed by global people flows, consulting closely in multilateral fora and bilaterally. In particular, we will focus on development of policy settings and practical cooperation with respect to:

asylum seeker and refugee readmission to countries of first asylum;

improving capacity-building (including in border management) in third countries that are of mutual interest;

the integration of migrants and the nexus between development and migration;

exchange of information relevant to fight people-smuggling, human trafficking and related transnational crime;

exchange of information on the development of new technologies and electronic support structures that could assist in combating irregular migration, and identity and document fraud.