



Delegation for relations with Australia and New Zealand

19.4.2023

MISSION REPORT

following the 27th EU-New Zealand Inter-Parliamentary Meeting (IPM), 20-22 February 2023

Delegation for relations with Australia and New Zealand

Members of the mission:

Ulrike Müller	(Renew) (Leader of the mission)
Axel Voss	(PPE)
Josianne Cutajar	(S&D)
Victor Negrescu	(S&D)
Morten Løkkegaard	(Renew)
Monika Vana	(Verts/ALE)
Iuliu Winkler	(PPE)
Paola Ghidoni	(ID)
Anne-Sophie Pelletier	(The Left)
Kosma Złotowski	(ECR)

Introduction

The European Parliament Delegation for relations with Australia and New Zealand (DANZ) carried out a mission to Wellington and Christchurch from 20 to 22 February 2023.

The Chair, MEP Ulrike Müller, led the Delegation and it included the two Vice Chairs, Axel Voss and Josianne Cutajar. In total, the delegation consisted of ten Members, representing all the seven political groups present in the European Parliament.

The main purpose of the mission was to celebrate the 27th EU/New Zealand Inter-Parliamentary Meeting (IPM) and to further strengthen the cooperation between the EU and New Zealand. The mission also provided the opportunity for several meetings with both government and civil society interlocutors.

The DANZ mission marked once more the regularity of the direct political dialogue with our New Zealand counterpart, which has been well maintained over the past years. The Delegation for the Relations with Australia and New Zealand underlines the importance of the continuity of such relations, which is a matter of essence for a like-minded partner at the other side of the world. In particular, since the beginning of the 2019-2024 EP mandate, the 23rd EU/NZ IPM took place in Brussels in October 2019, the 24th EU/NZ IPM in Auckland and Wellington in February 2020, the 25th in remote modality (due to the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions) in December 2021, and the 26th EU/NZ IPM took place in Strasbourg in July 2022. Moreover, in May 2022 the President of the European Parliament, and the DANZ Delegation, through a dedicated reception, welcomed the Speaker of the Parliament of New Zealand accompanied by a delegation of four MPs in Brussels.

The DANZ Delegation would like to warmly thank the New Zealand Parliament, which, in cooperation with the New Zealand Embassy in Brussels and the Delegation of the European Union in Wellington, provided a high quality programme and assured all possible assistance for the Delegation during the mission.

Context

The mission took place at a very difficult time for New Zealand as the Delegation from the European Parliament arrived in New Zealand just days after Cyclone Gabrielle had devastated the North Island of the country, causing loss of life, the displacement of thousands of people and vast destruction buildings, roads and farmlands.

In addition, the country had recently just appointed a new Prime Minister, as Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern had unexpectedly resigned from her post and Chris Hipkins had been appointed as the new Prime Minister on the 25th of January. Parliamentary elections have been scheduled on the 14th of October 2023.

The European Union and New Zealand continue to develop ever deeper relations: there the EU and New Zealand have a shared approach in their response to the Russian aggression against Ukraine, and on the trade front, with the conclusion of the negotiations of the EU/New Zealand Free Trade Agreement, we are now entering into the signing and ratification phases.

As far as the overall situation in the Pacific is concerned, several factors are instrumental in the strengthening of the political partnership between the EU and New Zealand. For example the growing role of China and the related tensions over Taiwan and the South China Sea, and the growing impact of climate change in the region - of which, Cyclone Gabrielle was a worrying example.

Finally, the European Parliament recognises the importance of Māori culture in the institutional life of New Zealand, as confirmed by, for example, constant references, in official meetings and speeches, to “Aotearoa New Zealand”, and by the election of Adrian Rurawhe as the new Speaker of the New Zealand Parliament.

Meetings

The visit included the 27th IPM, meetings with the Speaker; meetings with the Ministers for Foreign Affairs, Climate Change, Agriculture and Trade; and the Deputy Secretary, Trade and Economic (and former New Zealand Chief Negotiator for the EU/NZ FTA). The Delegation also had the opportunity to be present in the New Zealand Parliament Chamber (and be officially greeted by the Speaker), when the Prime Minister delivered a statement on Cyclone Gabrielle and the year ahead.

The Delegation had field visits in Christchurch to the Antarctica Centre, the post-Canterbury earthquake Anchor projects and the Lincoln University dairy farm. The official dinner hosted by the DANZ Chair in Wellington was also the occasion for a celebration of the extension of the European Enterprise Network to New Zealand.

The full programme is attached at the end of this report (see Annex II)

Relations with the EU: the Free Trade Agreement and beyond

Much is taking place within the rich partnership between the European Union and New Zealand. During the Delegation’s previous visit, in February 2020, both sides were worried about potential negative impacts of Brexit.

However, it would appear that there have very few negative consequences and in fact, there is perhaps even more direct contact between Wellington and Brussels.

The Free Trade Agreement (FTA) not only has been successfully concluded but, in recognition of its innovative targets, it has already been suggested that it is the most advanced model for a European Free Trade Agreement.

New Zealand is an island-country very dependent on trade. The Deputy Secretary for Trade and Economic and former negotiator of the FTA with the EU, presented the full architecture of existing multilateral trade agreements in the region, where all main countries are somehow inter-linked. However, as said during the meeting, the scope of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership - flagged as the widest free trade area in the world - not to mention the Trans-Pacific Agreement appear rather limited in their ambitions.

As clearly pointed out during the Inter-Parliamentary Meeting, although labelled as “FTA”, the EU-New Zealand Agreement is far more than simply a trade agreement. It includes ambitious chapters dedicated to for example: trade and sustainable development, the Māori trade and economic cooperation, SMEs, digital trade as well as animal welfare.

Both Parliaments seem to have a solid cross-party consensus to vote on the Agreement before their respective elections (which means, in New Zealand, before October 2023), and the conclusion of the FTA has provided a new platform for deepening relations on several fronts, which were intensively discussed by the DANZ Members with New Zealand MPs, government representatives and civil society and academic interlocutors.

New Zealand has concluded negotiations with the Commission that would make it the first country outside of the EU and its geographical neighbourhood to have access to the Horizon Europe Programme (the Association Agreement is expected to take place in 2023, pending the completion of all necessary validations on both sides). On the research collaboration front, the Delegation’s visit to the Lincoln University research dairy farm was an excellent example of an area where the two sides could join forces in developing innovative solutions for cutting emission in dairy production. The Antarctica Centre in Christchurch, which is already cooperating with EU Member States, has also great potential for further joint activities. Moreover, New Zealand will soon also work with the European Enterprise Network (EEN) - with the Chair of DANZ presiding to its soft launch in Wellington. The EEN will eventually also help to implement the trade agreement by establishing commercial, technological and research-related partnerships between European businesses and SMEs in New Zealand. In addition, several New Zealand colleagues expressed interest in learning more about, for example, the EU Green Deal, EU legislation on fertilizers and pesticides, and on the structure of the new EU agricultural policy (especially in relation to subsidies for the reduction of emissions and environmental protection). The two sides also discussed access to strategic rare earths elements, as one area where like-minded partners need to forge operational alliances to avoid dependence on non-democratic powers.

The parliamentary dialogue was proof that the conclusion of the FTA negotiations have not only opened even better economic integration possibilities between the two sides, but it has paved the ground for even deeper political cooperation.

A broad partnership for tackling climate change

The visit of DANZ took place in the immediate aftermath of Cyclone Gabrielle, a natural disaster that further contributed to the debate on the role of human behaviours, and of political decisions, on climate change. The forestry industry in New Zealand, for example, came under scrutiny for mal-practices in the stockpiling of discarded branches and "offcuts" that also played a negative role in the flooding. As discussed during the meeting with the Minister for Climate Change as well as during the Inter-Parliamentary Meeting with MPs, New Zealanders increasingly consider climate as a priority issue, and there is a perception that more should be done. There was also a discussion about the situation in the EU where, on the other hand, due to the pandemic, the rise of inflation and notably the war against Ukraine, there have been concerns that the attention on climate among certain sectors of the public has decreased. However, it is nevertheless widely perceived that the EU is the main international actor in promoting awareness and constantly updating legislation to tackle climate change.

As a trade dependent nation with a strong agricultural sector, New Zealand looks also to innovative ways of cutting emissions in farming and dairy production. Lincoln University illustrates the kind of transition undergoing in New Zealand society: future farmers are trained not only in agriculture production, but also on enhancing their work with environmental production, sustainable tourism, landscape protection, sport and recreational activities - very much in line with the new EU agricultural policy. All interlocutors agreed that the sustainability and the climate provisions of the FTA would have an important role to play in helping New Zealand farmers to adapt to more ambitious emissions cuts.

Furthermore, New Zealand follows the Green Deal with great interest, and looks to its external dimension as best practice in foreign policy that could also be implemented in the Pacific. Climate change is a crucial issue in the Pacific and it even poses an existential threat to some islands. New Zealand has been assertive in promoting its advocacy role in the region for a better regional environmental policy. According to the Minister of Climate Change, New Zealand's ability to de-carbonize largely depends on other countries capacity, since this depends hugely on the global supply chain. For this very reason, the FTA with the EU is much more than solely trade related.

A commitment of solidarity with Ukraine

The Delegation of the European Parliament discussed the war against Ukraine in several meetings and from different angles. Our New Zealand counterparts repeatedly stressed the

positive impression given by the degree of unity and consistency of the EU's response to the aggression. New Zealand has sided with Ukraine without hesitation and for the first time in its history agreed and implemented unilateral (non-United Nations (UN) related sanctions against a third country). To do so, a special legislation was needed and a cross-party consensus was quickly established. New Zealand has also generously contributed to humanitarian aid to Ukraine, and has engaged in training Ukrainian military personnel.

New Zealand, China and the Pacific

Both the Inter-Parliamentary Meeting and the exchanges of views with the Minister of Foreign Affairs as well as with senior staff of the Ministry for Pacific Peoples focussed on developments in the Pacific. There are just under 400.000 people identifying as being part of the Pacific Peoples ethnic group according to the last New Zealand census, and these represent some twenty different ethnic groups. New Zealand acts as a pivotal player for cooperation for development across the region, trying to: secure jobs, housing, and public health, improve connectivity, promote the development of threatened multilingual environments, and spread best practices to mitigate the impact of climate change.

During the IPM it was noted that the geographical distance from Beijing to Wellington is actually further than from Brussels to Beijing. Yet, China is perceived as the large neighbour, present in the region than ever on many different policies, including in: fishery, global food security, digital investments, connectivity, development of basic infrastructures in several islands, and huge exports. New Zealand looks with great concern to the diplomatic rivalry between Beijing and Taipei, and although four Pacific States maintain full diplomatic relations with Taiwan, others have recently shifted to diplomatic ties with Peoples Republic of China (PRC) in exchange for massive investment.

The outbreak of war in Europe is a sign that military options cannot be ruled out in the Pacific either, even if more than one New Zealand interlocutor warned that China's policies are sophisticated and long-term focused. "China is not interested in present time", a Minister declared, "they look at decades ahead and for instance they are massively supporting the education of future leadership". The Chinese policy of offering university fellowships to Pacific students (allegedly about 2.000 a year for a full University curriculum in China) was raised as a matter of concern also by the EU side. While in the past most of the highly educated people in the Pacific were trained in Western institutions, it was stated that in 20 years, they would be mostly Chinese speakers, with connections in China and a good knowledge of the Chinese society and values.

With only a very limited number of Erasmus Mundus scholarships per year available for New Zealand students or the Pacific peoples, the EU's investments in this area are very limited. According to our New Zealand counterparts, Western democracies should take this issue seriously, prioritise it, and join forces with a coordinated or even united scheme and provide

long-term university education in the region. New Zealand is an extremely reliable ally for implementing EU strategies in the Indo-Pacific, and education should not be neglected when strategic investment decisions are made.

Aotearoa New Zealand

The central role of New Zealand in the Pacific – is coupled with the ongoing process of increasing the visibility of the Māori dimension in public life. This was very visible to the EP Delegation, and well beyond the traditional Māori welcome ceremony - the “Mihi whakatau” - which is an important part of the protocol. Short Māori ceremonials were held at the beginning of almost every official meeting. In addition, there was a systematic use of the terminology “Aotearoa New Zealand”. It is evident that there is a broad effort to shape the entire New Zealand community with a connection to Māori culture.

As a committed partner, the EU can be counted on to listen to the people of New Zealand and their expressions of culture. As relations continue to develop over coming years, interlocutors from the European Parliament will respectfully follow public debates and learn from counterparts in New Zealand.

The role and a follow-up of the European Parliament

Given the conclusion of the FTA negotiations, the European Parliament will now turn its attention to the ratification process. The consent vote is likely to take place at the end of 2023. The participation of New Zealand in the Horizon Europe Programme is another issue where the consent of the European Parliament is needed this year. Additionally, due to its strong partnership with the European Union and the excellent and regular inter-parliamentary dialogue, New Zealand is an essential partner in the implementation of the EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. As highlighted in this report, there are several issues ranging from fight against climate change, security in the Pacific, increase of scholarships/Erasmus Mundus for New Zealand and the Pacific, to the added value of the European Enterprise Network with New Zealand, which are all areas where the European Parliament can play a significant follow-up in its budgetary, monitoring and parliamentary diplomacy roles.

List of Annexes

1. List of participants
2. Final programme
3. Agenda of the Inter-Parliamentary Meeting (IPM)



Delegation for relations with Australia and New Zealand

27th EU-NEW ZEALAND INTER-PARLIAMENTARY MEETING
Wellington-Christchurch
20-22 February 2023

Final list of participants

Members

Ms Ulrike MÜLLER, Chair	RENEW	Germany
Mr Axel VOSS, 1st Vice Chair	EPP	Germany
Mrs Josianne CUTAJAR, 2nd Vice Chair	S&D	Malta
Mr Victor NEGRESCU	S&D	Romania
Mr Morten LØKKEGAARD	RENEW	Denmark
Ms Monika VANA	Greens/EFA	Austria
Mr Iuliu WINKLER	EPP	Romania
Ms Paola GHIDONI	ID	Italy
Ms Anne-Marie PELLETIER	The Left	France
Mr Kosma ZŁOTOWSKI	ECR	Poland

Secretariat

1 Head of Unit
1 AST

Political advisers

1 S&D
1 RENEW
1 The Left
1 ID

European Parliament

2020-2024



Delegation for relations with Australia and New Zealand

27th EU-NEW ZEALAND INTER-PARLIAMENTARY MEETING Wellington & Christchurch

20 - 22 February 2023

FINAL PROGRAMME

Monday 20/02/2023

11:00-12:30	Meeting with the EU Delegation to New Zealand
12:00-14:00	Free time for lunch
14:10-14:30	Mihi Whakatau (welcoming ceremony) Attended by Mr Speaker, Rt. Hon. Adrian Rurawhe
14:30-17:00	Meeting of the 26th Inter-Parliamentary Meeting
18.30-21:00	Dinner hosted by EP Delegation Chair Ulrike Müller

Tuesday 21/02/2023

09:00-09:45	Meeting with Mr Ajay Ravindran, Senior MFAT and Europe division official, followed by Ms Glenys Karran, Unit Manager
10:00-10:30	Meeting with Mr Speaker Rt. Hon Adrian Rurawhe, Speaker of the House of Representatives
10:35-11:25	Meeting with Hon. Nanaia Mahuta, Minister of Foreign Affairs
11:25-11:55	Meeting with Minister Barbara Edmonds, Minister for Pacific Peoples
12:00-12:30	Meeting with Hon. James Shaw, Minister for Climate Change
12:30-13:40	Working lunch hosted by Co Chairs Marja Lubeck MP and Tim van de Molen
14:00-14:45	Question Time in Speakers Gallery
15:00-15:45	Meeting with Hon. Damien O'Connor, Minister for Agriculture and Minister for Trade and Growth
16:15	Depart to airport and flight 17h10 to Christchurch

Wednesday 22/02/2023

10:00-12:00	Meeting with Vice Chancellor, Professor Grant Edwards
12:30-13:00	Wreath laying ceremony leave for the Canterbury Earthquake National Memorial, Oxford terrace Christchurch Free time for Lunch
14:30-15:30	Meeting with Mr Andrew Trevelyan, Head of Communications of Te Pae Christchurch Convention Centre
16:00-17:00	Meeting with Briefing by Ms Sarah Williamson, Chief Executive Antarctica New Zealand
18:30-21:30	Dinner hosted by the Chair of the EP Delegation, Ms Ulrike Müller



27th European Union/New Zealand Inter-Parliamentary Meeting

AGENDA

20 February 2023

Wellington

- 1. Opening of the working session, with introductions and remarks by:**
 - Ms Marja Lubeck MP, Co-Chair, NZ-Europe Parliamentary Friendship Group
 - Ms Ulrike Müller, Co-Chair, Delegation for the relations with Australia and New Zealand
- 2. Adoption of the draft agenda**
- 3. Adoption of the minutes of the 26 EU/New Zealand IPM (Strasbourg, 6 July 2022)**
- 4. Political, security and economic developments in the European Union and in New Zealand, including response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine**
- 5. State of the EU/New Zealand cooperation, with focus on:**
 - EU and New Zealand role in the Pacific
 - Trade and economic relations, also following the conclusion of the Free Trade Agreement negotiations
 - Digital transformation and fight against climate change
- 6. Any other business**
- 7. Date and place of the next meeting**