



Celebrating
50 years: EU-Australia

FOREWORD

Shared *values* and institutional linkages



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Foreign Minister Bob Carr

The origins of the European project are found in Europe's response to World War II. In 1950, when French Foreign Minister Robert Schumann proposed the creation of a European Coal and Steel Community, he set the goal of making war 'materially impossible'. The ensuing peace dividend demonstrates the value of the European project as an example of how states can replace historical enmities with mutually-beneficial cooperation.

For decades, Europe has been at the forefront of the evolution of ideas of social justice, the centre of some of the world's most innovative thinking, and a global normative power.

Today, the weight of the world's economy is moving towards Asia. This shift offers the potential for increased prosperity and more political and economic freedom in the Asian region – goals and values that have long characterised the European landscape.

Although Australia is deeply embroiled in the Asian Century, for us Europe remains an integral partner in promoting the values of freedom and democracy. We are both committed to greater global integration, freer movement of people, goods, services and investment, and promotion of good governance and human rights. We have a common interest in Asia's continuing development and in being constructive partners. Our productive involvement in forums like the Asia-Europe Meeting shows our commitment to greater political and cultural dialogue with Asia.

Senator the Honourable Bob Carr
Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs

Formal bilateral relations between Australia and Europe began in 1962 when Sir Edwin McCarthy, public servant, trade negotiator and diplomat, took up his position as the first Australian Ambassador to the European Economic Community. Since then, Australia's relations with European institutions have flourished. Today, we work together across the spectrum of international policy – from security and climate change to cooperation in our aid programs. The conclusion of a Crisis Management Agreement – expected soon – will allow Australian participation in EU peace missions, a practical realisation of real-life cooperation.

Based on our shared values and growing institutional linkages, I am confident that the Australia-European Union bilateral relationship will continue to thrive. I fully expect that in another 50 years, a future Australian foreign minister will look back on the centenary of our relationship with an even keener sense of its importance. •