

EU Australia Online is a new online news service from Australian journalists on the ground in Brussels, delivering news and information to Australians interested in Europe and wanting to keep an eye on the European Union.

You will be able to read it free on the Worldwide Web.

In addition there will be special pages for subscribers.

With a subscription you will have an individual section containing additional information and documents relevant to your own interests and business.

A feed-back line will take in your requests for coverage and information on special concerns.

EU Australia Online will work like the street-corner cockatoo at the old two-up games: if something comes up that might interest you, that cockatoo will screech.



Watch this space for the launch of EU Australia online and free introductory subscriptions.

Backgrounder:

Introducing *EU-AUSTRALIA ONLINE*, a daily supply of news and information specifically for Australian interests from the heart of Europe.

The importance of EU news to Australian business and other agencies.

Tapping into the expanding single market of twenty-five countries gives access to 455 million people able to buy, sell, trade and exchange.

The collective EU GDP surged past \$7000-billion as the 21st Century began.

It is Australia's largest economic partner, in trade and investment, and accounts for a fifth of all Australia's overseas transactions.

ABS ratings place the EU first among Australia's top trading partners and export market for services; second after Japan in the growing field of merchandise exports.

The range of goods and services exchanged with Australia has been changing rapidly just as the European market itself expands.

Growth and development continues in the standard agricultural and resources products - coal, wool, iron ore, medicines and Australian wine- while their percentage share is being reduced now by the rise of new products and services.

The EU has become Australia's largest market for services especially travel and education.

A boom in investment activities starting in the late nineties saw the EU become Australia's largest source of foreign investment - 35% of totals. Investment flows from some of the "continental" investor countries increased more than 80%, expanding their share against "traditional" British interests in this sector.

The EU has almost one quarter of total Australian overseas investment, rated second after the United States, of which 58% to the UK, 42% to the remainder of the EU.

This setting for mutual opportunity is assisted by ongoing forums and agreements at inter-governmental level, whether on agriculture, consumer protection, education and training, employment, industrial policy, science and technology, veterinary issues and quarantine.

Why daily news?

This service will be dealing in news of the day generated in Brussels where decisions are being made.

Existing strictly specialist information and analysis always available on the EU is first quality, though it may be likely to go through a London filter, which can take time, and add in some special interests.

EUAustralia Online, as news, will be more like the cockatoo at the two-up; if we spot something coming that might affect your business or industry, the cockatoo will screech.

Free and fees

It comes as a free and public newsletter always accessible directly on the Worldwide Web; noting and commenting on daily events and disclosures, offering explanations, backgrounders and commentaries.

Being dedicated to good understanding it will hope to exploit the great affinities between Australia and the other end of the Earth.

After all, of the 3.9 million Australians born outside of this country, 2.2 million are from somewhere in Europe.

The service will publish only in English, though where needed information published in the other operational languages of the EU – French and German – will be obtained, to give you access to the full range of business. Documents obtained may be posted on the EUAustralia Online site in any of the three languages, with accompanying pointers and short explanations in English. We can recommend translation services for any detailed work required.

More specialised services are available for subscribers, who will be able to log on for information and commentary on developments in their own field of interest.

The subscriber service is to be fees based from early 2007 and will inclusively offer these features:

A direct feed-back line to Australia EU Online, to provide us with your leads on information and your requests for coverage in select areas.

Negotiated direct services, e.g. research and information on a specific trade issue; or assistance to representatives going to EU, such as research, briefings and initial help in the field.

Current issues.

A brief taste of EU decision-making in recent months:

- WTO - aftermath of Doha round negotiations closed down in Geneva.
- Follow-ups to “radical reform of the EU sugar sector” approved February.
- Wine industry changes to counter competition from outside the EU.
- Business indicators for the Euro area decline slightly.
- Extension of the aid scheme for EU fishing fleets in “outermost regions”.
- Strategies to strengthen EU partnerships in the Pacific Islands.
- Security, anti-terrorist measures in aviation and maritime industries.
- Measures against illegal immigration.
- Lebanon and EU; failure of the Rome peace summit.
- EU actions against member states not fulfilling Climate Change obligations.



Editor: *EU Australia Online* is edited by Lee Duffield, a former ABC correspondent in Europe, Journalism academic and specialist in European affairs.

August 2006