

Speech by His Excellency David Daly
Head of Delegation of the European Commission
at the St. Patrick's Day corporate breakfast of the Irish-Australian Business
Council, Melbourne, 17 March 2009

A dhaoine uaisle,

Tá áthas an domhain orm bheith anseo i Melbourne ar an lá seo, ar lá náisiúnta na nGael.

Beannachtaí na féile Pádraig oraibh go léir.

I am deeply honoured and very privileged to be invited here this morning.

At this breakfast meeting I am reminded of the American author John Gunther who once said "All happiness depends on a leisurely breakfast!" Indeed, on this happy day for the Irish everywhere, I would like to speak very briefly to you on the topic of ...happiness; in particular, selfishly, of my own happiness!

I have many reasons to be happy but I will briefly mention only three.

Firstly, I am very happy to be the new European Commission Head of Delegation representing Australia's largest trading partner – the European Union.

The EU accounts for 16% of Australia's trade, 11% of Australia's exports and 21% of its imports. The EU is the largest investment partner for Australia, accounting for a stock of investment worth A\$ 548 billion; around 2300 EU companies operate here providing directly and indirectly for some 1.2 million Australian jobs, 12% of the workforce.

Secondly, I am very happy to have a far more complex job than my predecessors down through the years!

The EU today has almost doubled in size to 27 Member States; it comprises a Single Internal Market of almost 500 million people; this is the most competitive internal market on earth and the most open trading bloc.

The EU today tackles challenges in areas which are relatively new for it; internal affairs subjects such as visas, justice issues and police cooperation; cooperation in higher education; cooperation in foreign affairs issues.

The EU today has become a security provider around the world – in the Western Balkans, in Georgia, in Africa and in Asia. Over the past 5 years the EU has fielded 20 operations in post-conflict areas fielding military, police, and judicial personnel attempting to bring protection and stabilisation to fragile situations.

The EU today does much more than just support European agriculture – important though that remains.

As I said, I am happy to have a more complex task than my predecessors!

Last but not least, I am happy to be the new Commission Head of Delegation in Australia especially.

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 are working together very closely in the context of the upcoming G20 summit.

Take the WTO - we both want a Doha deal.

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

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

Yes, Australia and the EU are natural partners.

Recently we have given ourselves a new tool for increasing our cooperation - the new EU-Australia Partnership Framework agreed last October in Paris. This document outlines the broad range of areas where we are increasing our cooperation - I heartily recommend it to you.

These are only three reasons for my happiness - I have plenty more.

However, I leave you with a final thought from my compatriot Oscar Wilde:

“Some cause happiness wherever they go, others **whenever** they go”.

Thank you for your attention.