

**Speech given by H.E. Mr. David Daly**  
**Head of Delegation of the European Commission**  
**At the Europe Day reception**  
**Brisbane, 3 June 2009**

I would like this evening to briefly recall something of the origins of the EU and to fast forward to where we are now in EU-Australia relations.

**The EU was born out of war**, from a deep desire to prevent war in the future such as Europe had seen every 50 years stretching back into the centuries.

After WW II there were political visionaries in Europe who wanted to do things differently this time around. One of these was the French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman. Coming from Lorraine, and having himself been in the German army in WW I, Schuman was well placed to know the tragedy of war and the need for political imagination and courage. As French Foreign Minister on 9 May 1950 he proposed that the countries of Europe should place their industries of war – iron, coal and steel – under a joint supranational control replacing national controls.

Five other countries joined with France to form the European Coal and Steel Community which led eventually to the EU of today.

We celebrate Europe Day around 9 May each year to commemorate Robert Schuman and the other visionaries, the founding fathers of the EU.

**The EU has grown from strength to strength both in terms of membership and policies.**

The EU has attracted new Member States since the beginning; successive enlargements have increased the size from 6 to 9, 10, 12, 15, 25 and now to 27. These accessions have been driven by political reasons, with countries wanting to benefit from this democratic club; also there are economic reasons related to the single European market which today boasts 500 million consumers.

Last Friday we had the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the accession of the 8 new Member States from Central and Eastern Europe as well as Cyprus and Malta; this 5<sup>th</sup> Round of enlargement was completed with the accession of Bulgaria and Romania in 2007. This enlargement was the biggest and most complicated, especially taking in the countries of the former Eastern Bloc – nonetheless, it was an historic opportunity which Europe was not going to miss.

The attraction of joining the EU continues, as demonstrated by the current candidate countries.

**In terms of policies the EU has also expanded.** Today's EU handles issues in areas such as visas and police cooperation, education and health, and security and defence – areas few would have predicted in days gone by.

Through all of this, **the EU has become a global player.**

As the world's largest and most competitive internal market, the world's largest importer and exporter, its rules and regulations have worldwide implications.

As the world's largest donor of development aid the EU and its Member States give 60% of all aid worldwide.

As the world leader on climate change the EU has demonstrated that an emissions trading scheme can work; there is a market where carbon can be traded.

In Australia the EU finds many shared values and common interests. In a world where we all face global challenges, **Australia is a natural partner for the EU.**

Take the Global Financial Crisis - we work together in the G20.

Take the WTO - we both want a Doha deal.

Take Climate change - the developed countries must show leadership, must take responsibility. That goes for the EU as well as for Australia.

Take regional security and counter-terrorism - we work together on the Pacific, on Fiji, in Indonesia and in Afghanistan.

All of this, and yes, the EU is also Australia's biggest economic partner as well - with EU investments accounting for around 1.2 million Australian jobs.

Recently we gave ourselves a new tool for increasing our cooperation - the new **EU-Australia Partnership Framework** agreed last October in Paris under the French Presidency. This outlines the broad range of areas where we are developing further our cooperation.

We already have concrete results - like in the new Wine Agreement helping Australian wine exports to the EU or in the new eVisitors programme helping all EU Member states to get Australian visas.....

We have other actions ongoing - like the current negotiations on a comprehensive air services agreement which would free up air links between Australia and the EU, or the coordination of development aid to the Pacific region where the EU is the second biggest aid donor after Australia ...

We are exploring other, new activities to take our cooperation further.

Europe has seen many flags raised in the context of dangerous nationalism, too many.

Last month in Canberra, we raised **the EU flag** at Commonwealth Place, down by the lakeside; The EU flag is itself a symbol of peace and prosperity, not just in Europe itself but globally.

To raise this flag in Australia was of particular significance; tens of thousands of ANZAC diggers gave their lives in European wars.

The EU has made any repetition of that unthinkable.