



Celebrating
50 years: EU–Australia

Foreword

Commemorating *50 years*



'In today's world, we believe that Europe and Australia have much in common and much to contribute – both bilaterally and globally.'

President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso,
and President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy

We warmly welcome this book commemorating the 50th anniversary of EU–Australia relations.

The bonds between the peoples of Europe and Australia are strong. Seventy per cent of Australians have European ancestry and we host many of each other's expatriate communities. We share a world vision rooted in the respect for democracy, human rights and rule of law. We are both committed to open economies and open societies and we both seek to address today's challenges through international cooperation and in a multilateral framework.

Fifty years ago the EU was a relative infant in the world recovering from the devastation of World War II. The European project is the most decisive response the Europeans have given to make peace inevitable and war unthinkable. Our bilateral ties were also forged in those days. Australia too had to emerge from war by modernising its economy and forging new markets in the region and across the world.

Since then the world has changed dramatically. In Europe we have witnessed the collapse of communism and progressive peaceful reunification through the successful enlargement of the European project.

We have seen the effects of globalisation – mostly for the good but with benefits not always equally spread. We have seen the growth and spread of technology which has dramatically affected our daily lives, the way we work, the way we play, and the way we plan for the future.

Amidst this transformation, the EU and Australia have developed a natural, solid and important global partnership.

The EU sees much to admire in Australia; its multicultural society and growing population, and its economy – rich in resources – which has seen growth for over 20 successive years, despite the global shocks of the Asian financial crisis and the more recent global financial crisis.

For its part, Europe holds its own lessons for those who seek freedom, peace and prosperity. It has grown from six Member States in 1951 to 28 in 2013. It has built the largest single market of 500 million citizens and has become the world's largest trading bloc, while providing over half of the world's development aid. In 1999, the EU launched the euro which, though recently under some pressure, has since become the world's second reserve currency.

Europe is playing an increasingly important role in foreign affairs, taking part in a number of peacekeeping roles, conflict resolution operations and is taking a leading role in overcoming global challenges such as climate change.

Europe plays an important role in multilateral fora such as the UN and the G20 where again we very much value Australia's role as a like-minded partner. We will work very closely for a successful meeting in Brisbane in 2014 when Australia chairs the G20.

The Asia-Pacific region is growing in importance. Both Australia and the EU are engaged in this region; we can both learn from each other and we can take complementary action where and when necessary.



In today's world, we believe that Europe and Australia have much in common and much to contribute – both bilaterally and globally.

It is with great confidence, therefore, that we look forward to exploiting these opportunities as we work together in the future. •

José Manuel Barroso
President of the European Commission

Herman Van Rompuy
President of the European Council

Above: H.E. The Hon Quentin Bryce AC CVO, Governor General of the Commonwealth of Australia with EC President, José Manuel Barroso, during her visit to the EU in June 2013.