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The EU High Representative / Vice President of the Commission Federica Mogherini and the Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop issued the following joint declaration after their meeting on 22 April in Brussels



Towards a closer EU-Australia Partnership

Joint Declaration of the EU's High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy / Vice President of the Commission and the Australian Foreign Minister

BRUSSELS The EU and Australia are likeminded partners on the international stage. We are committed to promoting prosperity and security in both our regions and we share the same values in respect of democracy, human rights and a rules based international system.

Today, on behalf of the EU and Australia, we agreed to move our relationship to a new strategic level by officially concluding the negotiations for the **EU Australia Framework Agreement**. This treaty will provide a strong basis on which to further develop our cooperation on foreign and security policy, sustainable development, aid delivery, economic and trade matters, justice, research and innovation, education, and global challenges including climate change, migration and public health.

Today we signed an agreement on **crisis management cooperation**, a concrete expression of our resolve to respond jointly to the resolution of international crises. This agreement establishes a framework for the participation of Australia in EU crisis management operations, of which there are currently sixteen, notably in Africa, in the Indian Ocean, the Middle East and Ukraine. Australia is already participating in the EUCAP Nestor mission aimed at enhancing the maritime capacities of countries in the Horn of Africa and the Western Indian Ocean and will now consider where it can further support these missions where Australian and EU interests coincide.

As important **trade and investment** partners, Australia and the EU work together closely to improve the conditions for global trade, enhancing prosperity and living standards. We are committed to boosting growth, prosperity and jobs through practical efforts that reduce barriers to commerce. Bilaterally, we are engaged in an informal process to review each other's policies related to free trade agreements with a view to strengthening our trade and investment relationship.

We are determined to strengthen our efforts on **development cooperation** including through the establishment of a regular senior officials' Development Dialogue. We will continue to explore opportunities for coordinated action to enhance the impact of our development assistance, including through co-financing and through delegated cooperation,

where appropriate.

We have discussed today the key security and global challenges that we are facing together.

We agreed that there can only be a political solution to the crisis in **Ukraine** based on respect for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. We will continue to follow the situation closely and will adapt our restrictive measures in line with further developments, in particular the implementation of the Minsk agreements. We stressed the importance of all parties fully cooperating with the independent international investigation into the downing of flight MH17 on which so many innocent Australians and European lost their lives.

We agreed to intensify our cooperation to counter the activities of terrorist groups such as ISIL/Daesh and to address the growing challenge of foreign terrorist fighters, especially in the Countering Violent Extremism field, including through the implementation of relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions. We welcomed the launch of the first **EU – Australian Counter Terrorism Dialogue** held in Brussels in November 2014 and associated ongoing cooperation.

We discussed **Iran**'s nuclear programme, the EU's coordinating role in the negotiations, and welcomed the recent political understanding reached between the EU/E3+3 and Iran on the framework for a final comprehensive agreement.

We discussed common approaches to developments in the **Asia-Pacific** region including **security in East Asia**, the upcoming ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Ministerial meetings. We also discussed our political and development cooperation in the Pacific, including our critical humanitarian assistance to Vanuatu after Cyclone Pam.

We reaffirmed our determination to work together and with other partners towards the adoption of a legally binding, ambitious, effective, and fair **climate agreement**, applicable to all, at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of the Parties (COP) in Paris in December 2015.

We welcomed the commencement of the **diplomatic exchange programme** between the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) with a view to intensifying cooperation between our services.

Our contemporary relationship has evolved to encompass a wide range of global challenges and interests. We will continue to take the opportunity to meet regularly at Ministerial level to deepen our engagement and take our relationship to the next level.

For more information on the items covered in this release,

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