

The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia

Parliamentary Delegation

to

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTS AND INSTITUTIONS

in

**The Netherlands, Belgium, France
and Austria**

4 to 20 April 2008

June 2008

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Recommendation

Recommendation

Chapter 2

2.64 The delegation recommends that future delegations be known as the 'Australian Parliamentary delegation to European Parliaments and Institutions'.

Preface

The Australian Parliament has for some time undertaken a biennial visit to various institutions in Europe of significance to Australia. This has proven to be an invaluable opportunity for Australian parliamentarians to evaluate the economic, political and social issues affecting Europe and their implications for Australia. The fact that the European Union, as an entity, is now Australia's largest trading partner serves only to add to the relevance of this visit for the members of the delegation.

On this occasion, the delegation was able to combine the usual meetings with relevant institutions and the European Parliament with meetings with representatives of each of the national parliaments in the countries visited. For 2008, this included meeting with representatives of the Dutch, Belgian, French and Austrian parliaments. These meetings were of considerable value to the delegation as they provided an insight into the issues emerging in some of the different parts of the European Union, in addition to the overarching perspective provided by the regular meetings with the European Parliament.

There were many topics covered in the open and wide-ranging discussions held at both the institutions and the European and national parliaments, not least being the ongoing dialogue on trade and the EU's common agricultural policy. Nonetheless, two clear themes emerged over the course of the visit; firstly, the possible expansion of the EU and the consideration of the proposed changes to the operations of the EU known as the Lisbon Treaty. The general security situation, and in particular European involvement in Afghanistan also featured prominently.

The European Union's significance on the international scene was reinforced by its most recent enlargement in January 2007 to 27 member states. Accession talks with Croatia and Turkey commenced in 2005 but have not yet begun with the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the only other country formally recognised by the European Union as an enlargement candidate. Just two weeks after the delegations visit, on 29 April 2008, the European Union signed a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with Serbia in Luxembourg. This is an important milestone towards possible future membership. Other potential candidates for access include Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo.

While the delegation was undertaking its visit the European Union was in the middle of a treaty reform process aimed at streamlining EU decision-making and providing a more effective foreign policy. A range of measures are proposed under the Reform or Lisbon Treaty, including: a longer-term President for the European Council; fewer Commissioners; a single foreign policy representative; and reform of the Union's

internal voting system. The Lisbon Treaty and its possible acceptance was a matter of considerable interest by all the national parliaments visited by the delegation.

It is essential that the regular dialogue between Australia and Europe at a parliamentary level is maintained. It is always a key objective for these visits to strengthen the relationship between the Australian Parliament and the many important institutions in Europe, including the European Parliament, and through them the European Union more generally. The opportunity to extend that dialogue to national parliaments in European countries adds to the depth of that relationship. The delegation felt that the meetings with national parliaments were so valuable that this report recommends that for future visits they should be accorded equal priority with the meetings with institutions.

Austria was a new addition on the program for this visit and its inclusion was an unqualified success. There had not been an official parliamentary visit to Austria for some years and they were enthusiastic and gracious hosts. Travelling to Vienna provided an important opportunity to gain a perspective from a more eastern part of the EU. As well as meetings with representatives of the Austrian Parliament and government, the delegation was able to access some of the UN and other institutions based there, in what is now being considered a hub for energy and security related organisations. Meetings with the IAEA and the OSCE provided another perspective on information provided by NATO officials. In particular, the visit to the OPEC headquarters, which had not previously hosted a delegation of Australian Parliamentarians, was found to be very constructive. The visit to Vienna was considered so beneficial and productive overall that this report recommends that Austria be strongly considered for inclusion on the program for future delegations of this nature.

A particular highlight for the delegations was the visit to the World War 1 sites in and around the town of Ypres in Belgium. We were fortunate to be able to visit the war graves at Polygon Wood and Tyne Cot and the 1917 Passchendaele Museum. We attended the Last Post commemoration at the Menin Gate in Ypres, at which I was privileged to be able to lay a wreath on behalf of the Parliament of Australia. A ceremony including the Last Post has been conducted there each day for around 80 years, broken only by the years of World War II. These places, along with Gallipoli and the Kokoda Trail, among others, represent the depth of Australia's commitment to freedom and democracy. Anyone fortunate enough to visit them cannot help but be moved by the immensity of the sacrifice but also the ongoing respect shown to the men who lost their lives there on foreign soil.

As ever, Australia is fortunate that its interests overseas are so ably represented by officers of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. On behalf of the delegations I especially record thanks to Her Excellency Ms Lydia Morton, Ambassador to the Netherlands and the Chargé d'Affaires Mr Lloyd Brodrick; His Excellency Mr Alan Thomas, Ambassador to Belgium and Luxembourg; His Excellency Mr David Ritchie, Ambassador to France and his colleagues His Excellency Chris Langman Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the OECD and Mrs Sally Mansfield, Deputy

Ambassador and Permanent Representative to UNESCO; and His Excellency Mr Peter Shannon, Ambassador to Austria.

These officers and their colleagues provided outstanding support for the delegation. The extent and detail of their preparations and the strong relationship with the relevant officials of our host countries contributed greatly to the success of the visit.

I also thank the members of the delegation; the Deputy Leader Mr Kelvin Thomson MP, Senator Grant Chapman, Senator Anne McEwen, Senator Ruth Webber and Mr Petro Georgiou, as well as the Secretary to the delegation Ms Maureen Weeks and my Senior Adviser, Mr Gerard Martin, for their cooperation and assistance in ensuring the success of the visit.

(Alan Ferguson)

President of the Senate and

Leader of the Delegation

Introduction

1.1 This report outlines the activities and observations of a delegation from the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia during the delegation's visit to the European Institutions and parliaments. Traditionally, the visit takes place on a biennial basis and includes the European institutions in Strasbourg, Luxemburg and Brussels. The year the visit took place in four countries, the Netherlands, Belgium, France and Austria, between 4 and 20 April 2008.

Objectives

1.2 The delegation adopted the following aims and objectives for the visit:

- To renew and strengthen ties with the EU and other European Parliaments
- To enquire into the current status of the EU's reform treaty as well as political, economic and social issues (such as illegal immigrants and refugees) within the EU
- To visit the European Commission and discuss issues affecting Australian interests and EU Australia cooperation
- To gain appreciation of the role of international organisations based in Europe, including those dealing with arms control, trade, and illicit drugs such as United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the International Narcotics Control Board
- To obtain the EU's outlook on security issues with the United States and an assertive Russia as well as the struggle against domestic and international terrorism both within the EU, the Middle East and Afghanistan
- To gain an appreciation of the EU's role and interests in the Asia-Pacific region
- To gain an understanding of the impact of new member countries on EU common agricultural policy CAP)
- To obtain an update on the EU's budget ('Financial Perspectives') and CAP 'health check'
- To explore and expand economic, investment and commercial opportunities between Australia and the EU, as well as future co-operation on climate change and energy security
- To exchange views and explore opportunities in strengthening social, cultural, educational and scientific relations as well as enhancing 'people to people' ties

1.3 The delegation was not able to visit the European Commission and consequently did not have formal discussions on the issues affecting Australian interests and EU Australia cooperation. With that small exception all other aims and objectives were met.

Acknowledgements

Australia

1.4 Before departure, the delegation received detailed oral and written briefings from staff of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Australian Federal Police and the Parliamentary Library, Department of Parliamentary Services. The assistance provided by the officers who participated is acknowledged with thanks.

1.5 The delegation thanks the staff of the Parliamentary Relations Office, in particular Lyn Witheridge, for their administrative assistance and to HRG Australia Travel and Qantas for flight arrangements.

The Netherlands

1.6 The delegation records its thanks to the Parliament and Government of the Netherlands for the hospitality and courtesy extended to it during its visit, in particular:

- Mr Ruud Nederveen, President of the Presidium of Amsterdam;
- Ms Helen Dupuis, Vice President of the Senate, Senator GJ de Graaf, Senator R Willems, Senator JSJ Hillen, Mr J ten Hoopen, Vice President of the House of Representatives, Ms R Vermeij, Mrs M Kraneveldt and Mr GJA Hamilton, Parliamentary Clerk.

1.7 It also wishes to acknowledge with thanks the time the following people made available to brief the delegation,

- HE Judge Kevin Parker AO, Vice President of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and John Hocking, Deputy Registrar,
- HE Judge Dame Rosalyn Higgins QC, International Court of Justice
- HE Judge Kenneth Keith, International Court of Justice
- Mr Mariano Simancas, Deputy Director (Serious Crime) Europol, Mr Laszlo Salgo, Assistant Director (Serious Crime), Europol; Mr Sean Griffin, Project Manager, and Mr Ivan Gelbard Analysis Work File Islamist Terrorism, EUROPOL

Belgium

1.8 In Belgium the delegation was honoured to meet with the President of the Chamber of Representatives, Mr Herman Van Rompuy, and Senator Dirk Claes, of the Burgemeester Rotselaar and it wishes to thank them both for making the time.

1.9 While in Brussels, the delegation also had extensive meetings with Members of the European Parliament, including: Mr Piotrowski, Mr Koterec, Mr Nicholson, Mr Hansch, Mr Chichester, Ms Klamt, Mr Martin, Mr Takkula, Mr Sturdy, Mr Triantaphyllides. It particularly wants to thank Mr Kirkhope, Mr Parish, Mr Gerard Onesta, Vice President of the European Parliament, and Mr Vandebon, European Commission for their involvement in the delegation's program.

1.10 Before leaving Brussels, the delegation visited NATO Headquarters and met with Ambassador Martin Erdmann, Mr Michael Ruhle, Deputy Head of the Speechwriting and Policy Planning Unit, Private Office of the Secretary-General, Mr Mihai Carp, Operations Division and Mr David Hobbs, Secretary-General, NATO Parliamentary Assembly. It extends its thanks to those people for making the time to meet with them.

1.11 On the afternoon of 11 April the delegation visited the Polygon Wood Buttes cemetery and the Tyne Cot cemetery and visitors centre, and the 1917 Passchendaele Museum. During these visits the delegation had the benefit of Mr Franky Bostyn's war knowledge and concern for the dead of World War I. Mr Bostyn is the Curator of 1917 Passchendaele Museum and the delegation thanks him for his time and willingness to share his knowledge.

France

1.12 In Paris the delegation met with and were provided briefings by the following officers of the OECD:

- Mr John West, Head Public Affairs Division
- Mr Jean-Luc Schneider, Deputy Director, Economics Department
- Mr Nils-Axel Braathen, Principal Administrator, Environment Directorate
- Mr Ken Ash, Deputy Director, Trade and Agriculture Directorate
- Ms Susanne Huttner, Director, Science, Technology and Industry Directorate.

The delegation thanks them for their time.

1.13 The delegation also thanks those members of the French Parliaments French-Australia Friendship Groups who met with them, including: Mr Pierre Frogier, MP, Mr Gael Yanno, MP, Senator Dominique Leclerc and Mr Bertrand Marcinal, Secretary of the National Assembly France-Australia Friendship Group.

1.14 Finally, while in Paris the delegation met with UNESCO officers and thanks both Mr Jean-Yves Le Saux, Director of the Division of Programme Planning, Bureau of Strategic Planning and Mr Nicholas Burnett, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education, for the time they made to meet with the delegation.

Austria

1.15 The delegation also extends its thanks to those members and staff of the Austrian Parliament who met with them and guided the tour of the Parliament Buildings, in particular:

- Vice President Susanne Neuwirth, Vice President of the Federal Council
- Mr Sigisbert Dolinschek, MP
- Mr Alois Gradauer, MP
- Ms Monika Kemperle, Member of the Federal Council
- Dr Sabine Oberhauser, MP
- Mr Stefan Schennach, Member of the Federal Council

1.16 During its stay in Vienna the delegation had a series of meetings with officers and members of some key institutions and appreciates both the time these people made available and information they imparted. In particular, the delegation wishes to thank the following officers from the IAEA:

- Mr Tomihiro Taniguchi, Deputy Director General, Department of Nuclear Safety and Security
- Mr Olli Heinonen, Deputy Director General, Department of Safeguards and Ms Jill Cooley
- Ms Anita Nilsson, Director, Office of Nuclear Security
- Mr Werner Burkart, Deputy Director General, Department of Nuclear Sciences and Applications
- Mr Manase Peter Salema, Director, Division for Asia and the Pacific.

1.17 The delegation was also welcomed by and appreciates the frank discussions held with Ambassador Marc Perrin de Brichambaut, Secretary General Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and Dr Hans Winkler, Austria's State Secretary for European and International Affairs. It extends its warm thanks to both Ambassador de Brichambaut and Dr Winkler.

1.18 The delegation also extends its thanks to Mr Antonio Maria Costa, Executive Director, UN Office on Drugs and Crime and Mr Koli Kouame, Secretary, International Narcotics Control Board for the insight they both provided on the work of their organisations.

1.19 Mr Tibor Tóth, Executive Secretary, and other officers of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organisation also met with the delegation and provided an informative briefing. The delegation thanks them for both making their time available and the information they provided.

1.20 The final briefing held in Vienna was with the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). The delegation found the briefing informative and

extends its thanks to Mr Abdalla Salem El-Badri, the Secretary General and other officers for their time and information.

Australian Missions in Europe

1.21 Finally, the delegation wishes to thank the staff at all the Australian posts who assisted with the visit and preparation of the program of meetings. The delegation was well served by the Australian Embassies in all the countries it visited, and provided with excellent briefings on its arrival to each country and it appreciated the thought and attention that had been put into both the programs and the well being of the delegation. While it is sure that such visits takes up the time and resources of all staff at the posts it particularly wishes to thank:

The Netherlands

- Ms Marie-Charlotte McKenna, Third Secretary and visit co-ordinator
- Mr Lloyd Brodrick, Chargé d'Affaires and Deputy HOM
- Ms Fay de Haas, Office Manager

Brussels

- Ms Melissa O'Rourke, First Secretary and visit liaison officer
- Commander Clive Dunchue, Defence Attaché
- Ms Isabelle Draux, Public Affairs Manager
- Mr Jean Dorsimond, Embassy Transport Manager
- Ms Patricia De Leenheer, Spouse Liaison Officer

Paris

- Mr Graham Andrews, First Secretary, Australian Mission to the OECD
- Mrs Lisa Mittelman, Third Secretary
- Mrs Sally Mansfield, Deputy Ambassador and Australian Permanent Representative to UNESCO,
- Mr Bernard Elias, Protocol Officer
- Mr Thomas Vitart, Protocol Officer

Austria

- Ms Wanda Oram-Miles, First Secretary and visit liaison officer
- Mr Thomas Roth, Counsellor
- Ms Elisabeth Jaquemar, Policy Officer

1.22 Lastly, but by no means least, the delegation appreciates the time given and direction provided by all the ambassadors at the posts in the countries visited:

- Ms Lydia Morton, The Netherlands

- Dr Alan Thomas, Belgium
- Mr Christopher Langman, Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the OECD
- Mr David Ritchie, France
- Mr Peter Shannon, Austria.

Without their generous assistance the delegation's visits would have been less informative and the delegation thanks them and their staff for making the visit a resounding success.

Chapter 2

Parliaments

2.1 This chapter outlines the meetings conducted with the five Parliamentary institutions which met with the delegation. These meetings were undertaken with the objective of renewing and strengthening the ties with the European Union and its Parliament and other parliaments in Europe. Not only did the meetings deliver on this objective, they also provided the members of the delegation with an opportunity to explore issues of common interest and to assist the delegation in meeting the aims and objectives of their visit, as follows:

- To inquire into the current status of the EU's reform treaty as well as political, economic and social issues within the EU;
- To gain an appreciation of the EU's role and interest in the Asia Pacific Region;
- To obtain an understanding of the impact of new countries on EU common agricultural policies;
- To obtain an update on the EU's budget ('Financial Perspectives') review and CAP 'Health Check';
- To explore and expand economic, investment and commercial opportunities between Australia and the EU as well as future co-operation on climate change and energy security; and
- To exchange views and explore opportunities in strengthening social, cultural, educational and scientific relations as well as enhancing 'people to people' ties.

The Eerste Kamer der Staten-Generaal

2.2 The Eerste Kamer der Staten-Generaal (Dutch Parliament) was the first of the Parliaments visited by the delegation. On the afternoon of 7 April the delegation had a formal meeting with the following members of both Houses of the Parliament:

- Mrs H Dupuis, Vice President of the Senate
- Mr G J de Graaf, Senator
- Mr R Willems, Senator
- Mr J ten Hoopen, Vice President of the House of Representatives
- Ms R Vermeij, MP
- Mrs M Kraneveldt, MP



The Delegation in the Eerste Kamer (Upper House)

2.3 Vice President Dupuis formally met the delegation and was to chair the meeting, due to the unfortunate absence of the President, Mrs Yvonne Timmerman-Buck, who was ill. Given the short notice, Vice President Dupuis asked that Senator de Graaf, as president of the Committees for Foreign Affairs, Defence and Development Cooperation chair the meeting. With the willing agreement of all, the meeting was conducted under his able direction.

2.4 What followed was almost two hours of earnest discussion as the members of both Parliaments explored issues, including immigration and the citizenship test, that affected both constituencies.

Treaty making

2.5 The making of treaties by both the Dutch and Australian governments and the roles played by the respective Parliaments was considered at length. The Australians were keen to explore the possible outcomes of the Lisbon Treaty, while the Dutch were interested in the Australian Parliament's role in scrutinising the effect of treaties to which Australia was a signatory.

2.6 The Lisbon Treaty is part of the European Union's reform package, so called because it was agreed in Lisbon in December 2007. It follows the unsuccessful EU Constitution that was rejected at referendum in both the Netherlands and France in 2005. Many of the proposals in the EU Constitution have again been offered in the Lisbon Treaty and are designed to streamline the EU's decision making process and facilitate an EU foreign policy. The hope is that the Lisbon Treaty will come into

force in 2009. At least 5 (including France) of the 27 countries required to endorse the treaty have already done so.¹

2.7 The Dutch members explained the process by which their parliament would review the treaty, indicating that they like most other European countries would not be going to referendum on the matter again.² It was noted that the House of Representatives was expected to have a vigorous debate and tease out the issues and did have a general authority to amend treaties. The Senate did not have such authority but could abstain. The delegation was left with an understanding that the Eerste Kamer der Staten-Generaal would be supporting the treaty.

2.8 The Australian delegation included the current chair of the Joint Committee on Treaties, Mr Thomson, MP and he was able to provide the meeting with an overview of the work of that committee.

Public Transport

2.9 At the meeting, both the Australian and Dutch members of Parliament were keen to share knowledge of actions that were being taken to address the use of public transport. It was acknowledged by both groups that car emissions were a growing concern as the volume of transport increased. It was agreed that there was a need to encourage greater use of public transport.

2.10 The delegation was told that, despite state investment in public rail infrastructure, and the 50 kilometre long traffic jam in peak hour there continues to be apparent reluctance on the part of commuters to forgo the benefits offered by car travel and rely on the public transport system. Other methods employed by the state in the Netherlands included those designed to discourage the use of private vehicles, such as taxes on petrol and parking, a substantial tax (25 percent) on the vehicle on purchase and those designed to encourage the use of public transport. However, the use of private car travel continues to dominate.

2.11 The tension of different modes of travel competing for state funding was also explored. The meeting also considered the value of state funding favouring one form of transport over another as a means to encourage travel on public transport. The Dutch parliamentarians acknowledged that state funding continues to be evenly split between all modes of transport.

2.12 The members of the delegation noted that the Australian context features considerable differences in terms of distance, but there were some shared challenges. The delegation was able to advise the Dutch parliamentarians that Australia had not found an immediate remedy to transport issues.

1 Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security Section of the Parliamentary Library Australian delegation to European Institutions. Briefing Papers for the 31st EU-Australia Inter Parliamentary Meeting, 9-10 April, Brussels, p 4

2 Ireland was the only country known to be putting the treaty to referendum *ibid*, p 5

Innovation and Industry

2.13 The delegation was interested to learn of the state's approach to industry and innovation in the Netherlands. The Dutch parliamentarians indicated that in the Netherlands government spending focused on six areas, including:

- Food and agriculture
- Water
- Creative industry
- High tech materials.

2.14 Assistance to industry could be provided in a number of ways including the provision of vouchers to industry allocating time in laboratories to encourage research and development and a research organisation similar to CSIRO, which was substantially (two thirds) funded by government. However, there was some concern amongst the Dutch members that their institutions were becoming less relevant and needed to modernise and were interested in exploring the Australian approach to research and development.

Afghanistan

2.15 The final topic explored at length at the meeting was the Dutch and Australian involvement in Afghanistan. The Dutch parliamentarians sought from the members of the delegation the Australian perspective. For their own part, they indicated the intense public debate in the Netherlands about the presence of Dutch troops in Afghanistan and the direct link in public opinion with the casualty rate. Further, they indicated the difficulties of maintaining a presence of 2000 troops in Afghanistan on three months rotation with a set limit in the number of troops. As the troops serve more and more rotations, public opinion sharpens.

2.16 The afternoon ended with a tour of the buildings of Dutch Parliament. Buildings that they are rightly proud of, as they represent a unique blend of the old incorporated into the new.

2.17 The opportunities for discussion were continued that evening with a dinner at the Parliament hosted by Vice President Dupuis. This informal setting allowed members of the delegation to pursue matters of particular interest to them with their Dutch counterparts.

The Belgian Parliament

2.18 While the main parliamentary focus for the delegation in Brussels was the European Parliament, the delegation was also pleased to meet with the President of the Belgian Chamber of Representatives, Mr Herman Van Rompuy and members of the Australia-Belgium Inter-parliamentary Friendship Group. The chairman of the Group, Senator Dirk Claes, accompanied the delegation on a tour of the Parliament building.

Both the meeting and the tour provided the delegation with the welcome opportunity to gain an understanding of recent political events in Belgium.

2.19 At the meeting, the President of the Senate, Senator Alan Ferguson issued a formal invitation to the Presiding Officers of the Belgium parliament to send a delegation to visit Australia and continue the dialogue that had taken place.



The Delegation at the Belgian Parliament

The European Parliament

2.20 As indicated above, the main focus for the delegation in Brussels was to renew Australian parliamentary links with the European Parliament. This was set out in the aims and objectives as one of the primary purposes of the delegation's visit. A number of meetings were held with members of the European Parliament over one and a half days during the delegation's time in Brussels. The meetings commenced on the afternoon of 9 April 2008 with the customary meeting with the European Parliament's Delegation for the Relations with Australia and New Zealand.

2.21 This meeting forms a regular part of the itinerary for the Australian Parliament's biennial delegation to the European Parliament. It provides a forum for members of both the delegation and members of the European Parliament to explore a wide range of topical issues and update one another as to recent developments in their own locale.

Climate Change

2.22 The meeting commenced with discussions on climate change, led by Dr Caroline Jackson MEP of the Environment Committee. She acknowledged

Australia's recent signing of the Kyoto Protocol and provided updates on the European Council's targets for renewable energy use and the Emission Trading Scheme (ETS).

2.23 Dr Jackson indicated that the European Union's ETS had been too generous in the bases used to set the initial targets and should be extended to include other industries and gases emitted. The European Union's current scheme covers only one half of the gases emitted. The general tenor of her opening paper was that both Australia and the countries of the EU needed to commit to the targets and invest in achieving them.

2.24 The ensuing discussion highlighted Australia's activities in recent months in this area. Discussion sought to identify the elements of the EU's ETS that were working and lessons and covered the role of transport and technological developments in climate change.

EU Constitutional reform

2.25 Discussion on the EU's constitutional reform was opened by Mr Richard Corbett MEP of the Constitutional Affairs Committee. He provided an overview of the changes proposed by the Lisbon Treaty, indicating that the reforms were designed to improve the EU's capacity to deliver to its member nations, and to do so more efficiently and at the same time to be more accountable. The mechanics of each member nation's national parliament involvement in policy formulation (co-decision making) was also outlined.

2.26 During the ensuing discussion it emerged that the view of those Members of the European Parliament at the meeting was that the EU would not be radically changed by the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty, but that member nations would have a more intensified common framework. In relation to foreign policy, where all member nations agreed on a common policy that would become the EU's position. There was an acknowledgement that although the proposals were not offering a federal system there were some elements that could be regarded as features of a federal system.

Trade Liberalisation and CAP

2.27 Mrs Erica Mann, MEP of the Committee on International Trade, opened the final discussion on the afternoon of 9 April. The session focused on trade issues, an important consideration to both groups present, as

[T]he European Union is Australia's largest single trading and investment partner.³

2.28 Mrs Mann took the meeting through recent developments in EU trade agreements, outlining existing bilateral agreements; European partnership agreements and expectations (or lack thereof) of the next Doha round of negotiations. The sense

3 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Brief for the Parliamentary Delegation

of the meeting was that timing on the completion of these negotiations was critical. All were mindful of the imminent election in the US and some expressed the view that the window of opportunity to finalise the current round was closing and would not be re-opened for 2 to 3 years once it had closed.

2.29 Given the trade relationship between the EU and Australia it is understandable that there was considerable discussion on agricultural trade. The Australian delegation was interested to hear that EU export subsidies for agricultural products would be a thing of the past by 2013. However, other EU agricultural subsidies would continue. There followed a robust debate about the need to protect struggling agricultural industries and cyclic trends in trade policies, including the role played by the often protectionist farm policies of the United States. Members of the delegation raised the distorting effect that subsidies had on the international market and Australia's lack of farm subsidies was noted.

2.30 The question of EU farm subsidies was explored again the next morning when the delegation met with the Chair of the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee, Mr Neil Parish, MEP. This meeting followed breakfast meetings that were held with members of like-minded party groupings within the European Parliament. Mr Parish outlined the history of agricultural subsidies in the EU and factors influencing change. It was flagged that the momentum for change that had been reflected both in changes to subsidies and agricultural policies was coming to an end. Farm costs were increasing and new states entering the EU were bringing different expectations and attitudes to the fore. Mr Parish reported that, in terms of a percentage of the total EU's budget, payments made under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) had previously been 60 percent, were now 40 percent and by 2013 would be 30 percent.

2.31 The President of the Senate, Senator Ferguson, noted that EU directives and regulations frequently were adopted as global standards and in this context raised the European Commission's proposed reclassification of nickel carbonate. The proposal to reclassify nickel carbonate from a Category 3 substance (suspected carcinogen) to a Category 1 substance (proven carcinogenic in humans) would have a significant impact on Australia's nickel trade. The President drew attention to Australia's concerns about the scientific assessment and the request by Australian industry for the opportunity to provide additional scientific information. The President asked that this request be passed to the appropriate EU body.

Migration

2.32 The second afternoon of discussions with members of the European Parliament's Delegation for Relations with Australia and New Zealand focused on immigration issues. As the discussion got underway it became very evident that the EU and Australia have very different starting points on matters of migration. Australia has a strong tradition of migration to its shores and the historical perspective of European Union countries is one of losing migrants.

2.33 Australia also has a reputation of embracing ethnic and cultural diversity and attracting skilled labour. The EU migrant population in the past has been largely unskilled – 85 percent of unskilled workers go to the EU. Migration was not high on the EU's agenda until 10 years ago. There is still no co-decision from either the European Parliament or the Council on an integrated EU policy. However, the Common Basic Principles have been flagged as the foundation for a co-ordination of national policies.

2.34 One aspect of the EU's interest in third country migration is skilled labour. In an attempt to encourage skilled labour to the EU a system of 'blue cards' has been proposed. Application for a blue card must be made from outside the EU and to a specific country. If the application is granted, the applicant must work for 3 years in the country of entry before they can apply for jobs elsewhere in the EU and take advantage of free movement within the EU.

2.35 The issues associated with asylum seekers' entry to both Australia and the EU was also explored. EU countries process such migrants quickly and generally did not have a policy of detaining them. It was noted that the majority of Australia's asylum seekers were found to qualify for entry while the opposite was the case in the UK.

Relations with Third Countries

2.36 Members of both the delegation and the EU completed their formal discussions with an exchange detailing the relationships with third countries, particularly those in the Pacific region.

2.37 Some of the discussion highlighted the economic relationships in the region, including Australia's ongoing negotiations with China for a free trade agreement.

2.38 In noting Australia's strong bilateral relationship with China, questions were raised about human rights issues in that country. This naturally led to queries about Australia's participation in the Olympics, and particularly about the Australian Prime Minister's intention to attend the opening ceremony. European media at the time was full of news stories about the Olympic torch and the difficulties that had been encountered during its world journey. In this discussion it was acknowledged that only with open lines of communication could difficult messages be relayed.

2.39 The EU members spoke of the need to provide good governance guidelines to the smaller countries in the Pacific region and the EU's plans. They also alerted the delegation to the high level commission on climate change that was being sent to Fiji. They acknowledged that Pacific nations look to the Pacific Forum for direction and leadership.

2.40 Recognition of the newly independent state of Kosovo was also discussed.

The European Parliament in session

2.41 The delegation's meetings at the European Parliament provided a good balance between formal discussions and an opportunity for informal dialogue. A dinner for the delegation was hosted on the evening of Wednesday 9 April by Mr Timothy Kirkhope MEP, the Chair of the European Parliament's Delegation for relations with Australia and New Zealand, and provided an opportunity for the delegation to pursue on a personal basis matters of interest. A similar opportunity was provided by the lunch hosted by the Vice President of the European Parliament, Mr Gerard Onesta MEP which was held in the President's dining room of the Altiero Spinelli Building.

2.42 The delegation was pleased to be able to observe a session of the European Parliament. With 785 members, speaking times are limited, whole debates can be limited to a little as 3 minutes. It was acknowledged that members vote along party lines and the furious pace demands intense focus. The delegation observed the session on Thursday, 10 April when the European Parliament considered a number of committee reports, including the *2007 Progress report on the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* from the Committee on Foreign Affairs, one from the Committee on Culture and Education on cultural industries in Europe and motions relating to combating cancer in the enlarged European Union and options for EU action in adapting to climate change in Europe. With electronic voting a series of amendments to the motions were completed in the blink of an eye. Before ending the session the President of the European Parliament, Mr Hans-Gert Pottering welcomed the Australian delegation, commenting that the dialogue between Australia and the EU had commenced in 1981 and he hoped it would continue.

2.43 The delegation also hopes that the very constructive dialogue that they enjoyed will continue and after discussions with their EU colleagues agreed that a similar session would be of assistance to EU delegations to Australia. The delegation has asked the Parliamentary Relations Office to consider ways to hold a similar forum when the EU Delegation for Relations with Australia and New Zealand pay a return visit later this year.

The French Parliament

2.44 In Paris, the delegation met with representatives of both the Senate's and National Assembly's France-Australia Friendship Groups. The meeting was chaired by Senator Dominique Leclerc as President of the Senate group with Mr Pierre Frogier, MP, President of the National Assembly's group also in attendance. Mr Frogier was supported by Mr Gael Yanno, MP.

2.45 Discussions focussed on the era of change that both countries had entered into at the hands of the electors. It was considered that both countries faced similar problems – those of environmental change, immigration and the international situation.

2.46 The French acknowledged the difficulties that some new policies were experiencing as they sought to implement changes that would affect employment and the economy. The unemployment rate (10 percent) coupled with a 35 hour working week are seen to be limiting economic growth. There was a view that work should be made more attractive and the unemployed encouraged to seek work. It was considered to be in the national interest for French citizens to work more to increase the national wealth which in turn would enable France to be more competitive on the world stage. If this could be achieved then the French would enjoy a better quality of life.

2.47 As with every other European parliament visited, there was curiosity expressed about Australia's 'planned' immigration policy. They noted that illegal immigration to France from Africa and the Balkans was on the increase.

2.48 There was also an expression of concern about France's ageing population and the consequent increase in demand that social programmes would experience. However, the delegation was also advised that the birth rate in France remained high.

2.49 On the issue of climate change, the French were quite positive about the current policies. The view that carbon and greenhouse gas emissions were declining was expressed. It was noted that 70 to 80 percent of French electrical power is nuclear.

2.50 Relations for both Australia and France in the Pacific were also explored. Mr Frogier is the Député for New Caledonia and was able to advise the delegation of the progress of Australia's commercial interests there, including BHP Billiton's mining and processing interests. He also indicated that Australia was the primary food source for those living in New Caledonia.

2.51 The discussion on the Pacific region also considered the stability of the region. France was actively seeking to establish strong links in the area and promote political stability. The delegation was informed of the work of the Pacific Fund which provides French aid each year, done in liaison with the governments of the nation states in the Pacific.

2.52 There was no discussion on the Lisbon Treaty (France has already ratified it) but an acknowledgment that French traditions, both cultural and ideological, were entrenched and that globalisation will demand that these traditions change. The path forward to change would require more dialogue and more information to be available to the 'citizens'.

2.53 Members of the delegation raised Australia's bid for the Security Council membership in 2013, with a view of sounding out French support for our candidacy. The delegation was informed that the matter would be conveyed to President Sarkozy. The delegation was also advised that the President would be encouraged to visit Australia when he next visited New Caledonia. Five Senators have a planned visit to Australia in August/September, providing a good opportunity to continue the dialogue.

2.54 The delegation was invited and enjoyed a tour of the Luxembourg Palace, where the Senate Chamber is located. They noted with interest the history of the Palace and evidence of the German occupation of the Chamber during the Second World War.

The Austrian Parliament

2.55 The visit to Austria commenced with a round table discussion with members of both the Federal Council and National Council, chaired by the Vice President of the Federal Council, Ms Susanne Neuwirth. The following members of the Austrian Parliament, representing a cross section of political views were also present:

- Dr Sabine Oberhauser (Member of the National Council)
- Ms Monika Kemperle (Member of the Federal Council)
- Mr Sigisbert Dolinschek (Member of the National Council)
- Mr Alois Gradauer (Member of the National Council)
- Mr Stefan Schennach (Member of the Federal Council)

2.56 In her opening remarks Vice President Neuwirth indicated that the Lisbon Treaty would be ratified by Austria. Vice President Neuwirth also noted that Austria welcomed Australia's recent ratification of the Kyoto Protocol and outlined that climate change, including emissions trading schemes, food prices and security and counter terrorism were amongst the major issues facing the Austria of today.

2.57 The Austrian Members of Parliament sought the views of the Australians on these issues, asking about our peacekeeping and peacemaking arrangements in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Of particular concern was the Australian public's acceptance of their troops' activities in both countries.

2.58 The delegation was also questioned about China and human rights issues, particularly Australia's Prime Minister's intentions in relation to attending the Olympics and the Opening Ceremony.

2.59 Economic issues were also raised during the discussions – figures on inflation and unemployment being swapped between each group. The cost of fuel was canvassed as were barriers to trade. There was some attempt to explore the Austrians' view of the EU subsidies for agriculture, but the response put the question firmly in the European Union basket.

2.60 The Austrians sought to explore the issues related to the deregulation of the Australian labour market and were provided with open and frank responses.

2.61 The formal discussion was concluded with a tour of the parliament buildings and the delegation was intrigued to find that by Vienna's standards the buildings were modern, although it was classical in design.

2.62 Following the tour, the delegation had lunch with those who had participated in the round table. The informality of the lunch provided a welcome opportunity to continue to explore issues of common interest on a one to one basis. The lunch concluded with the President, Senator Ferguson, extending an invitation to the Austrian Parliament to send a delegation of its own to Australia to continue the dialogue.

Conclusion

2.63 The delegation welcomed the opportunities to have discussions with their parliamentary colleagues and found it especially useful to be able to meet at both the European Parliament and the various national parliaments. The presence at each table of a diverse set of views was appreciated. It enabled the members of the delegation to become familiar with not only the issues facing European countries but also the breadth of views on those issues. The context created by these discussions assisted the members of the delegations in their discussions with other institutions during their visit. For these reasons the delegation is of the strong view that in the future the biennial visit by the Australian parliament to European institutions should give equal prominence to the parliamentary visits. Further recognition of the importance of the parliamentary visits should be reflected in the title given to the delegation.

Recommendation

2.64 The delegation recommends that future delegations be known as the 'Australian Parliamentary delegation to European Parliaments and Institutions'.

2.65 The delegation has also asked the Parliamentary Relations Office to consider ways to hold a discussion forum in Australia when the EU Delegation for relations with Australia and New Zealand visits Australia in intervening years.

Chapter 3

Institutions

3.1 This chapter outlines the delegation's meetings with other institutions. Over the ten days and throughout four countries of Europe, the delegation was privileged to meet with a wide range of institutions that are specialists in their fields.

3.2 Meetings were undertaken with senior officials in the organisations. The officials were generous in the background briefings and information they provided to the members of the delegation in order to assist them in meeting the following aims and objectives of their visit:

- To gain an appreciation of the role of international organisations based in Europe, including those dealing with arms control, trade and illicit drugs such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the International Narcotics Control Board; and
- To obtain the EU's outlook on security issues with the US and an assertive Russia as well as the struggle against domestic and international terrorism both within the EU, the Middle East region and Afghanistan.

3.3 The briefings were open and wide ranging and often covered several interrelated issues. This allowed the delegation to further explore aspects of the other aims of the delegation's visit, particularly in relation to climate change and energy security issues.

3.4 In two countries, the Netherlands and Austria, the delegation met with senior government ministers – Mr Frans Timmermans, the Minister for European Affairs from the Netherlands and Dr Hans Winkler, State Secretary for European and International Affairs from Austria. These ministers provided an added dimension to the delegation's picture of European affairs by offering the perspective of the executive in two important member countries of the EU.

Drugs and Arms Control

3.5 To gain an appreciation of the role of international organisations involved in the fight against illicit drugs and arms control, the delegation met with officers of the following organisations in Europe:

- Europol in The Hague;
- International Narcotics Control Board in Vienna; and
- UN Office on Drugs and Crime in Vienna.

3.6 Each agency has a specified role and there is an appreciation of the work of other agencies so that co operation can exist where necessary.

Europol

3.7 Europol's Headquarters is located in The Hague. On 8 April, the delegation met with a range of officers, including the Mr Mariano Simancas, Deputy Director (Serious Crime), Mr Laszlo Salgo, Assistant Director Serious Crime, Mr Sean Griffin, Project Manager (Islamic terrorism) and Mr Ivan Gelbard.

3.8 The briefing commenced with an outline of Europol's activities. It has 27 member states who contribute liaison officers and 7 or 8 associated nations, including Australia, who also have a liaison presence. These liaison officers are one of the strengths of the Europol system as they facilitate the exchange of information. Another of the strengths identified was the IT system that stores the information and quarantines it so that it is only available at certain levels and in certain circumstances.

3.9 Europol builds this information on a local, national, regional and global perspective. Its projects for inquiry are decided by the member states and are focussed on large scale activities rather than reacting to individual incidents. The strength of their work is in information sharing, exchange and analysis, providing threat assessments and situation reports to member and associated countries.

3.10 Australia's involvement with Europol in drugs related cases is highly regarded within the organisation, particularly as it relates to the Asian region. The point was made that the major danger of drugs trafficking to the EU is not only the effect of the substance supplied but the creation of routes that can be exploited for other purposes. West Africa was identified as being a significant concern in terms of new trafficking routes to Europe. In identifying possible new routes, the EU was developing programs that targeted the vulnerabilities that made these routes viable, but as could be expected there is a lead time in seeing the results of such programs.

International Narcotics Control Board

3.11 The delegation also met with Mr Koli Kouame, Secretary to the International Narcotics Control Board and discussed the work of the Board. Australia is one of the world's producers of legally grown opiates and comes under the scrutiny of the Board to ensure that the drugs are only traded and used internationally for medical and scientific purposes. The Board also has a mandate to ensure the availability of opiates for these purposes.

3.12 Australia's poppy growing industry was acknowledged as conforming to the Board's requirements. The question of supply was usually settled by informal negotiations. The Board will make recommendations but only with the cooperation of the government of the nation growing the approved crop. Australia has effective narcotics controls in place and the growing quotas are established in conjunction with the Tasmanian and Federal Governments. The formula includes the amount of land to be cultivated and the total quantity to be harvested.

3.13 The Board also has a responsibility to prevent the cultivation, production and illicit use of drugs. Their mandate is to ensure that opiates grown for medical or scientific purposes do not get diverted. However, the Board does not have any operational power. Its work is largely advisory but it will give assistance to capacity building.

3.14 It was indicated that Australia was a leader in providing good examples for the Asia Pacific region. However, Afghanistan and neighbouring regions were identified as problem areas.

UN Office on Drugs and Crime

3.15 The delegation met with Mr Antonio Maria Costa, the Executive Director of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime on 17 April. He indicated that one of the Office's major responsibilities was to assist member countries to establish a common approach to agreements concerning the interlinking elements between drugs, crime and terrorism. The Office also undertakes research and has been more successful in their work on drugs than on crime. Key factors that have been identified in relation to drugs are the age profile of the population, employment levels, poverty and urbanisation.



The Delegation at the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, Vienna.

3.16 The Office's research has shown that where a country is vulnerable to crime, foreign investors become wary of investing and development is further impeded. With 70 percent of their resources devoted to operational matters and 52 field officers throughout the world they attempt to provide a bigger picture, including capacity building, so that these vulnerable countries can have options and can pursue those active in crime.

3.17 Mr Costa indicated that the main challenges in the South East Asian area were the increase in opium crops and the increase in the production of amphetamines, together with organised crime and money laundering and corruption.

3.18 The problems of the opium fields in Afghanistan were also canvassed. It was noted that there was no real substitute crop for the farmers to grow. However, a map depicting poppy fields indicated that the majority of the crops were in the southern provinces where the Taliban has greatest control. The crops are used to finance the insurgency, and the lawlessness of the region means that for the local farmers there is no incentive or culture to do anything other than grow opium.

EU outlook on Security Issues

3.19 Afghanistan continues to dominate the consideration of current security issues in Europe. All the security related institutions visited noted Afghanistan as an important current focus for their operations. The ongoing stability in Afghanistan was seen as essential for security in Europe.

3.20 Continuing the progress in the Balkan states also remains an area of interest, particularly in Eastern Europe. The **International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia** (which has an Australian as its Vice-President, HE Judge Kevin Parker AO) has played a major role in bringing justice and some resolution to the serious difficulties faced by this region.



The Delegation in the Peace Palace: International Court of Justice

3.21 The delegation met with Judge Parker and the Deputy Registrar of the Tribunal, Mr John Hocking, who is also an Australian. Judge Parker provided the delegation with an outline of the operations of the Tribunal and its origins. It was acknowledged that the international discomfiture that countries experienced as a result

of the information that is laid bare in the trials acted as deterrents to these countries in further difficulties.

3.22 The delegation was also informed that the Tribunal was closed to fresh indictments and that it expected to complete its work in 2009, with all appeal cases finalised within two years after that date. These predictions were predicated on the continued good health of the defendants and no other administrative problems. The delegation was impressed by the work The Tribunal has undertaken in finalising cases, often in challenging circumstances. It was pleasing to hear that Australian 'know-how' had been used to achieve administrative outcomes for the tribunal.

3.23 Discussion also highlighted the work of the International Criminal Court which is an independent permanent court created by the Rome Statute of the International Court. The Court was established to hear cases where persons have been accused of 'serious crimes of international concern, namely genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes'¹. The view was expressed that this body, in prosecuting such crimes internationally, would undertake a global role similar to that the Tribunal had filled for the former Yugoslavia.

3.24 Another United Nations body that can act to diffuse a difficulty between countries is the **International Court of Justice**. The delegation also met with its President, HE Judge Dame Rosalyn Higgins, QC. Judge Higgins briefed the delegation on the work of the Court, admitting that the workload of the court had increased over the years. Some of its work results from the approximately 300 multilateral treaties that stipulate the Court as the mechanism in deciding certain questions. The Court still requires that all parties agree to it pursuing a matter, and it was suggested that this was one reason as to why compliance with the Court's rulings was high.

3.25 The Judge also discussed with the delegation the work the Court had done in relation to the questions of genocide and torture. To establish that genocide had occurred, intent and patterns needed to be established, and that had to be in addition to a large number and series of murders. The question of what defined torture was a more problematic one and there was no clear answer.

3.26 Europe and the US continue to maintain a close security relationship, notably though the **North Atlantic Treaty Organisation** (NATO). The importance of Russia in the broader international security environment was noted. The delegation was made aware that NATO has a sound relationship with Russia, with areas of agreement and disagreement acknowledged between the two.

3.27 When the delegation visited the NATO headquarters in Brussels the focus was on the recent summit held in Bucharest. Ambassador Martin Erdmann, the Assistant Secretary-General, Political Affairs and Security Policy, was keen to express his

1 International Criminal Court website About the Court accessed 19 June 2008

appreciation of Australia's interests, although we are not a member country. He also made the point that not all EU countries are members, for Turkey is a member of NATO, and Sweden is not.

3.28 During discussions with Ambassador Erdmann NATO's decision making processes – one of consensus based on intergovernmental co-operation - was also noted. The stresses placed on the process by NATO's expanding membership over the last few years were also explored. In 1995, as part of a study on the enlargement of NATO, a number of criteria were identified as being necessary for a country to enter the NATO fold. The criteria included the rule of law or an organised judicial system, a defence force (nations must be security providers not security consumers) and nations should not have any unresolved conflicts with NATO states. Under article 10 of the Washington Treaty (which establishes NATO) all European nations are eligible for entry to NATO, if the specified qualifications are met. European nations are regarded as those that fall within the geographical confines of the Ural Mountains to the Mediterranean Sea.

3.29 NATO acts as a means of keeping the United States of America engaged in Europe and the strong relationship between the two is clearly indicated in NATO. Transatlantic relationships are also encouraged by the NATO Parliament which has a vote on the budget, the use of NATO forces and the ratification of any amendments to the Washington Treaty. The Parliamentary Assembly is made up of 250 members of Parliament from member countries and 70 odd non member countries with observer status. The population of the member state is the determinant in how many seats they have in the Assembly.

3.30 The strength of the transatlantic relationship is also demonstrated in the US missile shield system which is designed to protect much of Europe. Those nations not covered by the US missile shield system will have NATO's missile defence system.

3.31 Discussions with other NATO officers permitted the delegation to explore the evolution of NATO and its new roles. The delegation became aware that the evolution process has meant that the focus of NATO has changed significantly over its 59 years and that it is no longer Euro centric. The events of '9/11' caused NATO members to re-evaluate its strategic position. The conclusion was reached that the major threats to the US and Europe often originate from outside the area covered by NATO, requiring a more proactive stance to provide a stable security position.

Afghanistan and The Middle East

3.32 Afghanistan is clearly an area of significant interest to the institutions in Europe. It featured prominently in almost every discussion that the delegation conducted with the international organisations and parliamentary groups it met.

3.33 NATO, through the International Security Assistance Force continues to move forward with a combination of security stabilisation, reconstruction and community building operations. The delegation was made aware that without this three pronged approach it was unlikely that there would be success in Afghanistan. At the recently

held meeting in Bucharest a number of decisions had been made and the focus of NATO now was to implement those decisions.

3.34 The UN was to take a leading role in co-ordinating the community building operations and reconstruction. The reconstruction programs led by NATO countries, were often multinational, but the lead nation was responsible for the decisions about how and where money was spent.

3.35 Organisations relating to monitoring of illegal drugs and drug trafficking, including Europol, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime and International Narcotics Control Board maintained a strong interest in the ongoing developments in Afghanistan and its effects on poppy production. Encouraging alternate industry and agriculture to replace the poppy trade was identified as an important aim, but one which will not be easily achieved.

3.36 Australia is the largest non-NATO contributor to the operations in Afghanistan. It was acknowledged that Australia is playing an important role both in the activities of its armed forces and in the rebuilding process. Overall, involvement in Afghanistan was seen as a vital security and stability measure for Europe, even within organisations that did not have a history of taking a proactive stance outside European borders. It was noted that Australia had a strong history in defending its soil from afar, but for European countries it was a relatively new experience.

3.37 Australia's participation in Afghanistan was very well recognised and appreciated. In all discussions where Australia's role in Afghanistan was noted, there was a confirmation as to value of the Australian work there. Members of the Dutch Parliament and their Minister for European Affairs, Mr Frans Timmermans, were particularly appreciative of the close working relationship between our two countries in the southern provinces of Afghanistan.

3.38 In discussions with NATO, the Middle East region was identified as a region that represented possible threats. These threats arose from failing states and ungoverned areas as well as those generally recognised - terrorism and proliferation.

3.39 Discussions with officers of the **International Atomic Energy Agency** (IAEA) in Vienna assisted in informing the delegation as to how the threats of proliferation were being monitored. The IAEA's safeguards division is responsible for monitoring nuclear activities, not just in the Middle East but throughout the world. It inspects nuclear material and activities to verify that it is not used for military purposes. The inspections take place in accordance with agreements that have been concluded with the relevant country. It has 250 safeguard inspectors and conducts about 9,000 inspections per year in 70 countries, including Australia. The inspections are designed to inform rather than to test against specific criteria. Australia got a tick

of approval for being the only nation that publishes the report of the inspection statements².

3.40 Inspections also assist in providing a complete picture of a country's nuclear program. Other aspects of the monitoring program include remote monitoring and environmental sampling. Assistance in building a complete picture can also be provided by vendors in the market. One of the values of the analysis is as a check on each state's declarations. Both Iraq and Iran are nuclear states and fall within the monitoring regime.

3.41 The IAEA is part of the UN family and its mandate extends to two other areas – promoting safety and security and science and technology.

3.42 The brief for the safety and security division extends from nuclear installations through to radioactive materials to radioactive waste. In discussions, it was noted that the final judgement for safety and security must lie with the government of the relevant country. The IAEA can provide assessments and offer advice, but ultimately it is the state that must bear the responsibility. Much of their work is focussed on prevention. It was acknowledged that the number of incidents was increasing but this must be considered in the context of improved reporting and technical control.

3.43 The division also looks at the security risks with the aim of improving security and putting in place sustainable systems for the future – a future in which nuclear energy is looking increasingly attractive for a number of nation states. Russia, for example, is planning to extend the number of its nuclear power plants. While the difficulties in predicting future figures for nuclear power plants were noted, it was possible that the number will have increased to 200 by 2030. The assistance provided by Australia, as a uranium producer, in exchanging information about nuclear security was acknowledged.

3.44 The last area of the IAEA's work is the scientific and technological work they undertake and assist in developing countries. In briefing the delegation some examples of their recent work were given - one in the field of medicine with the work of nuclear therapy. The other was in the field of food and agriculture and included plant breeding as well as insect pest control. The use of atom energy for peaceful purposes had many other possible applications, including disease prevention, resource management, power generation and desalination and food security. Australia's contribution to this program was both acknowledged and welcomed.

3.45 Another key player in the ongoing work against nuclear proliferation is the **Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organization** (CTBTO). The delegation met with the head of the organisation, Mr Tibor Tóth, in Vienna. During discussions the delegation was made aware of the

2 the statements are included in the Annual Report prepared by the Australian Safeguards and Non-Proliferation Office and tabled in Parliament.

work of the agency in preparing for the ratification of the Treaty. Under the terms of the treaty, 44 designated states must ratify it before the treaty can come into force. There are nine of the 44 states who have not yet signed.

3.46 The Treaty bans nuclear explosive testing and prescribes a verification regime, the key of which is the International Monitoring System (IMS). The delegation was informed that 337 monitoring stations had been established. The stations 'sniff the air' and monitor seismology. The information is transmitted to Vienna where it is analysed. The system was able to identify the DPRK (North Korean) nuclear test in October 2006.

3.47 While some stations are manned not all stations are. Australia already has 17 operative stations and will ultimately have 21. The CTBTO is still working to establish the remaining stations. All participating states are provided with the information obtained to assist them.

3.48 The ratification of the treaty continues to be the focus of the CTBTO work, but mention was also made of the potential for other uses that could be made from the information gained from the monitoring stations, including as a tsunami warning system.

Russia

3.49 The **Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)** operates without a charter and on the goodwill of the member states. It has 56 member states ranging across 3 continents. It 'works for early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation.'³ OSCE places its values at the centre of the process. These values include promoting democracy, a free and independent media, and economic prosperity. Perhaps one of the roles most recognised is that it has in monitoring elections. It does so at the invitation and agreement of the state. It was acknowledged that the last two elections in Russia had not been monitored by the OSCE.

3.50 The Organisation works on consensus and acknowledged that one state can therefore delay a process. Russia, for example has suspended participation in the development of an open skies treaty. The open skies treaty is an arms control treaty and puts in place a regime of observation flights over the territories of the states that are parties to the agreement. However, it was also made clear that it was not the only state that had stalled development on projects and it was also clear that Russia was still interested in participating in the Organisation.

3.51 The OSCE continues to encourage dialogue between its members and the value of this work in preventing conflicts and terrorism and in promoting awareness is difficult to estimate. It is important to have the forum and states continue to use it to air difficulties and views.

Domestic and International Terrorism

3.52 Apart from Afghanistan, counter-terrorism continues to be a major focus of the general security environment in Europe. The delegation noted in particular the work being done in Europol in this area. Europol is an information sharing and analysis organisation with experts seconded from member countries. Australia is developing closer ties with this organisation and supplies AFP liaison officers to work with Europol. The success of the process was highlighted in the examples provided to the delegation during the briefing.

3.53 Europol has identified several forms of extremism that could lead to terrorism, including Islamic terrorism. Political extremism is often closely aligned with acts of violence that could readily escalate into terrorism. One of the factors in the equation is the freedom of movement that takes place in the EU. It enables terrorism of all kinds to cross borders and 'experts' to do so without detection. Europol's information sharing had experienced success in combating this trend.

3.54 The question of what attracts young people to radical extremism was addressed in part in the delegation's briefing at **UNESCO**. UNESCO has a strong and evolving role in education matters and in that context it has participated in exploring the question of how to stop young people being attracted to radical extremism. Education is seen as one means to address the root causes and UNESCO has spent time and money in developing text books and promoting the education targets they established (millennium goals for primary and gender education). One of the problems it has encountered in meeting its education goals is the lack of teachers and other infrastructure to provide the education. The challenge now is to provide a secondary education process so that teachers can be trained.

3.55 UNESCO, as the body which is responsible for the World Heritage List, also has access to expertise in developing these sites as tourist destinations. It has devoted resources to assisting the development of cultural tourism in less developed countries, providing economic projects to assist development.

3.56 Many of UNESCO's projects are focused in Africa. However, there is some engagement in the Pacific and Asia. It was noted that it was unlikely that the Pacific would meet the millennium targets for education. It was acknowledged that UNESCO can advise a nation and assist with capacity building but cannot push a nation to develop programs. It saw itself more as a resource for developing countries and a centre for knowledge and education that could be accessed around the world.

Other international organisations

3.57 The delegation met with two other institutions during the visit and gained an appreciation of the role both institutions played. It met with the first of these organisations - the **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)** – in France.

3.58 The OECD looks at problems of global significance – it puts countries in a position to respond to changes that have been sparked by global changes. Its strength is in the collection of comparative information and it assists policy making by preparing concepts that are well analysed and are generally applicable.

3.59 Every two years, the OECD conducts a full economic assessment of the G7 countries. During the briefing, it was acknowledged that many factors need to go into the mix to make an economic assessment and many of these have proved difficult to predict. The delegation was advised that commodity prices were on the increase and that trend was likely to persist in the short term. The effects of this trend would not be evenly distributed. However, most economies were entering this period with good trade and business confidence which should mitigate the effects. Coupled with the cooling in the housing market and given the lack of knowledge about the risk borne by investors it was proving difficult to predict the outcome.

3.60 In forecasting Australia's economic development two problems were identified - the tyranny of distance and the state fragmentation of the regulatory framework. Both problems influence Australia's productivity.

3.61 The OECD has recently focused its research on climate change working on both mitigation and adaptation policies. Research has included work on carbon emission trading schemes (ETS), examining the investments that had been made to date by the EU countries, Norway and New Zealand. The evidence suggested that more emphasis should be placed on auctioning rather than granting permits. It was indicated that although limited in its coverage the EU's ETS was working.

3.62 The work the OECD has conducted on food and agriculture includes an examination of the support levels provided by each nation to agriculture and the effect of that support on the global market. It was pointed out that how much support was provided was as important as how it is provided. In this context it noted that the EU had undertaken significant reform in terms of how the support is provided although there had been little reduction in terms of the amount of support provided.

3.63 Another aspect of the OECD's work in the agricultural area examines the impact on the market of the production of biofuels from farm products. It was acknowledged that it does have an effect on the crops planted.

3.64 The second of the two institutions that have a broad international focus visited by the delegation was the **Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)**.

3.65 OPEC was founded in 1960 with five member countries. The membership has expanded as the number of oil producing nations has increase. The aims of OPEC are:

- to co-ordinate petrol prices and supply,
- to stabilise oil markets
- to ensure oil supply.

3.66 During the discussions, its future challenges were identified as being the stability of global energy markets; energy for sustainable development and energy its impact on the environment.

3.67 In discussing the oil outlook to 2030, the current increases in oil prices were addressed. The view was expressed that oil market conditions were being influenced by the value of the US dollar and the futures market, in particular the ratio of barrels on paper to those that were being traded. It was indicated that there were healthy commercial stocks still available.

3.68 In acknowledging the sustainability of resources in future the years as a challenge, OPEC noted the advent and ongoing interest in biofuels. These and other renewable sources of energy (hydro, nuclear and wind farms) were seen as a supplementary source of energy and not necessarily as being in competition with oil. Technological research and development for the oil industry were seen as essential component to the continued supply of oil.

3.69 OPEC has also conducted research on future oil markets. It indicated that in the foreseeable future (2030), the OECD countries will continue to use more oil per day than the developing countries. Transport was identified as a major growth sector.

3.70 In considering the impact of oil on the environment, the view was expressed that there was a need to limit emissions in the production of oil and that carbon management would become central in production. OPEC was collaborating with experts to ensure that research was being conducted to assist in achieving that. The research is to include consideration of carbon capture and storage.



*Senator the Hon. A Ferguson, Leader of the Delegation,
with HE Abdalla Salem El-Badri, Secretary General of OPEC*

The Ministers

3.71 The opportunity to meet with senior ministers - Mr Frans Timmermans, the Netherlands' Minister for European Affairs and Dr Hans Winkler, Austria's State Secretary for European and International Affairs - in two countries provided the delegation with an added perspective on the European Union. The meetings were frank, with discussions that covered a number of topics.

3.72 In both the Netherlands and Austria, involvement in Afghanistan was canvassed. In Austria, it was noted that while they have a strong tradition of peacekeeping, the deployment of troops for fighting was relatively new and required the agreement of Parliament for the government to act.

3.73 The issue of climate change and the EU's carbon trading scheme was also the subject of discourse with the ministers of both nations. Both Ministers acknowledged Australia's recent ratification of the Kyoto Protocol. Austria identified transport as an area that was an important challenge. Issues arising from transport were also explored with Minister Timmermans of the Netherlands who was able to identify some innovative Dutch thinking in this field.

3.74 The third area of concern, discussed by the delegation with both Minister Timmermans and Minister Winkler, is immigration. Minister Winkler acknowledged that the EU would benefit if an immigration policy for the Union was developed. For both countries integrating the new immigrants presented problems. The use of citizenship tests was also explored by the members of the delegation with both ministers.

3.75 The final area of discussions was the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty and the proposals it includes. The difficulties in the treaty getting ratification were acknowledged by both ministers. Those in the community against its ratification run negative campaigns claiming amongst other things that the expanded EU would bring greater immigration to the existing member countries of the EU. The delegation gained the impression that the treaty, which offers new structures, was required to refresh the EU.

3.76 In Austria, the members of the delegation raised the question of support for Australia's election as a member of the Security Council for the period 2013-2014. It was noted that the Austrians were hoping to have a delegate elected in the period prior to Australia's candidate.

3.77 Minister Winkler also gave the delegation an update on the working holiday makers agreement and indicated Austrian support for the EU agricultural policies.

People to people ties

3.78 There was one other aim that was successfully met during the delegation's visit to Europe. This was to exchange views and explore opportunities to strengthen social, cultural, educational and scientific relations as well and enhancing 'people to people' ties. While the whole program facilitated this there are three occasions that highlighted the ties between our nation and Europe.

3.79 First was the visit to the Aboriginal Art Museum in Utrecht. In the opening remarks Australia's recent apology to the stolen generation of indigenous people was welcomed. The leader of the delegation, the President of the Senate, the Hon Alan Ferguson closed the "Brilliance" exhibition after the delegation's tour. The juxtaposition of Australian indigenous art with European artists was an exciting and very expressive link between Australia and the Netherlands. The delegation was keen to continue this relationship and provided a booklet of WA indigenous art to the museum so that further exhibitions could be considered.

3.80 The second and very poignant reminder of the links between Australia and Europe was the delegation's visit to the Polygon Wood Buttes and Tyne Cot cemeteries. The rows of white crosses bearing the names of men born in countries far from the fields of their deaths stand as a testimony to links that time cannot erase. The visit to the 1917 Passchendaele Museum where the conditions they endured before their deaths were explained, reminded the delegation of the debt it owed these men. That evening at the Menin Gate in Ypres, while the Last Post sounded, the President of the Senate and Leader of the Delegation, Senator Alan Ferguson, laid a wreath of behalf of the Parliament of Australia, in recognition of the Australian sons and brothers left behind on foreign soil.

3.81 The final link discovered by the delegation was on farm land in the Krems-Stein region, not far from Vienna. In a beautiful old building that still had the remnants of an old grape crusher, members of the delegation met an Austrian wine maker who has vineyards at Finnis River in South Australian. Salomon Estate Australian wines are imported and sold in Austria, together with those produced by the Salomon family with its Austrian grapes. This successful link between Australia and Europe was a memorable way to end the visit.

Conclusion

3.82 The delegation returned home having established good relations with many organisations and with a much better picture of the problems facing Europe. The fight against the trade of illicit drugs and the security tensions faced by Europe were issues that the delegation was able to explore. It was invaluable to gain an insight into the economic tensions that face the EU and how these tensions are playing out in different economies. The work of organisations on nuclear proliferation and monitoring testing was another aspect of the visit that was of great assistance to members of the delegation.

3.83 While the delegation considers the whole visit to have been very successful, the members agree that the wide range of organisations visited in Vienna was particularly useful. It notes that Vienna has not been a regular stop of the biennial delegation to European institutions. Vienna is a hub for energy and security organisations. The members of the delegation believe that Vienna should be included on a regular basis for future delegations to the region.

APPENDIX

DELEGATION PROGRAM

NETHERLANDS

Saturday, 5 April

10.50 Arrival, Amsterdam (Schiphol)

Sunday, 6 April

11.00 Guided canal tour of Amsterdam hosted by Mr Ruud Nederveen, President of the Presidium of Amsterdam

13.05 Depart Amsterdam by coach for Utrecht

14.05 Arrive at Dom Plein, Utrecht. Escorted on foot to the Aboriginal Art Museum, Utrecht (AAMU)

Speeches by Mr Hans Sondaal, Chairman of the Board, AAMU, and Mrs A Raven, Acting Queen's Commissioner for the Province of Utrecht

14.35 Performance by artist Mr Christian Thompson, followed by tour of the Museum's current exhibitions

15.15 High tea at the Museum in the company of:

- Mrs A Raven, Acting Queen's Commissioner for the Province of Utrecht
- Mr H Sondaal, Chairman of the Board, AAMU
- Mr. A Wolfsen, Mayor of Utrecht
- Mr JC Henneman, Deputy Director-General, Regional Policy and Consular Affairs, MF
- Mr A Jonkman, Financial Director, Fugro N.Y. (Dutch oil, mineral and mining survey company)
- Mr P de Haan, Director of the University Museum and Quartermaster of the Celebration of the Peace Treaty of Utrecht and Utrecht Cultural Capital of Europe 2018

- Mr. S Raemeckers, Australian Trade Commission, The Netherlands.
 - Mr C Steenhoven, Member of the Board, AAMU
- 16.00 Official closing of the exhibition by Senator the Hon. Alan Ferguson, Delegation Leader
- 16.15 Depart Utrecht by coach for The Hague
- 19.00 Ambassador's residence, The Hague: Dinner, hosted by HE Ms Lydia Morton, Ambassador and Mr Doug Woodhouse

Monday, 7 April

- 09.15 Depart by coach for the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY)
- 09.45 ICTY: View trial proceedings in Prosecutor v. Gotovina from gallery
- 11.00 Meeting with the Vice-President of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), HE Judge Kevin Parker AO
- 11.10 Depart by coach for the International Court of Justice (ICJ)
- 11.30 Meeting with the President of the International Court of Justice, HE Judge Dame Rosalyn Higgins QC
- 12.00 Tour of the Peace Palace
- 12.30 Lunch with HE Judge Sir Kenneth Keith, International Court of Justice at Restaurant des Juges
- 13.45 Depart by coach for Dutch Parliament
- 14.15 Arrive at Dutch Parliament and welcomed by the Vice-President of the Senate, Ms Helen Dupuis and Vice-President of the House of Representatives, Mr J ten Hoopen
- 14.25 Meeting in the Gravenkamer with:
- Ms Helen Dupuis, Vice-President of the Senate
 - Mr. GJ de Graaf, Senator, President of the Committees for Foreign Affairs, Defence and

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- Development Cooperation
 - Mr. PH Hofstra, Senator
 - Mr R Willems, Senator
 - Mr JSJ Hillen, Senator
 - Mr GJA Hamilton, Parliamentary Clerk
 - Mr J ten Hoopen, Vice-President of the House of Representatives
 - Mr R Vermeij, MP
 - Mr M Kraneveldt, MP
 - Mrs E Biesheuvel-Vermeijden, Parliamentary Clerk
- 15.45 Guided tour of the Senate, Hall of Knights, and the House of Representatives
- 18.30 Apertitif hosted by the Vice-President of the Senate, Ms Helen Dupuis in the Wandelgang of the Senate, Dutch Parliament
- 19.00 Dinner hosted by the Vice-President of the Senate, Ms Helen Dupuis in the Senate Hall, Dutch Parliament

Tuesday, 8 April

- 9.00 Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Meeting with the Minister for European Affairs, Mr Frans Timmermans
- 10.15 Depart by coach for Europol Headquarters
- 10.30 Europol – Meeting with Deputy Director (Serious Crime) Mr Mariano Simancas and Assistant Director (Serious Crime) Mr Laszlo Salgo
- 11.00 Presentation by Project Manager Mr Sean Griffin and Mr Ivan Gelbard on Islamist Terrorism
- 11.45 Buffet lunch hosted by Europol
- 12.20 Official photographs at Europol
- 12.30 Depart the Hague by coach for Bruges

BELGIUM**Tuesday, 8 April**

- 15.00 Arrive in Bruges by coach from the Hague
- 15.30 Guided walking tour of Bruges
- 18.00 Depart for Brussels
- 19.00 Arrive Brussels

Wednesday, 9 April

- 10.30 Australian Embassy for briefing with Ambassador, HE Dr Alan Thomas
- 11.25 Welcomed at the Belgian Parliament by Mr Herman Van Rompuy, President of the Belgian Chamber of Representatives, followed by a tour of the Parliament
- 12.30 Lunch hosted by Mr Herman Van Rompuy
- 14.45 Depart Belgian Parliament for the European Parliament
- 15.00 Official Opening of the 31st EU-Australia Interparliamentary Meeting
- 15.15 Discussion on Climate Change
- 16.00 Discussion on EU Institutional Reform
- 16.45 Discussion on Trade Liberalisation
- 17.40 Depart the European Parliament
- 19.30 Dinner at La Maison du Cygne, hosted by Mr Timothy Kirkhope, MEP, Chairman of the European Parliament's Delegation for relations with Australia and New Zealand

Thursday, 10 April

- 08.55 Arrive at the European Parliament
- 09.00 Breakfast meetings with:

Members of the European Parliament's European People's Party/European Democrats Group (for Senator Ferguson, Senator Chapman and Mr Georgiou)

or

Members of the European Parliament's Socialist Group (for Mr Thomson, Senator Sterle, Senator McEwen and Senator Webber)

- 10.00 Meeting with Mr Neil Parish MEP, Chair of the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee and former Chair of the ANZ Delegation
- 10.40 Overview of the European Parliament, with attendance in the diplomatic gallery to observe debate and votes, followed by a tour of the Parliament
- 12.45 Lunch hosted by Mr Gérard Onesta MEP, Vice-President of the European Parliament
- 14.30 31st Australia-EU Interparliamentary Meeting
- 18.00 Depart European Parliament
- 19.30 Dinner hosted by Australian Ambassador, HE Dr Alan Thomas at his residence

Friday, 11 April

- 09.15 Arrive at NATO Headquarters
- 09.30 Briefing on the Outcomes of the NATO Summit in Bucharest, 2-4 April
- 10.00 Briefing on NATO's Role in the 21st Century
- 10.45 Briefing on NATO's Operations in Afghanistan
- 11.30 Briefing on the NATO Parliamentary Assembly
- 11.50 Depart NATO Headquarters
- 13.00 Travel to Ypres
- 14.30 Guided tour of Ypres and surrounds
- 20.00 Attend Last Post ceremony at the Menin Gate

20.15 Travel to Brussels

Saturday, 12 April

11.13 Depart Brussels for Paris by Thalys fast train

FRANCE

Saturday, 12 April

12.35 Arrive Paris, Gare du Nord, from Brussels

Evening Private arrangements

Sunday, 13 April

18.00 Briefing at the residence of HE Mr Christopher Langman, Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the OECD

19.00 Dinner hosted by Ambassador Langman

Monday, 14 April

09.10 Arrive OECD

09.45 Meeting with Mr Jean-Luc Schneider, Deputy Director, Economics Department for discussions on *the World Economy and Australia*

10.30 Meeting with Mr Nils-Axel Braathen, Principal Administrator, Environment Directorate for discussions on *Climate change and emission trading schemes and transport issues*

11.30 Meeting with Mr Ken Ash, Deputy Director, Trade and Agriculture Directorate for discussions on *agricultural markets, protection and reform, including "food miles"*

12.30 Working lunch at OECD, hosted by Ms Susanne Huttner, Director, Science, Technology and

Industry Directorate

- 14.15 Transfer from OECD to French Senate
- 15.15 Joint meeting of representatives from the French National Assembly and French Senate
- 17.30 Depart French Senate
- 19.00 Reception at residence of the Australian Ambassador, hosted by Mr David Ritchie, Ambassador-designate

Tuesday, 15 April

- 09.25 Transfer to UNESCO and meet Mrs Sally Mansfield, Deputy Ambassador and Australian Permanent Representative to UNESCO
- 10.15 Meeting with Mr Hans d'Orville, UNESCO Assistant Director-General of Strategic planning
- 11.00 Meeting with Mr Nicholas Burnett, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education
- 16.15 Depart Paris, Charles de Gaulle Airport, for Vienna

AUSTRIA

Tuesday, 15 April

- 18.15 Arrive Paris from Vienna, met by HE Mr Peter Shannon, Ambassador

Wednesday, 16 April

- 9.00 Briefing at Australian Embassy
- 10.00 Austrian Parliament:
Roundtable with Austrian Parliamentary Committees, followed by guided tour of the Parliament buildings
- 12.00 Lunch at Palais Pallavicini, hosted by Mag. Susanne Neuwirth, Vice President of the Federal

Council

- 14.45 Arrive Vienna International Centre
- 15.00 Presentation on the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

Thursday, 17 April

- 8.45 Arrive at Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and meet with Ambassador Marc Perrin de Brichambaut, Secretary General
- 10.30 Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs- Meet with Dr Hans Winkler, State Secretary for European and International Affairs and Roundtable discussions with Ministry officials
- 12.40 Lunch at Vienna International Centre, hosted by Ambassador Shannon, with guest Mr Antonio Maria Costa, Executive Director, UN Office on Drugs and Crime
- 14.00 Vienna International Centre, meet with Mr Tibor Tóth, Executive Secretary, Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organization
- 15.30 Vienna International Centre, meet with Mr Koli Kouame, Secretary, International Narcotics Control Board
- 18.30 Reception at Ambassador's residence

Friday, 18 April

- 9.30 Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to meet with Mr Abdalla Salem El-Badri, Secretary General
- 11.00 Tour through the Wachau region of Lower Austria Province by minibus
- 12.30 Guided tour of Melk Abbey

15.00 Duernstein, town and castle

16.30 Salomon Wine Estate

**Saturday, 19 and
Sunday, 20 April** Departures