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P8_TA(2018)0109

EU-Australia Framework Agreement (Resolution)

European Parliament non-legislative resolution of 18 April 2018 on the draft Council decision on the conclusion on behalf of the Union of the Framework Agreement between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and Australia, of the other part (15467/2016 – C8-0327/2017 – 2016/0367(NLE) – 2017/2227(INI))

(2019/C 390/33)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the draft Council decision (15467/2016),
- having regard to the draft Framework Agreement (FA) between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and Australia, of the other part (09776/2016),
- having regard to the request for consent submitted by the Council in accordance with Articles 207 and 212(1), and in conjunction with Article 218(6)(a) and the second subparagraph of Article 218(8), of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (C8-0327/2017),
- having regard to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), as adopted by the General Assembly on 13 September 2007,
- having regard to the EU-Australia Partnership Framework signed in October 2008, which is due to be replaced by the FA,
- having regard to the Joint Declaration on relations between the European Union and Australia adopted in Luxembourg on 26 June 1997,
- having regard to its resolution of 25 February 2016 on the opening of Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations with Australia and New Zealand ⁽¹⁾ and to its resolution of 26 October 2017 containing Parliament's recommendation to the Council on the proposed negotiating mandate for trade negotiations with Australia ⁽²⁾,
- having regard to the joint statement of 15 November 2015 by the President of the Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, and the Prime Minister of Australia, Malcolm Turnbull,
- having regard to the joint declaration of 22 April 2015 by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the Australian Foreign Minister entitled 'Towards a closer EU-Australia Partnership',
- having regard to the Agreement between the European Union and Australia establishing a framework for the participation of Australia in European Union crisis management operations, signed in 2015 ⁽³⁾,
- having regard to the Administrative Agreement between Australia and the European Union, agreed in December 2014, establishing a programme for diplomatic exchange,
- having regard to the Mutual Recognition Agreement on Standards Certification between the European Community and Australia, signed in 1998 ⁽⁴⁾, and the EU-Australia Agreement amending that agreement in 2012 ⁽⁵⁾,
- having regard to the EU-Australia Passenger Name Record (PNR) Agreement signed on 29 September 2011 ⁽⁶⁾,
- having regard to the Agreement between Australia and the European Union on the security of classified information, signed on 13 January 2010 ⁽⁷⁾,

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 35, 31.1.2018, p. 136.

⁽²⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2017)0419.

⁽³⁾ OJ L 149, 16.6.2015, p. 3.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ L 229, 17.8.1998, p. 1.

⁽⁵⁾ OJ L 359, 29.12.2012, p. 2.

⁽⁶⁾ OJ L 186, 14.7.2012, p. 4.

⁽⁷⁾ OJ L 26, 30.1.2010, p. 31.

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- having regard to the Agreement on scientific and technological cooperation between the European Community and Australia, signed in 1994 ⁽⁸⁾,
 - having regard to the 38th EU-Australia interparliamentary meeting (IPM), held in Strasbourg from 4 to 5 October 2017,
 - having regard to the first EU-Australia Leadership Forum held in Sydney in June 2017, bringing together political and business leaders, academics, media and civil society;
 - having regard to the Foreign Policy White Paper published by the Australian Government in November 2017 which describes Australia's priorities and challenges in the external scene and underlines the primary importance of the so-called Indo-Pacific region to Australia,
 - having regard to the fact that the Foreign Policy White Paper sets out the key roles played by the US and China in the Indo-Pacific region and in Australia's foreign policy, while mentioning the importance of Australia's relations with the European Union and its Member States,
 - having regard to the 2017 Review of Climate Change Policies which the Australian Government issued in December 2017,
 - having regard to the Australian Government document entitled 'Australian climate change science: a national framework', published in 2009,
 - having regard to its legislative resolution of 18 April 2018 on the draft decision ⁽⁹⁾,
 - having regard to Rule 99(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (A8-0119/2018),
- A. whereas the EU and Australia concluded an FA on 7 August 2017; whereas the close and strong relationship between Australia and the EU and its Member States has long historical roots and is based on common values and principles, such as respect for democracy, human rights, gender equality, the rule of law, including international law, and peace and security; whereas people-to-people links are deep and long-lasting;
- B. whereas the EU and Australia celebrated 55 years of cooperation and diplomatic relations in 2017; whereas this relationship has gained renewed dynamism in the last few years; whereas all Member States have diplomatic relations with Australia and 25 of them have embassies in Canberra;
- C. whereas the Australian Government's Foreign Policy White Paper states that 'a strong European Union remains vital to Australia's interests and will be an increasingly important partner in protecting and promoting a rules-based international order'; whereas the White Paper underlines the need to cooperate closely with the EU and its Member States 'on challenges such as terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), sustainable development and human rights';
- D. whereas the EU and Australia are engaged in cooperation and dialogue with countries in Southeast Asia, including through the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) and the East Asia Summit (EAS); whereas Australia is a founding member of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) and has a strategic partnership with ASEAN; whereas Australia hosted an ASEAN-Australia Special Summit from 17 to 18 March 2018;
- E. whereas the EU, as a global actor, should further strengthen its presence in the large and dynamic Asia-Pacific area, where Australia is a natural partner of the EU as well as an important actor itself; whereas a stable, peaceful and rules-based Asia-Pacific region, in line with our principles and standards, is useful for the EU's own security and interests;
- F. whereas the EU and Australia are closely aligned on foreign policy issues, such as those relating to Ukraine, Russia, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the Middle East;
- G. whereas Australia has close political, security and defence links with the US, which are compatible with its growing ties with China, with which it maintains a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership;

⁽⁸⁾ OJ L 188, 22.7.1994, p. 18.

⁽⁹⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2018)0108.

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- H. whereas in 2016 the EU was Australia's second largest trading partner – its second source of imports (19,3 %) and third destination for exports (10,3 %) – and whereas the two sides share a wide range of economic interests; whereas in 2015 EU foreign direct investment stock in Australia amounted to EUR 117,7 billion and Australian direct investment stock in the EU was EUR 21,7 billion;
- I. whereas Australia is strongly committed to free trade and has concluded bilateral FTAs with important countries in East Asia – China, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand – (as well as a regional agreement with ASEAN), and with New Zealand, Chile, the United States and Peru, and the PACER Plus agreement with the Pacific Islands;
- J. whereas on 23 January 2018 Australia and 10 other countries bordering the Pacific Ocean announced that they had reached an agreement on a trans-Pacific trade deal, the so-called Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), which was signed in Chile on 8 March 2018; whereas Australia is currently negotiating a high number of trade agreements, including the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) launched at an ASEAN Summit in 2012;
- K. whereas Australia, a country committed to international global governance, has been a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council (UNSC) on five occasions and has been an active member of the G20 since its establishment, chairing its summit in Brisbane in 2014 in very good cooperation with the EU; whereas Australia was recently elected to the UN Human Rights Council;
- L. whereas Australia has deployed troops to join the Global Coalition against Daesh in Iraq and Syria; whereas in Afghanistan Australia was the largest non-NATO contributor of troops in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF);
- M. whereas Australia has contributed to numerous UN-backed peacekeeping missions across three continents as well as in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands;
- N. whereas in 2014 Australia contributed for the first time to an EU-led crisis management mission, EUCAP Nestor, in the Horn of Africa; whereas the Australian navy is carrying out anti-piracy and counter-terrorism operations within the Combined Maritime Forces in the Horn of Africa and in the Western Indian Ocean;
- O. whereas Australian citizens inside and outside their country's borders have suffered from a number of terrorist attacks of radical Islamist origin; whereas both the EU and Australia cooperate in counter-terrorism activities, including action to counter violent extremism, efforts to stop the financing of terrorist organisations and the coordination of specific capacity-building projects;
- P. whereas the Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation (JCLEC), an Australian-Indonesian initiative, aims to enhance the expertise of Southeast Asian law enforcement agencies in the fight against terrorism and transnational organised crime and has also received EU funding;
- Q. whereas in October 2017 the Australian Government launched its international cyber engagement strategy with a view to addressing issues such as digital trade, cybercrime, international security and e-government;
- R. whereas Australia has supported the Philippines in promoting security and in the fight against jihadism;
- S. whereas the EU and Australia discuss migration matters at the yearly EU-Australia Senior Officials' Dialogue on Migration, Asylum and Diversity Issues; whereas the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime is co-chaired by Australia;
- T. whereas Australia has a very high per capita income and an open, democratic and multicultural society; whereas one in four of its population was born overseas and around seven million permanent migrants, including many originating from Europe, have settled in Australia since 1945; whereas Australia is in a special geographical situation, occupying a vast area between the Indian Ocean and the South Pacific;
- U. whereas Australia and the EU reaffirm in the FA their commitment to cooperating on climate change; whereas the 2017 Review of Climate Change Policies has reiterated Australia's commitment to fighting this threat;
- V. whereas Australia faces significant environmental and economic impacts from climate change across a number of sectors, including water security, agriculture, coastal communities and infrastructure;

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- W. whereas Australia, a member of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), is particularly committed to supporting good governance and economic growth in Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, Timor-Leste and other Pacific islands and Asian countries, where the EU and its Member States are also key donors;
- X. whereas the Australian Government is investing in programmes such as the Australian Climate Change Science Programme and the Natural Resource Management Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation Research Programme to help decision-makers understand and manage likely climate change impacts;
- Y. whereas Australia has established a national framework and High Level Coordination Group to develop a plan for implementing climate change science, providing a coordinated approach to address the issue in communities across the country;
- Z. whereas on 10 November 2016 Australia ratified the Paris Agreement and the Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol, reinforcing its commitment to action on climate change, and has developed a range of policies to reduce domestic emissions and support global action;
- AA. whereas the Australian Government's climate change plan includes reducing emissions by 5 % below 2000 levels by 2020 and by 26-28 % below 2005 levels by 2030, and doubling the country's renewable energy capacity by 2020;
- AB. whereas the Australian Government has played a leading role in supporting Pacific national meteorological services and regional organisations to deliver climate and weather early warning systems;
1. Welcomes the conclusion of the FA, which will provide a legally binding instrument to upgrade and strengthen EU-Australia bilateral relations and to increase cooperation in areas such as foreign policy and security issues, human rights and the rule of law, global development and humanitarian aid, economic and trade matters, justice, research and innovation, education and culture, agriculture, maritime affairs and fisheries, and in the face of global challenges such as climate change, migration, public health, the fight against terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD);
 2. Stresses that the EU and Australia are strong and like-minded partners with a deep bilateral relationship that both share values and the principles of democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law, maintain increasingly strong political and economic ties and enjoy close and active cultural, academic and people-to-people connections;
 3. Highlights the special value for the EU and Australia, as partners with the same world vision, to cooperate bilaterally and multilaterally on regional and global issues; underlines the advantage of the EU and Australia acting together in the UN and in the WTO, as well as in bodies such as the G20, to preserve and strengthen a cooperative and rules-based global order in a complex and changing world facing great uncertainty;
 4. Welcomes the establishment of a joint committee under the FA to promote the effective implementation of the agreement and maintain overall coherence in EU-Australia relations;
 5. Supports the upcoming launch of negotiations for an EU-Australia free trade agreement, which must be conducted in a spirit of reciprocity, transparency, accountability and mutual benefit while taking into account the sensitivity of certain products, such as agricultural ones, due to the fact that Australia is a major agricultural exporter; encourages both partners to have a high degree of ambition in the area of services; underlines that in the negotiations the EU should take into account SMEs' needs and requests, and not lower environmental, social and labour standards; points to the timely launch of these negotiations, given that Australia has already concluded several FTAs with important countries in East Asia and the Pacific and is about to conclude such agreements with other relevant countries;
 6. Underlines Australia's active role in the EU's higher education cooperation programmes through the EU-Australia Bilateral Education programme, and notes positively that since 2015 Australian universities have been able to enter into Erasmus+ mobility agreements; notes that this cooperation should be strengthened even further to promote mutual benefits for students and researchers and put them in a position to acquire multicultural and innovative skills;

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7. Recalls that the EU and Australia are important partners in research and innovation cooperation with a view to contributing to sustainable economic development and as a means of further building a knowledge-based society;
8. Commends Australia for its support and for aligning its sanctions regime with the EU following Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and military interventions in eastern Ukraine;
9. Welcomes Australia's support for targeted international sanctions against individuals and entities responsible for military aggression, terrorism and human rights abuses, including in response to Russian aggression in Ukraine and occupied Crimea;
10. Commends Australia's Office of National Assessments for its support in the provision of international, political, strategic and economic analysis and its liaison with international partners to ensure responses to matters of common interest;
11. Recognises Australia's critical role in the 'Five Eyes Intelligence Community' and its support for the security of both EU Member states and transatlantic partners, commends Australia's operational agreement with Europol and highlights the potential for further expansion of intelligence sharing and operational cooperation with the Australian Government;
12. Recognises Australia's role in co-sponsoring in 2014 the UNSC resolutions on condemning the downing of flight MH17 and on the elimination of Syria's chemical weapons; commends its key contribution in the Security Council to seeking to improve the humanitarian situation in Syria, managing the security transition in Afghanistan and addressing the human rights situation in the DPRK;
13. Welcomes the strong commitment of both partners on cooperation in combating terrorism, as set out in the FA; underlines the importance of ever-closer bilateral cooperation on exchanging information on foreign fighters and their return; encourages both partners to continue to ensure effective implementation of the four pillars of the UN Counter-Terrorism Strategy; commends Australia's role in the Global Coalition against Daesh and its significant work in the fight against international terrorism in Southeast Asia;
14. Highlights Australia's international cyberspace initiatives and commends the fact that, according to the FA, both partners will cooperate in cybersecurity matters, including the fight against cybercrime;
15. Calls for steps to enhance counter-terrorism cooperation through joint-training exercises between Member State emergency response teams and EU agencies such as Europol and its European Counter-Terrorism Centre (ECTC) on the one hand and key elements of the Australian national security architecture such as the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO), Australian Defence Forces (ADF) and the Australian Federal Police on the other;
16. Welcomes the engagement by the EU and Australia envisaged in the FA on intensifying their dialogue and cooperation on migration and asylum; underlines that the high level of global mobility requires a holistic and multilateral approach based on international cooperation and on shared responsibilities; welcomes the fact that both partners proactively are contributing to the ongoing negotiations on both the UN Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees;
17. Underlines the importance of regional cooperation frameworks – such as the Bali Process – with countries of origin, transit and destination in order to save lives, break smuggler networks and manage migration and refugee flows; welcomes Australia's strong commitment vis-à-vis the UNHCR to resettling refugees and increasing in its global humanitarian funding; encourages Australia to continue to contribute to finding a positive solution to the situation of asylum-seekers and migrants retained in Papua New Guinea and Nauru;
18. Welcomes the commitment of both partners to advancing the protection and promotion of human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law, including in multilateral fora and with third partners, as envisaged in the FA; welcomes Australia's election to the UN Human Rights Council for the period 2018-2020; highlights the launch by Australia in 2008 of the Closing the Gap strategy on addressing indigenous disadvantages, such as the gap in life expectancy and other inequalities; underlines that this strategy enjoys bipartisan support and that an annual progress report is submitted by the Prime Minister to the Australian Parliament; highlights the fact that the Australian Government is working with the states and territories and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, in order to refresh the Closing the Gap strategy;

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19. Reiterates that the fight against climate change requires the support of the international community as a whole; welcomes Australia's ratification of the Paris Agreement and the commitment laid down in the FA to enhance cooperation and foreign policy endeavours in order to fight climate change; takes note of Australia's target of reducing emissions by 26 to 28 % below 2005 levels by 2030, which was reaffirmed in the 2017 Review of Climate Change Policies; highlights the fact that this review maintains the commitment to help other countries through bilateral and multilateral initiatives; welcomes Australia's ongoing efforts on the provision of financial support through aid programmes to the Pacific region and to vulnerable developing countries in order to enable them to grow their economies in a sustainable manner and reduce emissions and to help them adapt to climate change; underlines Australia's co-chairmanship and funding of the Green Climate Fund;

20. Recalls that Australia, the EU and its Member States are important actors in development cooperation and humanitarian assistance in the Pacific region; highlights the fact that both sides focus their cooperation on areas such as economic growth, good governance and environmental resilience;

21. Recalls its concern about tensions in the South China Sea; encourages both partners to continue to promote stability and freedom of navigation in this crucial international waterway; commends Australia's position in favour of a peaceful settlement of disputes based on international law;

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22. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the European External Action Service, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the Government and Parliament of Australia.
