



President's Report, AGM, 28th April 2016

Introduction

During the year past the NZEBC has had four 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 with Peter Kylie and with our member nations. I have also worked closely with the EU representative office in Wellington, especially around the Europe House.

Earlier this year a small group of us met with H.E. Mr. Sem Fabrizi, Ambassador and Head of Delegation of the European Union to Australia and to New Zealand and a little earlier with Mr. Ugo Astuto EU deputy director for Australia and New Zealand. In addition various members and I have met up with a number of Ministers and Ambassadors from EU member states visiting Auckland during the year. There is a desire from Europe to reach out to Pacific island nations and in that context travels also often include Auckland.

Meetings

The 2015 AGM was held 7th May 2015.

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

4th June 2015

18th August 2015

8th December 2015

9th February 2016

Membership/ Database

Total members 2016: 52

Database files have been developed as follows:

Full members: 26 were invoiced in 2015, 8 remain unpaid [increased to 27 for 2016]

Associate members: 17 were invoiced in 2015, 4 unpaid [increased to 25 for 2016]

Auckland Consular Corps: 66

President: Frank Olsson. 6 Renall Street, Freemans Bay, Auckland 1011, New Zealand.

Tel: +64 21 989 414. Email: frank@olsson.co.nz www.nzebc.org.nz

The two key issues we have worked on are the prospective FTA EU – New Zealand and also the inauguration of the Europe House.

FTA

In support of the FTA preparations, we submitted a paper in August 2015 which is available on our web site. Another submission was made in February, at the request of MFAT and also posted on the website: <http://nzebc.org.nz> . The two parties agreed on 29 October 2015 to begin working towards a deep, comprehensive and high-quality FTA. Negotiations, once started, are expected to take 12 – 18 months.

The EU is:

- New Zealand's third-largest trading partner, with two-way trade valued at \$20 billion.
- New Zealand's second-largest source of foreign direct investment at \$11 billion
- the third-largest direct investment partner at \$ 3 billion.

Nearly 40% of all New Zealand international research collaboration is with EU partners. New Zealand is now one of only six WTO members without an EU FTA in place or under negotiation.

Top of EU FTA agenda currently includes Vietnam, Merco Sur, updating of Mexico and Chile, Morocco, Tunisia with India.

The dynamics in Europe have changed and trade agreements have become highly politicized, engaging governments and citizens requiring everything to be very transparent – trade for all. Business associations have become more important to prevent domination of multinationals.

The biggest challenge for EU is to ensure a common EU approach rather than a national approach to particularly China, India and Brazil.

Europe House.

On Tuesday 8th December, 2015 we had the inaugural function at Europe House, 16th Floor 56 Wakefield Street, Michalis Rokas, EU Chargé d'Affaires to New Zealand, attended the event and gave a presentation to those present. This was a well-attended event and the peak of two years of planning and negotiating. The premises at the AUT campus are very suitable and useful for EU and NZEBC purposes and we are very grateful to Roger Stokell and 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 Rachel Hogan tel 021 402763 and email events@aut.ac.nz

President: Frank Olsson. 6 Renall Street, Freemans Bay, Auckland 1011, New Zealand.
Tel: +64 21 989 414. Email: frank@olsson.co.nz www.nzebc.org.nz

EBO Conferences

NZEBC is a member of EBO (European Business Organizations) together with the Australian and PNG organizations in our region. Some EBO like the one in China are large with professional staff and several thousand corporate members and some are small like us, operating with volunteer staff and no direct corporate membership.

During the past year I have participated in two EBO conferences; the first one was in Brussels in June. With twenty-seven EBOs attending this conference was the biggest gathering so far. Three more countries have applied for membership in EBO. 90% of European economic growth will be derived from countries outside Europe.

From its vantage point, the EBO Worldwide Network recommends that the EU focus on:

- enhancing the business image of Europe;
- building a shared vision of EU Economic diplomacy amongst its key stakeholders;
- improving the ease of doing business for European companies in third markets;
- leveraging the on-the-ground resources of EU Delegations and European Business Organizations.

The second conference was in Beijing mid-November. We had two scheduled days of meetings including two external ones with the president designate of the AIIB, (Asian International Investment Bank) Mr Lin Liqun and also the head of China Institute of International Studies. AIIB is now building up staff to be diversified and lean. One of the key ideas currently assessed is *One Belt One Road* to connect Eurasia. AIIB will be a member of the MDBs (multinational development banks) together with the EIB, World Bank and IMF founded in the last century. The initial focus will be on Asia and to better connect Asia with Europe.

The next EBO Conference is scheduled for June this year in Brussels. Invites have yet to be sent out, but assuming this happens soon, I have been mandated by NZEBC to attend the three day conference in June – at no expense to NZEBC.

Our web site www.nzebc.org.nz

We have continued to develop and update our web site through the assistance of Claire Conza of Kiwihaven. We do ask that members actively visit the website and include a link to it on their own website. Members are also welcome to have their events listed in the event section.

Looking forward.

The Brussel's representative at the latest EBO conference reminded us that for trade, FTA is not a magic bullet – it is only the beginning and needs a strong follow up effort and vigorous implementation. Once we have all the bricks we need to build a house. We need to simplify, clarify and amplify also through bottom up initiatives to ensure independence and integrity. EBO advocacy will become more important. There is a need to shake up and improve.

Ambassadors, trade officers and businesses need to be enlisted. Local country networks like EBOs must be supported and encouraged by EU. When EU representatives come for visits they should be able to cover the cost of venue hires and events.

- 9th May is Europe Day which is celebrated with a function in Wellington.
- 27th May we have a breakfast scheduled with NZ Heads of Missions in Europe.
- 7th June Official inauguration of Europe house
- 22nd June EBO Conference I Brussels.

Members will be informed of other events as they get scheduled.

Key for the coming year is continued support and facilitation of the FTA initiative.

We have greatly benefitted from our co-operation with Canterbury University (European Centres Network), Auckland University (The Europe Institute, and AUT University (Europe House). Sincere thanks also to MFAT who have generously availed premises and co-hosted events when requested. Finally special thanks to the EU office in Wellington. We appreciate these excellent relationships.

I am grateful to Monique Surges and Peter Kiely as well as other members for their active support of NZEBC in our endeavors to improve visibility and impact.

Frank Olsson
President