



Celebrating
50 years: EU–Australia

Working together in the Asian *Century*

The Australia–EU relationship is of strategic economic and political importance in the Asian Century, says the European Australian Business Council.

The Chairman of the European Australian Business Council, Alastair Walton, emphasised the importance of the Australia–EU relationship and outlined an ambitious bilateral agenda in his keynote address of the annual Schuman Lecture at the Australian National University, Canberra in May 2012.

‘Australia’s relationship with the European Union must be seen as strategically important as those with the United States, China and Indonesia,’ Mr Walton said. ‘The dynamics of this relationship and what underpins it need not only to be well understood across the political divide but also resonate with the public at large. The Australia–EU relationship must be viewed as core business for any Australian leader.’

In the keynote lecture, entitled *New Alliances: Australia and Europe in a G20 World*, Mr Walton outlined five key action points that Australia should undertake to build on the momentum of the most recent phase of Australia’s bilateral relationship with the European Union.

‘The magnitude and dimensions of the Australia–Europe relationship are of such importance in the Asian Century that a complete strategic re-think is required,’ Mr Walton said.



The European Australian Business Council (EABC) is driving this re-think by bringing together key stakeholders in the Australia–Europe economic relationship including government leaders, senior officials and diplomats with business leaders, leaders of Chambers of Commerce and other business and industry groups.

The Council has regular programs of business and industry round-tables, briefings, conferences, delegations and large events in Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra, Brussels and London. New programs have been launched in Brisbane and Perth in 2013.

Trade and shared interests

Established with the support of the Delegation of the European Union to Australia and New Zealand in 1999, the EABC was originally an umbrella organisation bringing together bilateral European Chambers of Commerce and other trade and investment-focused organisations. Today, it is one of the most active and influential business organisations in Australia.

Australia's relationship with the EU must be seen as strategically important as those with the United States, China and Indonesia.



Above: Karel De Gucht, EC Commissioner for Trade, and Alastair Walton, EABC Chairman at a conference organised by the EABC at Parliament House in Sydney, March 2011.

Reflecting the dynamics of a long-established, diverse and sophisticated economic relationship between Europe and Australia, the Council focuses on two-way trade and investment issues, as well as shared interests in the Asia Pacific region and global regulatory and trade policy.

Membership of the Council reflects the broad profile of Australia–Europe trade and investment. Its corporate leadership group includes companies such as Acciona, BHP Billiton, Brambles, Credit Suisse, Ericsson, Goldman Sachs, The GPT Group, Louis Vuitton, Lynas, M&C Saatchi, Minter Ellison, NAB, PwC, Qantas, Servcorp, Thales and Visa.

Bilateral chambers of commerce and other organisations supporting the two-way relationship include those in Belgium, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Malta, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK.

The Council's Board and Corporate Council include some of Australia's most respected business and policy figures including Alastair Walton (Chairman), Stephen Loosley (Deputy Chairman), Leigh Clifford AO, Cameron Clyne, Charles Curran AC, Nicholas Curtis AM, John Dawkins AO, Allan Fels AO, Nick Greiner AC, Graham Kraehe AO, Michael L'Estrange AO, Kevin McCann AM, Paul McClintock AO, Max Moore-Wilton AC, Bruce Morgan, Hugh Morgan AC, David Mortimer AO, Simon Rothery, Peter Shergold, Warwick Smith AM, James Strong AO, Peter Young AM and Carla Zampatti AC.

In addition to holding senior positions in business, many of these individuals have extensive policy experience and expertise, having served in public office, as diplomats and advisors to government.

High-level missions

Each year, the Council organises a high-level mission with Australian business to Brussels and other political and economic capitals in Europe. The aim of these missions is to provide opportunities for delegation members to engage in dialogue on issues including policy responses to the global financial crisis, the euro crisis, banking and financial services regulation, foreign and security policy, trade policy, competition policy, climate change and energy policy, research and innovation, transport and infrastructure.

Insights are also gained into the development of the institutions of the European Union, including the European Council, the European Commission, the European Parliament and the European Central Bank, and the relationships between these institutions and the EU's Member States.

Participants in these missions have included representatives from leading Australian and international firms and organisations, including Australian National University, BHP Billiton, Brambles, Goldman Sachs, Macquarie Bank, Minter Ellison, Monash University, National Australia Bank, PwC, Ramsay Healthcare, Servcorp and Stockland.





Celebrating
50 years: EU-Australia

The EABC works closely with a range of government and industry partners both in Australia and Europe, contributing to policy discussion and development.



Left: In October 2012, the Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard and Australian Ambassador to the European Communities Brendan Nelson met with EABC Members (right to left) Alastair Walton, Michael Ullmer, Simon Rothery and Jason Collins in Brussels.

Hosting European business leaders

The Council regularly hosts official and business leaders visiting from Europe, often in partnership with the Australian Government, the Delegation of the European Union to Australia and New Zealand, and with EU Member State Embassies and Chambers of Commerce. Highlights in recent years have included visits by:

- European Commission President Barosso and Commissioners Karel de Gucht, Connie Hedegaard, Maire Geoghegan-Quinn and Charlie McCreevy
- Delegations of Members of the European Parliament and the Secretary General of the European Parliament Klaus Welle
- Director General of the World Trade Organisation Pascal Lamy; and Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organisation Francis Gurry
- President of the Federation of German Industry, Professor Hans-Peter Keitel and senior Swedish businessman Jacob Wallenberg.

Government and industry meetings

The Council also focuses strongly on Australian public and economic policy developments and has held meetings and events with many Federal and State Government representatives including:

- the then Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard and Federal Ministers including Trade Minister Craig Emerson, Infrastructure Minister Anthony Albanese, Immigration Minister Chris Bowen, Resources Minister Martin Ferguson and Broadband Minister Stephen Conroy
- Federal Shadow Ministers including Shadow Foreign Affairs and Trade Minister Julie Bishop, Shadow Treasurer Joe Hockey, Shadow Communications Minister Malcolm Turnbull and Shadow Resources Minister Ian MacFarlane
- Premiers and Treasurers of Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia and Victoria
- Senior officials including Reserve Bank Governor Glenn Stevens, Prime Minister and Cabinet Secretary Ian Watt, Treasury Secretary Martin Parkinson, ASIC Chairman Greg Medcraft and ACCC Chairman Rod Sims.



The Council works closely with a range of government and industry partners both in Australia and Europe, contributing to policy discussion and development including:

- Framework Treaty and free trade agenda
- EU Delegation and Australian Embassy Brussels
- EU Economic and Commercial Counsellors and Austrade
- European Chambers and Australian Business in Europe networks
- European and Australian Business and Industry Organisations
- EU Centres: the Australian National University, Monash University, RMIT University
- policy conferences – free trade, competition policy, resources and energy, women in business leadership, IPR and tax
- business surveys.

Worldwide networks

The EABC is an active member of the European Business Organisations (EBO) Worldwide Network, an association of European Chambers and Business Councils in 26 countries, including the major high-growth countries of Brazil, Russia, Indonesia, India and China. The EABC's Chief Executive Officer, Jason Collins, was elected the inaugural Chairman of the EBO Worldwide Network in April 2011 and re-elected in June 2012. •



European
Australian
Business
Council
eabc.com.au

Tel: +61 2 8272 0600

Web: www.eabc.com.au

Top: President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso with Board Members from the European Australian Business Council.

Middle: EC Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science, Mairé Geoghegan-Quinn, met with the EABC during her trip to Australia in March 2012.

Credit © European Union, 2013

