



Commission welcomes green light to start trade negotiations with Australia and New Zealand

Brussels, 22 May 2018

The Commission welcomes today's adoption by the Council of the negotiating directives for free trade agreements with Australia and New Zealand. The preparations – which included an impact assessment for both agreements – are now complete and formal negotiations can begin.

President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude **Juncker** said: *"These agreements will build on the recent successful agreements with Canada, Japan, Singapore, Vietnam, as well as Mexico among others, expanding the alliance of partners committed to open and rules-based global trade. Open trade must go hand in hand with open and inclusive policy making. That's why the Commission published the draft negotiating mandates with Australia and New Zealand when it proposed to the Council to open these negotiations. These agreements will be negotiated in the greatest transparency and we expect Member States to uphold this high level of transparency."*

Commissioner for Trade Cecilia **Malmström** said: *"This is great news. We look forward to adding Australia and New Zealand to the EU's ever-growing circle of close trading partners. We are already close in terms of shared values and our open, global outlook. Together, we will now negotiate win-win trade deals that create new opportunities for our businesses, as well as safeguard high standards in key areas such as sustainable development. I am looking forward to visiting Canberra and Wellington in the coming weeks to officially launch our negotiations. Starting these talks between likeminded partners sends a strong signal at a time where many are taking the easy road of protectionism."*

Australia and New Zealand are important allies and these agreements will offer significant economic gains by getting rid of obstacles and boosting trade further. Despite the distance, trade between the EU and these two countries is already roughly the same as with Mexico or Canada.

Having trade agreements with Australia and New Zealand would provide EU businesses with a valuable entry point into the wider Asia-Pacific region. They will also put European companies on an equal footing with those from the other countries in the area that have signed up to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) or that already enjoy better access to Australia and New Zealand through other preferential trade agreements.

Commissioner **Malmström** will travel to Australia and New Zealand in June to open negotiations at the political level. The first negotiation rounds between the teams of negotiators are then envisaged to take place in Brussels in July.

For More Information

[Draft mandate for negotiations with Australia](#) and [draft mandate for negotiations with New Zealand](#) as proposed by the Commission in September 2017

[Factsheet on future negotiations with Australia and New Zealand](#)

[Impact Assessment Report](#) and its [executive summary](#) for the agreement with Australia

[Impact Assessment Report](#) and its [executive summary](#) for the agreement with New Zealand

More information on [EU-Australia](#) and [EU-New-Zealand](#) trade relations

IP/18/3881

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