

## Summary

- The International Trade Committee of the European Parliament expressed its support for swift ratification of the NZ-EU Free Trade Agreement during a recent visit to Wellington.
- The alignment of New Zealand with key EU values, including the sustainability, along with the troubling global geopolitical environment were cited as reasons for a rapid ratification.

## Report

Following conclusion of negotiations of the NZ-EU FTA in Brussels on 30 June 2022, members of the European Parliament's Committee on International Trade (INTA) visited Wellington from 21-23 September 2022.

The INTA Committee provides recommendations on EU FTAs to the broader European Parliament and then leads the ratification process.

The visit was an important opportunity for New Zealand to make a strong case for the swift ratification of the FTA, building on the positive momentum of Prime Minister Ardern's joint announcement with Commission President von der Leyen of the conclusion of negotiations in June.

The delegation, led by INTA Chair Bernd Lange, included eight Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) representing a range of EU Member States and political groups. The MEPs were accompanied by five officials from the Secretariat, as well as six representatives from the political groups in the European Parliament.

The delegation's programme included engagement with Ministers, Treaty Partners, the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee (FADTC), civil society, the Climate Change Commission, the Ministry for Primary Industries, New Zealand business and industry, and media.

### Key themes of the visit

Recurring themes and messages raised by and with the European parliamentarians in the various engagements were:

- The **NZ-EU FTA was "gold standard"**— and a model for the EU in terms of "free, fair and green" trade from Chair Bernd Lange's perspective.
- The **compelling strategic case** for the NZ-EU FTA including
  - a strong **geostrategic argument** in favour of closer links between New Zealand and the EU
  - the need to **support the international rules-based order** (and the role high quality trade agreements play in strengthening the architecture around that)
  - the importance of trade to New Zealand as a small economy
  - our strong alignment as **likeminded partners with shared values**, in a difficult geopolitical context, including in light of Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine.

- The **Trade and Sustainable Development (TSD)** chapter was considered of critical importance and a model for future EU FTAs. Trade agreements should promote a **Trade for All** approach- the sustainable development and inclusive trade outcomes in the NZ-EU FTA, including on the Paris Agreement and on gender equality, reflected this key perspective.
- The importance of indigenous involvement in the FTA, highlighted by the **Māori Trade and Economic Cooperation chapter**.
- **Mixed reactions to the FTA by New Zealand business and industry** – with horticulture, honey, seafood, services and tech industries speaking to the positive outcomes in the FTA, with representatives from the dairy and beef industry expressing disappointment that the outcomes were not more comprehensive.
- **Climate impact** of New Zealand's agriculture production and emissions reduction. European parliamentarians asked how New Zealand intended to keep agricultural emissions low as well as increase production. New Zealand representatives focused on adding value to products, rather than increasing volume.
- **The importance of swift ratification**, with an ambitious target date of mid-2023 for signature and ratification to follow not long after (potentially in 2024).

## What next?

New Zealand and the European Union officials are working hard to progress the necessary steps to bring the NZ-EU FTA into effect as soon as possible, so as to enable stake-holders to take timely advantage of the many opportunities arising. The text of the NZ-EU FTA and further information about the FTA's outcomes and benefits can be found [here](#).

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