

FONZ LETTER



Friends of New Zealand | European Parliament

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Change of government in New Zealand

Following 26 days of negotiations after the 23 September election, a new coalition government took power in New Zealand on 25 October, led by 37 year-old Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern. The coalition is composed of the Labour Party and the New Zealand First Party led by Winston Peters, with support from the Green Party.

Ms Ardern was first elected to parliament in 2008. Prior to becoming an MP, she had worked in the cabinet office of United Kingdom former Prime Minister Tony Blair's and was a staffer for former New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark.

Tackling inequality and child poverty was a central part of her election campaign. To demonstrate the importance of this policy area, Ms Ardern has also taken on responsibility for child poverty reduction. In addition, Ms Ardern is responsible for the portfolios of arts, culture and heritage, and national security and intelligence.

Winston Peters became Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, State Owned Enterprises, and Racing.

PM Ardern made her first official overseas visit to Australia on 5 November where she met with Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull.

More information on PM Ardern's cabinet [here](#).

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Deputy PM Winston Peters and PM Jacinda Ardern

INTA delegation visits Wellington

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On 30 – 31 October, a delegation of the Committee on International Trade of the European Parliament (INTA), chaired by Bernd Lange, visited New Zealand. During their visit in Wellington the MEPs met with Trade Minister David Parker, their counterparts from the New Zealand Parliament, representatives of the New Zealand business community and leaders of the Maori community.

Before summing up the first day with an official reception at the EU Residence, the Heads of EU Member States Missions in New Zealand also met with the INTA Members. On the second day, the delegation visited Swedish company Hexatronic, a pioneer in providing solutions for fibre optic communications. Before continuing their mission in Australia, INTA Members met with representatives of New Zealand Trade Unions and Civil Society to exchange views on the future Free Trade Agreement process.



Credit: European Parliament

NZ commemorates the Centenary of the Battle of Passchendaele

Commemorations in Belgium for the centenary anniversary of New Zealand's "darkest day" at Passchendaele were delivered on 11 and 12 October.

Some 5000 people attended the Embassy-led event *"From the Uttermost Ends of the Earth"* on 11 October. Designed to complement events on the 12th, this activity sought to tell a broader story about New Zealand's voyaging history and enduring connections to Flanders, Belgium and Europe (all in the

context of remembrance of WWI and Passchendaele). It combined a number of different elements: a large-scale video projection and sound show; the paddling of a ceremonial waka taua (traditional Maori canoe); and New Zealand singer Dave Dobbyn performing under the Menin Gate.

The National Service at Tyne Cot Cemetery the following day attracted international media attention. In attendance were Prince William, Duke of Cambridge and Princess Astrid of Belgium.

Tyne Cot is the cemetery with the largest number of New Zealand WWI servicemen buried. It contains 520 New Zealand graves and further New Zealanders are listed on the New Zealand Memorial to the Missing. Overall, some 843 New Zealanders died at Passchendaele in a few short hours.

At the conclusion of the service the official party joined their Royal Highnesses in unveiling a centenary plinth on a small rise overlooking the battlefield, and youth from New Zealand,

Belgium and Germany planted a memorial tree. A group of New Zealand Youth Ambassadors then had the opportunity to meet the royals in the Tyne Cot visitors' centre, before the VIP party joined our other invited guests at a reception in a marquee to the rear of the cemetery.

A number of associated events were organised in the afternoon by the local community like the

opening of a New Zealand Memorial Poppy Garden.

This special day of commemorations ended with a Sunset Service which was widely praised by locals in attendance as one of the most moving commemorations they had seen in recent memory. Utilising the New Zealand memorial as a stage space, it combined theatre, music and ceremony to tell the story of New Zealand at Passchendaele

and the impact of the tragedy back home. It was a poignant end to a worthy day's tribute to those who fought and died 100 years ago.

See more pictures here:

<http://www.lastpost.be/en/photos/2017/national-commemoration-new-zealand-pictures-fv>



German and Irish Presidents visit New Zealand

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German President Dr Frank-Walter Steinmeier visited Wellington on Monday 6 November. He and his spouse Elke Bündenbender received a full state welcome on the lawn of Government House on Monday morning before sitting down with the Governor General, Dame Patsy Reddy. President Steinmeier also visited Pukeahu National War Memorial Park to lay a wreath alongside Defence Minister Ron Mark.

He later met with New Zealand's new Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern. He was the first Head of State to meet Ms Ardern in her new capacity as Prime Minister. Ardern said the President's visit had demonstrated the warm and close relationship between the two countries. President Steinmeier also spoke of the strong people-to-people links between New Zealand and Germany, noting that New Zealand had become a "dream destination" for 16,000 young Germans in the past year (coming under the working holiday scheme).

Irish President Michael Higgins also met with Ms Ardern a few days earlier when she was Prime Minister-designate. They discussed, among other things, the decision to open respective embassies to demonstrate the strong friendship ties that unite both countries.



PM Ardern and President Steinmeier. Credit: Getty Images

Draft mandate for EU-NZ free trade negotiations obtains strong support in EP plenary

The INTA committee report "Recommendation to the Council on the proposed negotiating mandate for trade negotiations with New Zealand" was adopted with a comfortable majority in Plenary on 25 October. The resolution was passed by 440 votes to 122, with 27 abstentions.

Rapporteur Daniel Caspary (EPP, Germany) said "While protectionism is on the rise in other parts of the world, the EU's trade agenda is on track: the trade negotiations with Australia and New Zealand will bring us closer to each other and pave the way for new jobs and more growth".

The European Parliament's Research service also recently published an interesting [report](#) on the current progress of our FTA process. The paper highlights that

"(...)the FTA would create a level playing field for the EU with other trading partners that have already concluded FTAs with New Zealand. The FTA would also strengthen the EU's position in Asia-Pacific value chains, and help to advance the trade policy interests of the EU in the region". The report also addresses agricultural sensitivities and common misconceptions; it notes that "it is unlikely that the volume of exports to the EU will rise, given the increased exports to countries with which New Zealand already has FTAs, such as China. There are seasonal complementarities in the supply of certain products, such as kiwi fruits. Fonterra, New Zealand's largest dairy cooperative (...) is exporting from Europe almost the same amount of goods as it is [bringing into] Europe".

New Zealand Ambassadors across Europe meet in Brussels

On 7-8 November, New Zealand Ambassadors accredited to various European countries met in Brussels for their annual regional Heads of Missions meeting. They were also joined by Senior Ministry officials who came from Wellington: Deputy Secretary for Europe, Middle East and Africa Jeff Langley and Divisional Manager for Europe Rob Taylor.



Ambassador to the EU David Taylor hosted a reception at his official residence where NZ Heads of Mission had a chance to mingle with MEPs, Permanent Representatives and senior officials from the EU institutions.



Ambassador Taylor and Deputy Secretary Langley both spoke of the strength of the EU-NZ partnership, which is based on a strong foundation of shared values. They also expressed hope that they would soon be building even closer ties together with a free trade agreement.

Top: Ambassador Taylor addressing the crowd. Bottom: Deputy Secretary Jeff Langley

New Zealand Speaker meets EP Vice-President

On 11 October, the then-Speaker of the New Zealand Parliament, the Right Honourable David Carter, met with Mr Boguslaw Liberadzki, Vice-President of the European Parliament. They had a very warm and friendly discussion, during which they exchanged

together on common areas of interest for New Zealand and the European Union, such as trade, tourism, security and migration. They acknowledged that while geographically distant, New Zealand and Europe share a lot of the same concerns and challenges, which is why regular exchanges and sustained cooperation are useful.

Mr Carter was accompanied by Peeni Herare, New Zealand Labour MP and Charlotte Dawber-Ashley, Inter-parliamentary Relations Officer as well as Ambassador David Taylor.

Since then, the coalition agreement has brought a change of government in New Zealand; the Rt Hon David Carter is no longer Speaker of the House, he was succeeded by the [Rt Hon Trevor Mallard](#). Mr Peeni Herare was since appointed Minister for Youth, Community and Voluntary Sector, and Māori families.



From left to right: Ambassador Taylor, Rt Hon David Carter, VP Liberadzki, Ms. Dawber-Ashley, MP Peeni Herare.