



Celebrating
50 years: EU–Australia

The EU Centre *initiative*

EU Centres around the world aim to provide information about the EU and to encourage greater understanding of the EU and its policies. Australia has three EU Centres in Canberra and Melbourne.

Right: Monash University's EU Centre provides a portal to facilitate European and EU related activities across the university.

Image: Monash University.

Foreign policy is not just about international summits and meetings between government officials. It is also about helping people in different countries to understand each other. In 1998, the European Commission launched a pilot project to establish a network of European Union Centres in the United States. The aim was to provide information about the EU and to encourage greater understanding of the EU and its policies, and how they were relevant to the host country.

Since then, the network has grown substantially and there are now 37 EU Centres across the world in the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, Russia, Macao and Hong Kong.

In Australia and New Zealand, the first Centres were established in 2001 as three-year pilot projects. These two centres were the National Europe Centre at the ANU in Canberra and the National Centre for Research on Europe at Canterbury University in Christchurch.

Following on from their success, two more centres were established in Australia at Monash University, and a network jointly administered by La Trobe University in Melbourne and Macquarie University in Sydney. An EU network was also formed in New Zealand encompassing all of the universities there.

Today in Australia, there are three EU Centres:

- the ANU Centre for European Studies, Australian National University, Canberra
- the Monash European and EU Centre, Monash University, Melbourne
- the EU Centre, RMIT University, Melbourne.

The EU Centre Network continues in New Zealand. The Centres are projects jointly funded by the European Commission and the host institution.

Promoting greater understanding

The EU Centres promote greater understanding of the EU and stronger relations between the EU and the partner country through their teaching, research and outreach activities.

While each Centre has a different approach and focus, their objectives are the same. As communication has become easier, the networks have become more inter-connected and joint events are now a common occurrence. The EU Centres are all hosted by universities – academic centres of excellence in themselves. >

The Centres try to provide a platform for their local communities to be engaged in European issues and understand the changes in Europe.





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EU CENTRES IN AUSTRALIA

**ANU Centre for European Studies
at the Australian National University**
<http://ces.anu.edu.au/>

EU Centre at RMIT University
www.rmit.edu.au/eucentre

**The Monash European and EU Centre
at Monash University**
<http://artsonline.monash.edu.au/eurocentre/>



There will always be new objectives and new generations to reach out to and encourage their understanding of the European dream.

Right: The EU Centres present a range of speeches, conferences and events. In 2011, EC President, José Manuel Barroso, spoke on the shared future for the EU and Australia at the ANU Centre for European Studies.

Image: Credit © European Union, 2013

Middle: The Conversations series of publicised discussion celebrated the 50th anniversary of EU–Australia relations and is just one example of the outreach programs.

Image: Laura Clarke, ANU Centre for European Studies

Stimulating European Studies

The core objectives of the EU Centres are to encourage the study and research of the EU. The Centres stimulate development of European Studies across a broad range of fields, including:

- the role of the European Union as a major economic and trade partner
- the European Union as a political actor and its international relationships, in particular in the Asia-Pacific region
- the integration process of the European Union (eg, single market, monetary union, economic and social cohesion)
- the policies of the European Union (eg, single market, competition, environment, climate change, energy and transport, security, education and science, and their relevance for Australian/New Zealand partners).

The purpose is not only to develop courses for specialists of the European Union who will work in the field of government and international relations, but also to provide relevant courses useful for students/scholars/researchers in different fields (eg, law, political science, economics, business administration, science and technology).

Community events on European issues

The Centres must also reach out beyond the academic world into their local communities. In Australia, where so much of the population has a European background, many people are interested in what is happening “back there”. The Centres try to provide a platform for these communities to understand the changes in Europe.

The types of activities can be very different. For instance, the ANU Centre hosted the highly successful series of “Conversations” which was broadcast on ABC National Radio but it also took part in the “Europe Street” event which brought all the EU Member States together as part of Canberra’s National Multicultural Festival.



The three Centres collaborate on a summer school for secondary school teachers, engaging them in issues that have as much relevance for Australia as they do for Europe – asylum policy, migration, rural development and so on.

Other Centres around the world hold art exhibitions, Parliamentary simulations, travel tours and other events designed to showcase Europe and the EU to suit everyone's taste.

Partnering for an extra dimension

The Centres are generally funded for three to four years at which time a new call for proposals is issued and other institutions are encouraged to apply. The host institutions are encouraged to also look at other partners to help them carry out their objectives. Groups such as think tanks, community groups and chambers of commerce can all be partners and add an extra dimension to the implementation of the Centres' objectives. The next call for Australia and New Zealand will be published in September 2013.

The primary objective of creating the EU project was to end the frequent, terrible wars between European neighbours, which culminated in World War II. The EU has achieved this aim but now there are other objectives – primarily to ensure continued economic prosperity for all of Europe's citizens, as well as helping developing countries. Like the EU project itself, the work of the Europe Centres is an ongoing project around the world. There will always be new objectives and new generations to reach out to and encourage their understanding of the European dream. •

Top: RMIT University is establishing a site in Barcelona, Spain, to build its European education, research and student mobility activities. It will link to its EU Centre in Melbourne, as well as other faculties and campuses.

Image: RMIT University.

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