

EU-Australia Relations Factsheet

The EU, its Member States and Australia share strong bonds in all domains. Bilateral relations are deeply-rooted and expanding.

Diplomatic and Political Relations

Diplomatic relations were established in 1962, followed by the opening of the Delegation of the European Commission to Australia (now Delegation of the European Union) in 1981. All EU Member States have diplomatic relations with Australia and 24 of them have Embassies/High Commissions in Canberra. EU Member State Consulates are present in several Australian State capitals, including Sydney and Melbourne. Australia's Embassy to Belgium was accredited to the then European Communities in the 1960s. Australia has Embassies in 17 EU Member States as well as a wide net of Consulates across the continent.

EU-Australia political relations are strong and flourishing. A new Framework Agreement signed on 7 August 2017 marked the beginning of a new era of strategic cooperation. Once it enters into force, it will build on an already well-established cooperation basis that includes multiple formal dialogues (e.g. on Foreign and Security policy, Trade policy, Counter Terrorism, Migration & Asylum, Environment, Fisheries, Customs, Human Rights, Development, and Consular issues). There are also several sectoral agreements of varying scope, ranging from Scientific and Technical Cooperation to Mutual Recognition in relation to Conformity Assessment, Certificates and Markings; from Wine to the Security of Classified Information; from Australia's participation in EU crisis management operations to the processing and transfer of Passenger Name Record data etc.

Economic Interaction

EU-Australia economic interaction is strong and vibrant. In 2019 Australia was the EU's 21st-biggest trading partner in goods, while the EU was Australia's 2nd largest goods trading partner after China.

Total trade in goods for 2019 was worth EUR 39.1 bn consisting of EUR 8.2 bn of Australian exports to the EU and EUR 30.8 bn of imports from the EU to Australia. Australia's exports to the EU are dominated by mineral commodities (coal, gold, lead, metallic ores) and agricultural products (oil-seeds, alcoholic beverages, wool and animal hair), while the EU's exports to Australia are predominantly manufactured goods (motor vehicles, pharmaceuticals, mechanical equipment).

Trade in services between EU and Australia in 2018 was worth EUR 24 bn with Australia importing EUR 17 bn of services from the EU and exporting EUR 7 bn. In 2019, the EU was the 3rd biggest source of foreign investment in Australia; accounting for 17.8% of the total (AUD 684 bn / EUR 425 bn).

The EU and Australia have a mutual recognition agreement on conformity assessment covering eight sectors: Automotive products, Electromagnetic Compatibility, Low Voltage Equipment, Machinery, Medical Devices, Pressure Equipment, Telecommunications Terminal Equipment, and Good Manufacturing Practice Inspections of Medicinal products. The EU and Australia also have an agreement on trade in wine that includes provisions for the reciprocal protection of geographical indications of wines from the EU and Australia.

On 18 June 2018, negotiations for an EU-Australia Free Trade Agreement (FTA) were formally launched. Seven rounds of FTA talks have already been held and others will follow.

EU–Australia Cooperation on Research

In 1994 the EU and Australia signed a Scientific and Technical Cooperation Agreement, the first ever between the EU and a non-EU country. Strong cooperation is ongoing. There are on average close to 30 000 publications involving EU and Australian authors every year. Australian researchers and organisations are actively involved in Horizon 2020 with close to 305 Australian researchers participating in Horizon 2020 related projects to date. Within Horizon 2020, the Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions have seen the involvement of over 169 Australian researchers. The successful involvement of Australian organisations and individuals in Horizon 2020 builds on

collaboration that took place under FP7, the EU's previous Research and Innovation funding programme for 2007-13 and all earlier Framework Programs.

Education

EU Member State and Australian universities have long-established links, matched by their students' interest in studying abroad. There are also several cooperation exchange programs between some EU Member States and Australia's tertiary education sector.

Assistance to foster university level exchange is offered at the national and the EU level, the latter via the Erasmus+ Programme (2014-20). Building on the previous Erasmus Mundus programme, Australian university students and staff actively participate in Erasmus+ through the International Credit Mobility programme.

As at 2018 there have been 222 projects selected involving Australia with nearly 1500 students and staff moving between Europe and Australia.

The EU's Joint Masters Degree programs offer scholarships to Australian and European Students to study both in the EU and in Australia. As at 2018 there were 38 scholarship winners from Australia and two universities taking part in two EMJD consortia.

Over the past 20 years, 43 projects have been awarded to Australian Universities through the Jean Monnet Grants Scheme for networks, Chairs, Centres of Excellence, study modules and projects.

Environment

The EU and Australia cooperate across a wide variety of international environmental agreements and hold high-level dialogues dedicated to environmental and climate change issues. Australia and the EU have been working together on many global challenges, including combating the practice of illegal logging and on biodiversity conservation.

Broader Social Interaction

People-to-people links are deep and longstanding. Nearly 70% per cent of Australians have European ancestry, forming an integral part of Australia's rich multicultural landscape. Data from 2018 indicates that 29% of Australians were born overseas, with two EU Member States being among the top 10 countries of birth by number.

EU Member State citizens live and work in Australia and vice versa: At the end of 2018 there were more than 33 000 Australians with valid residence permits (for at least 3 months) issued by EU Member States. Bilateral tourist flows are normally quite considerable.