



## Conference European Foreign Policy ASSESSING EU'S ROLE IN THE WORLD

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### Abstract

This paper builds on 16 years of research into Australia's relations with the European Union. It attempts to explain recent developments in EU-Australia relations by contextualising the relationship with the EU as an international actor. It illustrates that the traditional battleground of the EU and Australia regarding agricultural trade is being replaced by broader and deeper cooperation on issues of transnational concern, such as security, migration, and climate change. The paper argues that there is increasingly common ground between the EU and Australia and that the perception that they were worlds apart is changing. Successive Australian governments and the European Commission have worked to establish more fruitful cooperation across a range of policy areas. Australia is developing institutional, procedural, and diplomatic tools to deal with EU. There is a growing recognition of the EU's influence as an international actor and its effect on Australia. The engagement is increasingly multidimensional, comprehending trade; investment; science and technology; wine market access; immigration, security and various aspects of foreign policy. Shared values and global goals, such as human rights, trade liberalisation, liberal democracy, counter-terrorism and environmental concerns will reinforce and extend the relationship. However, the question still remains: does Australia recognise the EU as a major international actor? Despite shared values and an increasingly broad and multifaceted relationship there is some doubt that Australia accords the relationship adequate attention.