



President's Report, AGM, 28th April 2017

During the year past the NZEBC has had two scheduled meetings. In addition there have been a number of meetings by part of the committee and with members in connection with many visits from Brussels and European member countries. I have met up with the Treasurer, Monique Surges regularly as well as attended various meetings with EU representatives together with our NZEBC members. There has been a change of guards at the EU Delegation in Wellington and we have welcomed the new EU ambassador HE Bernard Savage who spoke to our members at a Breakfast in October. The co-operation with staff at the EU office in Wellington has continued in a positive vein.

Early June there was a joint Renewable Energy tour of the Pacific by a combined EU NZ Delegation led by *Mr. Neven Mimica* European Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development and NZ Minister for Foreign Affairs *Mr. Murray McCully* and *Ms Paula Bennett*, NZ Minister for Climate Change Issues, Social Housing and State Services. Also on the tour were *Mr. Andrew Jacobs*, EU Ambassador to the Pacific based in Suva and *Mr. Michalis Rokas*, EU Chargé D'affaires to NZ together with senior representatives for NZ Government and NZ and European Business. The Slovak consul general (honorary) *Peter Kiely* was also participating in his capacity as Chairman of the Pacific Cooperation Foundation and I too was invited. We visited five countries in five days and were looking at what had been achieved in terms of development and how we can move forward with increased EU-NZ development co-operation. My report from the tour was posted on our Website. A very useful opportunity for all.

I attended the EBO annual conference in Brussels 20-22 June 2016. The Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME), acting under powers delegated by the European Commission, invited European Business Organizations (EBO) Worldwide Network to a meeting organized by DG Grow. Overall I found it interesting and worthwhile, particularly to meet and listen to representatives for 30 EBOs around the world and of course, senior officials of the EU organization. The participating EBOs around the world are quite different, some fully-fledged entities with hundreds of corporate members and dozens of staff in multiple offices and some like ourselves are umbrella organizations where most of the resources and activities rest with the national member trade organizations. I think both set ups, although different, can be useful and make sense. Again, I found that the great take out is the networking and contacts with people from around the world, working towards a common goal. My full report from the event has been posted on our Website.

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The Brexit referendum took place 23rd June and delivered what was to many a surprising outcome, resulting in the UK's prime minister David Cameron's resignation. At end of March 2017 the UK prime minister, Theresa May, triggered paragraph 50 of the EU agreement to start the exit negotiations, expected to last for at least two years.

In November 2016, we had a Royal Netherlands visit to NZ focusing on both business and academic exchange. The Netherlands' foreign minister gave an interesting and well-attended presentation at Auckland University. Our major country members like France, Germany and Britain have regular events promoting trade and commerce between Europe and New Zealand as well as cementing relationships through cultural events. The smaller members also hold events albeit a bit less frequently. Recently Italy, Czech, Poland, Hungary, Denmark, Norway and The Netherlands have held such events with invitations and participation of a multitude of our NZEBC members working together severally and jointly as circumstances justify. Arguably Europe remains culturally and historically closer to NZ than other world regions in spite of NZ becoming increasingly multicultural.

In March 2017 we had a visit from Mr. Stefano Manservisi, director general of DEVCO of the European Commission laying out the future approach to development efforts for the Pacific islands emphasizing the need to join forces between recipient country to ensure cultural and practical fit, private industry to ensure commerciality and continued employment, and DEVCO. This holds great promise for development of the Pacific region.

Finances

Our financial position is strong with NZD 11,548.83 in the NZEBC accounts. Monique Surges commented that we had payments from 16 associate members and 22 full members however there were still some subscriptions outstanding. There is no need to increase membership fees as the NZEBC is presently covering its expenditure with strict cost control when running events on a cost recovery basis. The majority of work done in our organization is pro bono by the president, vice president and treasurer.

Meetings

The 2016 AGM was held Thursday 28th April 2016.

Committee meetings were held on the following dates and minutes are on file:

6th October 2016

16th February 2017

The 2017 AGM to be held Friday 28th April 2017

Membership/ Database

Total members 2016: 50

Database files have been developed as follows:

Full members: 27 were invoiced in 2016, 5 remain unpaid

Associate members: 23 were invoiced in 2016, 5 remain unpaid

Auckland Consular Corps: 66

Alternate mailing list: 42

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The key issue for NZEBC is the prospective EU-NZ FTA. Prime minister Bill English recently announced that formal negotiations are expected to be entered into in the second half of this year.

The EU remains a very major partner for NZ in terms of trade and investment. Nearly 40% of all New Zealand international research collaboration is with EU partners. New Zealand is one of the few remaining WTO members without an EU FTA in place or under negotiation.

Europe House.

On Tuesday 8th December, 2015 we had the inaugural function at Europe House. The premises at the AUT campus are very suitable and useful for EU and NZEBC purposes and we are very grateful to AUT for their support and co-operation. It is a first for Europe and has attracted a lot of interest and attention from other countries.

There has been good usage of Europe House and all members are able to book the venue for European events. Coordinator is Lauren Williams tel 021 428293 and email events@aut.ac.nz

Our web site www.nzebc.org.nz

We have continued to develop and update our web site through the assistance of Claire Conza who set it up and also from time to time by Marcel Roos. Members are invited to have their events listed in the event section.

Looking forward

We are planning a major dinner event in the 4th quarter of the year on the FTA progress with Europe. We are hopeful that the EU Commissioner for trade, Cecilia Malmström will be the guest of honor and the speaker at this event. If she is not available the intention is to have the event anyway to coincide with the formal start of the FTA negotiations.

As a committee, we are planning four meetings for the year, in June, September, December and February.

Other than that, we will use every opportunity to meet NZ heads of mission during their visits to NZ and also arrange events around visits of prominent EU representatives including ministers of our member countries.

Thank yous.

Thank you to Monique Surges who has been most helpful in all matters and especially treasury matters. Thank you to AUT for providing Europe House. Thank you also to all the council members for their support with special mention of Maureen Benson-Rea, Martin Holland and Roger Stokell from our supporting universities.

Frank Olsson
President NZEBC

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