

EU in the Views of Asia-Pacific Elites:

Australia, New Zealand and Thailand

December 2005

NCRE Research Series No. 5

Martin Holland, Natalia Chaban,
Jessica Bain, Katrina Stats,
Paveena Sutthisripok

Acknowledgements

The study of EU perceptions among national elites was the third and final stage in the innovative trans-national comparative research project **Public, Elite and Media Perceptions of the EU in Asia Pacific Region: Australia, New Zealand, South Korea and Thailand: a comparative study** (www.europe.canterbury.ac.nz/app). Results of the first two stages of the project – the analysis of the news media representations of the EU and the survey of the general public's perceptions of the EU – can be found in the NCRE 2005 Research Series no.4 publication *The EU Through the Eyes of the Asia-Pacific: public perceptions and media representations*.

This two-year international project was made possible by the generous support of the European Commission, Directorate-General for Education and Culture (Grant agreement No. 2003-2292/001-001).

This report would not have been possible without dedicated work and creative inputs from the project's international research team: Jessica Bain, NCRE, University of Canterbury, New Zealand; Katrina Stats, University of Melbourne, Australia; Paveena Sutthisripok, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand, and Fiona Machin, University of Melbourne, Australia. We extend our gratitude to Professor Ole Elgström, Lund University, Sweden, and Associate Professor Philomena Murray, University of Melbourne, Australia, for providing invaluable insights into the process of developing the questionnaires and conducting the interviews.

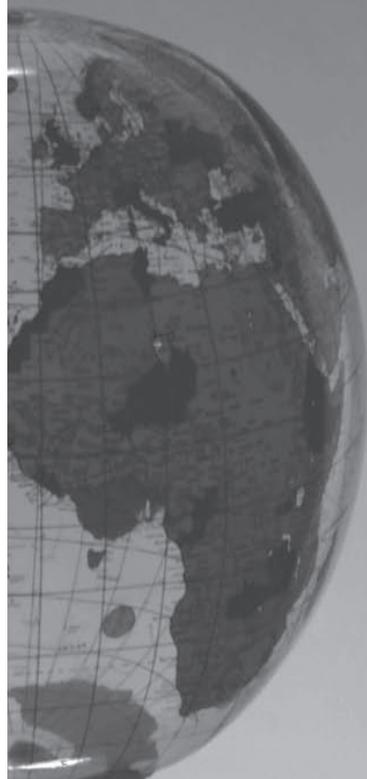
Professor Martin Holland,

Director, NCRE, University of Canterbury, New Zealand
Supervisor of the trans-national project

Dr Natalia Chaban

NCRE, University of Canterbury, New Zealand
Research Coordinator of the trans-national project

ISBN 0-473-10984-0



EU in the Views of Asia-Pacific Elites:

Australia, New Zealand and Thailand

Table of Contents

I.	Introduction
<hr/>	
II.	Research Background
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Australia – EU relations- New Zealand – EU relations- Thailand – EU relations
<hr/>	
III.	Executive summary of the findings
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Perceived importance- Perceived impact<ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Enlargementii. Euro- Spontaneous Images of the EU- Sources of Information on the EU
<hr/>	
IV.	Recommendations
<hr/>	
V.	Methodological and technical specifications
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Footnotes
<hr/>	
VI.	Appendix
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- List of interviewees

I Introduction

With its population approximating 450m people and its territory covering the space from the Atlantic Ocean to the Carpathian Mountains, the European Union (EU) is a new “giant” on the world stage. Neither a nation-state nor a regional organization, the EU is growing in importance as an international actor. Traditionally, it has been known as a global economic powerhouse and currently holds the status of a leading economy in the ‘troika’ of major regions of the world economy – Europe/EU, North America, and the Asia-Pacific.¹ Alongside this projection as an economic “muscle”, the EU has more recently sought new and complementary roles on the world stage – as an audible voice in the international political arena, a skilful international negotiator, a power with a ‘soft’ touch, a model for international integration, and a possible counterbalance to the USA.²

Yet, an absence of a ‘unified EU voice’ on certain important issues both internally and externally (such as the ratification of the EU Constitution and on the Iraq war) can result in a catalogue of diverse and sometimes contrasting roles ascribed to the EU by international observers. As a result, the EU – an ever-evolving new and unique entity closely observed around the globe – still appears to be profoundly misunderstood beyond its borders.³

This report presents the executive summary of the understandings and meanings attached to the EU that currently exist among the national elites in three Asia-Pacific countries: Australia, New Zealand and Thailand. Ultimately, reflections from outside the European Union can contribute towards the expression of the shared ‘EU identity’, perhaps one of the most contested and challenging concepts in current EU discourse.⁴ Arguably, identifying the patterns of foreign actors’ perceptions at the elite level enhances the understanding of the conduct of foreign policy of a country.⁵ According to Michael Brecher:

... decision makers act in accordance with their perception of reality, not in response to reality itself. [...] In any event, all decision-makers may be said to possess a set of images and to be governed by them in their response to foreign policy problems. Indeed, elite images are no less “real” than the reality of their environment and are much more relevant to an analysis of the foreign policy flow.⁶

II Research Background

EU - AUSTRALIA RELATIONS

Europe remains one of Australia’s main international trade and foreign relations priorities.⁷ But Australia, like many other third countries beyond the EU’s “near abroad”, continues to be relatively unimportant for the EU, representing a mere 2% of EU trade.⁸ Given that the EU is Australia’s largest single economic partner, it is both necessary and important for Australia to work harder in pursuit of its interests with the EU.

Even so, there are incentives for the EU to support enhanced communication and bilateral relations ‘Down Under’; Australia is, after all, the largest supplier of wine to the region!⁹ The former Head of the European Delegation to Australia and New Zealand pointed to the increased political dialogue between the Australian government and the EU.¹⁰ Between June 1997 and 2003 there were 11 consultations with the EU presidency, 18 annual ministerial consultations, Senior Officials’ and ATMEG meetings, a combined total of 30 Australian ministerial visits to Brussels and European Commission visits to Australia and three Parliamentary Delegation visits.¹¹

With a view to ‘advancing the national interest’ in Europe, the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), has a “Europe Branch” devoted to developing links with Europe, fostering EU relations and expanding key bilateral relationships. It identifies Australia’s current priorities as enhancing dialogue on Asian issues with Europe; encouraging reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP); promoting a further round of multilateral negotiations; and optimizing Australia’s economic opportunities in Europe.¹²

Australia’s disapproval of the “EU’s narrow and minimalist approach to global and agricultural trade”¹³ has a powerful impact on the shape of the relationship. Arguably, the Australian Government’s frustration in dealing with the “complex and difficult”¹⁴ European Union was behind its pursuit of the 2004 free trade agreement with the United States. Its strategy for dealing with the EU on issues such as agricultural trade includes the lobbying of EU institutions and EU capitals; regular high-level visits to Brussels and EU capitals; active engagement of the European diplomatic network; and the development of coalitions with like-minded countries and organizations as a means of providing a ‘counterweight’ to the European Union.¹⁵

Bilateralism is a defining, if controversial, policy direction of the coalition government of Liberal Prime Minister John Howard.¹⁶ Australia’s relationship with the EU is characterized by an uneven weighting in favour of the UK. As a source of foreign direct investment for



Australia, the UK is second only to the United States.¹⁷ Perhaps revealingly, in the period 1999-2000, visits by the Australian Prime Minister and Government Ministers to London outnumbered visits to Brussels by a ratio of four to one!¹⁸ The 2004 enlargement and prospects for further growth in EU membership is a cause of some Government re-evaluation given this preference for bilateral relations and negotiations.¹⁹ More positively, enlargement is seen as building a "strong and united Europe"²⁰ more able to effectively tackle problems of increasing importance to Australia that escape the jurisdiction of the nation-state alone; namely, terrorism and security, trade, and the international drug market. These are the areas "where Australia's interest are strongly engaged"²¹ and intertwined with those of the European Union.

However, there remains a sense of trepidation with which the Government pursues its European agenda in the wake of the 2004 expansion. As Europe grows in size, it also swells in political and economic significance, and international influence. As Foreign Minister Alexander Downer noted at the time, "It is axiomatic that a larger, increasingly powerful European bloc will increase the EU's capacity to support or disadvantage us."²² He speculated on how Europe's "ambitious agenda...will impinge upon Australia's interests" and of the necessity for Australia to be "an alert and active" partner with the EU.²³ The dreaded possibility appears clear – that an enlarged Europe will lose sight of its small Aussie 'mate'.

EU – NEW ZEALAND RELATIONS

The EU25 single market represents New Zealand's second largest merchandise trading partner (exceeded only by trade with Australia). EU-NZ trade accounted for 15% of total exports and 19% of total imports in the year to June 2005.²⁴ The EU remains New Zealand's largest, highest value and in many cases fastest growing market for valuable commodities like sheep meat, wool, fresh fruit, dairy, venison, and wine.²⁵ It is the fourth most lucrative destination for non-agricultural export goods, increasingly including non-traditional trade in services and technology. The EU's main imports into New Zealand are vehicles, aircraft, and medicines.

Twelve EU member states are also among New Zealand's top 50 bilateral trading partners – Germany, UK, France, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, Sweden, Spain, Denmark,

Finland, Ireland, and Austria. The UK alone represents 23% of foreign direct investment in the New Zealand economy, while the EU25 is the second largest source of overseas visitors to New Zealand (462,000 in 2004)²⁶, both in terms of tourism and immigration. Students from EU countries constitute 3.6% of all overseas students studying in New Zealand.²⁷ The Government regards the recent expansion of the EU market to 450m consumers as advantageous by opening up new and wider opportunities for New Zealand traders.

In the development of foreign and social policies, the New Zealand Government has seen the EU as an important reference point. For example, both have developed similar approaches towards sustainable development, the Kyoto Protocol, the International Criminal Court, the path to peace between Israel and the Palestinians, and on disarmament and human rights issues in general.²⁸

Finally, historically and culturally a significant majority of New Zealand's population trace their heritage to European settlers.²⁹ Citizens of European ethnicity accounted for 80% of the total population (or 2,868,009 people) in the 2001 Census³⁰, with the largest European ethnic groups English (34,074 people), Dutch (27,396), Scottish (12,792), Irish (11,199), and German (8,700)³¹. The main country of overseas birthplace in the 2001 Census was the UK.

The Prime Minister, Helen Clark has described the relationship with the EU as one of paramount importance to New Zealand – the EU is recognized as New Zealand's official key foreign partner and as a close friend.³² The formal development of the relationship is represented by the 1999 Joint Declaration on Relations between the European Union and New Zealand, and in its 2004 review *The NZ/EU Action Plan: Priorities for Future Cooperation*. A regular dialogue is ensured by the presence of the New Zealand Embassy in Brussels (accredited since 1961), the EU's Delegation in Canberra (accredited to New Zealand since 1984), and the EU Delegation office in Wellington (opened in 2004). A range of formal consultation mechanisms govern interactions between the EU and New Zealand. The principal forums are the bi-annual Ministerial consultations with the EU Presidency and the annual Agricultural Trade Policy Consultations.



EU-THAILAND RELATIONS

Historically, European – Thai relations can be traced back as far as the 17th century. Despite the spread of European colonialism in Asia during subsequent centuries, Thailand is unique among South East Asian countries in having avoided being directly colonised by any European power. However, this is not to deny the effect of a European colonial influence in Thailand. European political, commercial and cultural influences were obvious in the modernisation process of the country.

Official EU – Thai relations were first established in 1972 through the EU-ASEAN dialogue. Since then, multilateral rather than bilateral mechanisms have continued to be preferred. Consequently, EU-Thai relations have been developed within the regional and interregional context, both the ASEAN – EU and the ASEM frameworks.

In terms of foreign policy, officially Thailand and the EU share a number of similar foreign policy goals: for example, both attach great importance to promoting human rights, human security, democracy and good governance.³³ With respect to the Myanmar issue (one of the major problems in ASEAN-EU relations), the Thai Government has declared that it is willing to work with the EU to make progress towards solving the Myanmar impasse - on either a bilateral (EU-Thailand) or regional (EU-ASEAN) basis. Thailand’s approach is indicative of a perceived “partnership” with the EU based on equality and mutual respect for their differing policies towards Myanmar.

Economically, the EU is the third most important trading partner for Thailand (after the USA and Japan). Since 1995, the EU has accounted for approximately 15% of Thailand’s total trade volume and during the 1999-2003 period, Thailand enjoyed a trade surplus with the EU.³⁴ Major Thai exports to the EU include machinery products, agriculture, textiles and clothing. The major Thai imports from the EU are machinery and chemicals.

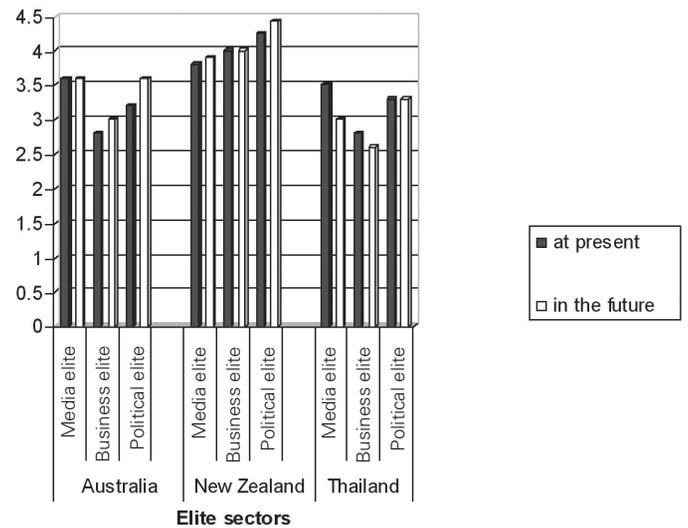
Traditionally, Thailand has also been subject to the EU’s Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) regime, especially in respect of its agricultural and fishery exports to Europe. However, GSP has often been a controversial policy and is generally being phased out by the EU. Consequently, the EU’s decision to abolish some of the GSP advantages that Thailand has enjoyed (such as the GSP scheme for shrimp exports), has become a major concern for Thai exporters and officials.

Furthermore, because agricultural products, particularly poultry and shrimp-based products, are the most important Thai exports to the EU, problems associated with food quality and food safety have been a major concern. Periodic EU bans on Thai shrimps on food safety grounds caused major problems for Thai exporters from 2000 until recently. The avian influenza outbreak in poultry in Thailand in January 2004 created further strains, resulting in the Commission banning the import of Thai chicken products into the EU.

III Executive Summary

PERCEIVED IMPORTANCE

On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not important at all and 5 is very important, elite interviewees were asked to rate the importance of the EU to their country at present as well as in the future (See Graph 1).



Graph 1. Level of the EU’s perceived importance across the three countries and different elite sectors

Recognizing the EU as a major economic and evolving political powerhouse of the world, interviewees were asked about the importance of the EU to their own countries when compared with the importance of other major global actors. Elites in each country profiled the dynamics of the EU’s importance to their country in slightly different ways (see Graph 1).

Australia

POLITICAL ELITE

The EU’s importance was typically assessed as stable by Australian politicians. Only one respondent thought it might decline. In fact, the lowest rating from this group came from the only respondent who saw the EU’s importance as growing. Like the Thai political elite, this was seen to be dependant on the success of achieving unity, with the 2005 constitution debacle suggesting otherwise. One reason cited why the EU’s importance may have been generally judged as stable by this group was a growing focus on the Asia-Pacific region.



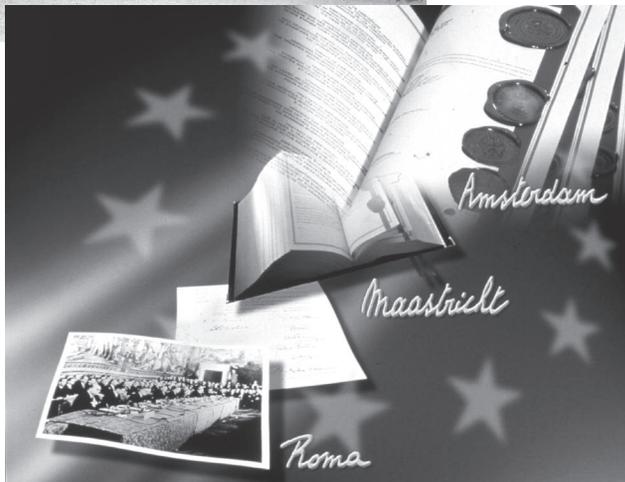
BUSINESS ELITE

Australian business elites recognised the EU's present importance for Australia but nonetheless often predicted



that it would at best remain the same or perhaps decrease. This was typically seen as unfortunate: "It's frightening to face that fact... that assessment I know. For me it's disappointing but that's how it is."³⁵ While some pointed to the growing markets

elsewhere in the world, namely Asia, many attributed the undervaluing of the EU and lack of potential for it to grow in importance to current Government. Several interviewees identified a problematic deficit between the reality of the EU's importance to Australia (in their perception) and the Government's assessment of its importance and suggested the future importance of the relationship with the EU depended very much on the direction of the Government and the resolution of agricultural issues: "It depends how the Government steers the ship in terms of trade policy and particularly bilateral trade agreements."³⁶ According to this interviewee, the Government's focus was on Asia and the USA to the detriment of a relationship with Europe. She argued Australia needed to pursue a FTA-style relationship with the EU. Another interviewee felt that the future importance of Europe "depends on what happens in Asia" with China possessing the potential to "replace Europe and the European Union as a significant power base."³⁷ Agricultural subsidies were seen as another major obstacle in the way of a stronger relationship and if reformed or dismantled could result in a significant augmentation of the EU's



importance for Australia.³⁸ So, despite their hesitations, and provided that the Government recognised the EU's growing significance and given subsidy reforms, there was a slight overall increase from an average rating score for importance from 2.8 at present to 3 in the future.

MEDIA ELITE

Australian media elites typically rated the EU's importance for Australia as quite high (3.5) and increasing. One news editor recognised it as Australia's most significant economic partner and therefore gave it the maximum score of five.³⁹ He noted that this was not the common perception of the relationship and indeed this was obvious in the responses from other interviewees many of whom felt that relations with USA and Asia were predominant. However, the future appeared quite bright: all but three respondents anticipated that the EU's influence would increase despite the public perception of "squabbling Europeans" while the USA's influence was expected to decline.⁴⁰ Only the respondent who gave the lowest rating of the EU's current importance to Australia (2) saw no change, thinking,

"in terms of what happens in Europe which can affect us, what happens here that can affect Europe...the answer is not very much. I mean we're both quite interested in each other, but you know we're separated by half the globe...it would have been different 30, 40 years ago. To some extent we went our own way."⁴¹

The two respondents who saw the EU's importance for the Australian domestic sphere as declining were both from the same paper, the conservative *Australian Financial Review*.⁴² The first of these two interviewees saw attention turning to Asia and remarked that assessing the EU's importance as a unitary actor was a problematic task since he saw the contribution of individual member states as important but thought that would exist anyway without EU.⁴³

New Zealand

POLITICAL ELITE

The EU "has always been important"⁴⁴ for New Zealand according to its political elite. Consequently, the EU was rated highly by New Zealand politicians "partly because of history, culture, partly because if one looks where a lot of New Zealand trade goes, Europe is still a very significant place for us".⁴⁵ The EU was considered

“very important, because whether you like it or not, because their role in the WTO in terms of trade talks, in terms of being an alternative to the United States of America in terms our international leadership, of backing the United Nations, probably in all of those hot-spots, of providing alternative visions of the world... in terms of International Court, in terms of international jurisprudence...in terms of our relationship with Australia over time.”⁴⁶

In fact, more of the political elite seem to like it than not, with high hopes and genuine belief that its importance for New Zealand would continue to grow. Even those who thought it might diminish added qualifiers such as “but it will diminish only fractionally, because we still need those political and trade links.”⁴⁷ However, while it was believed that the EU would remain “hugely important” for New Zealand for the next 25-30 years (retaining a rating of 5 according to this respondent), beyond that it was less certain - “Europe’s economic strength is going to be affected by its demographics. It does have an aging population. America doesn’t, neither does China. China has a different demographics problem, India does, but Europe 50 years out – the jury is out”.⁴⁸ The performance rating varied across policy areas for one politician who praised the EU’s progressive foreign and environmental policies, but was not so impressed by its economic policy.⁴⁹ The EU’s future significance was also contingent upon many factors including “on the people, their political view, their direction and progress... socially, economically and environmentally.”⁵⁰

Disputing the idea that relationships in one part of the world need to be at the exclusion of others or the “perception that you have to put your stick on the ground and to stay there”⁵¹, one respondent highlighted the need to have “diversity in our international standpoint, which makes us good international citizens”.⁵² Consequently, “it is in New Zealand’s interest to be able to have relationships with the European bloc, with the America bloc, and the Asian bloc and whoever else.”⁵³ Though the result (being good international citizens) might be cosmopolitan the driving motivation for such an approach was admittedly one of national interest.

BUSINESS ELITE

The EU was described by representatives of the New Zealand business elite as a very important partner and the one with “growing influence and

opportunities”⁵⁴: “...a very significant player simply because of their market size or population size, their requirement or interest in our products...”⁵⁵

On par with its importance, the EU was also recognized to be a “challenging” partner⁵⁶ for New Zealand. Some interviewed noted that due to the restrictions on access to markets in the EU, business people in New Zealand perceive Europe as “being quite hard”.⁵⁷ Other noted that “Europe used to be where NZ sought”.⁵⁸ That mindset has, however, changed enormously due to New Zealand’s growing trade with Australia, the US, and Canada⁵⁹, and the rise of Asia.⁶⁰ Due to this change in outlook, Europe and the EU are approached by many New Zealand business people “later on”.⁶¹ Still, New Zealand’s “roots” were described to be with Europe⁶² and thus, for the business community, Europe would be “worth the effort”⁶³ in the future.

“Europe is probably the place they [New Zealand exporters] should be trying to go, instead of Australia where they target their export activities. We also see Europe as a place where we can probably learn more lessons than we can from Asia. For various reasons, Ireland, Denmark, Finland, the Nordic counties are more relevant as case studies for New Zealand and New Zealand companies than many in Asia. So, it’s very important, but that importance has declined substantially in the last ten years. I would like to see it grow.”⁶⁴

MEDIA ELITE

In general, the New Zealand media elite rated the EU’s importance for their country more highly than their counterparts in Australia and Thailand. The EU was considered to be “up there”⁶⁵ because, as one respondent argued, “we are a small nation and the EU is a huge and important economic player, so by definition it’s going to be very important”.⁶⁶ Moreover, its importance was considered to be “not just economic”, the flow of people between New Zealand and Europe being proffered as an example of it being more than an economic relationship. However, one issue that was identified as inhibiting the relationship was that fact that “New Zealanders...still think about Europe as a group of nations and I don’t think people think of Europe as Europe. I think that that kind of perception is maybe lagging behind reality. But I would see that changing, I do see that changing.”⁶⁷



They were more ambivalent, however, when it came to assessing the future importance of the region. The EU was alternatively seen as remaining at the highest level of importance for New Zealand, as increasing exponentially or decreasing gradually over time. The reason for the anticipated decline in importance was because of a growing focus on Asia, which was seen as a more sensible pursuit due to its geographical proximity: "I think Asia will become very much the focus for us just because of where we are in the world."⁶⁸ This was probably the reason behind one response that the future of the relationship "depends how other things develop."⁶⁹

Thailand

POLITICAL ELITES

Arguably, numerical ratings are of less significance than the thinking that directs them. In Thailand, political elites tended to describe the EU's importance to Thailand as "average", of less or at best of equal importance as the US, Japan, China and South Korea. With the sole exception of one respondent who felt it depended on the future of European unity (which, in his opinion looked dire at present), none of the Thai political elite saw the EU's importance increasing. The highest rating (4) came from a respondent who noted the value of the UK in the equation and called the cultural relationship between Thailand and Europe as "intense." In contrast, one respondent who asked to remain anonymous gave the lowest rating (2) and argued that Europe was irrelevant to Thai people and Thailand, despite a significant admiration for the European way of life.



"I mean personally, as I told you, Europe is the number one in civilisations. To stroll along a street in Madrid, Venice or Paris is the best [experience]. The lifestyle of Sweden, Denmark and Norway is the best. Freedom in the Netherlands is the best. French cutlery is the best. German efficiency is the best. But these things are civilisation. The question is that if we're short of the things

*they have, can we survive, from the perspective of national interest? Yes, we can. That's why I give a low number. ...It's like we live in our little home. Our neighbour is a millionaire whose house is big and posh. We don't have to be like them and we don't have to know them, right? The case would be different if the millionaire owns the road which we have to pass everyday. If they block the road, we will suffer, so we have to make acquaintances with them. As long as they mind their own business and we our own, it's okay. That's the way the EU and Thailand is."*⁷⁰

BUSINESS ELITE

In contrast to their more optimistic Australian counterparts, the Thai business elite generally saw the EU's variable current importance for Thailand as remaining stable in the future (those who rated it a 3 now saw it remaining a 3, those who rated it a 2 saw it remaining at 2 in the future). Again, when other more important partners were named they were the US, China and Japan. The growing importance of Asia did not necessarily spell a decline for the EU however. One business elite gave the lowest rating of 1 saying: "Europe hardly matters to us"⁷¹, expressing a preference for bilateral dealings with EU Member States. One respondent rejoiced in Thailand's decreasing dependence on European technologies which might reduce the EU's importance, although this was modified by the recognized potential for the EU to impose new and detrimental trade regulations at will.

MEDIA ELITES

Amongst the Thai media elite the EU's overall importance was rated relatively highly (3-4) but with opinions polarized between the lowest rating (2) and the maximum rating of 5. Even so, the EU was not considered as important as the US and other regions (frequently China and Japan, India, Africa, Korea, Taiwan and even Australia). These other regions were seen as being more important or interesting while there was "nothing interesting" about Europe, arguing that "The EU is not in our plan at all."⁷² Even the



respondent who rated the EU's importance a 5 commented that it was nevertheless not as important as the United States. It was rated highly by another interviewee because of its potential to act as a model for Thailand, the Asia Pacific region and ASEAN. But this potential was limited since the EU appeared to be speaking "a different language" to Thailand on crucial issues such human rights. Its potential to increase in importance was seen to be dependant upon the success of integration and overcoming perceived problems of disunity evident in the rejection of the EU constitutional treaty, for example, and perceived insularity: "Europe can't even effectively deal with itself now, so I don't think that they will care about this region [ASEAN]. Europe is too busy with themselves now."⁷³



*in effect, formed a web of connection with people who graduated from the US. If the EU keeps doing this steadily and increasingly, in the future they will play a more significant role in Thailand.*⁷⁶

In summary, in terms of its importance the EU was not perceived to be the most important counterpart in any of the three Asia-Pacific countries: Australia was perceived to be a leading counterpart by New Zealand interviewees, the USA was seen as a priority in importance for Australian elites, and Asia led in perceived importance among Thai respondents.

A couple of the interviewees did see the EU's influence on the rise: it was potentially a good match for the emerging Asian power bloc (China + Asia-Pacific) though it would have to "struggle" to avoid becoming "an obsolete superpower".⁷⁴ For those who saw the EU's influence declining in the future, the responses tended to be emotionally driven rather than based on economic or political facts. One respondent claimed to "hate the EU" and was unimpressed with Thailand's EC Delegation's initiatives to improve its profile:

*"I mean they think they can make a start by this way: by having a dinner party on boat in a semi-diplomatic way. I think they simply think like diplomats. The whole thing couldn't impress us, couldn't make us feel good and couldn't make us know more about the EU. This is the most important thing of all: we didn't know about the EU any better, since they didn't answer a lot of our questions."*⁷⁵

However, this was interpreted differently by the next interviewee who saw the 'meet and greet' campaign a positive and proactive approach to building the EU's presence in Thailand and argued that the EU should

"keep doing this - and on a large scale - like what the US did in the past ten years... In the past the US gave Thai people scholarships extensively and

Perceived Impact

AUSTRALIA

Outlining the EU issues that were perceived to impact on Australia the most, it was mentioned that the EU holds the most contrary positions to Australia than any other international organisation. Australia very often finds itself opposing the EU across a wide range of issues from the Kyoto Accord to the Middle East conflict. The issues that were prioritized included trade (the necessity of a free trade agreement with the EU or individual Member States, the EU's trade barriers, trade access, agricultural trade, and subsidies); EU regulations on animal welfare; EU environmental regulations; EU regulations on food labelling; the state of EU economy in general; and the single currency.

NEW ZEALAND

The list of the EU issues that especially impacted on New Zealand also included trade issues (the EU's role in the WTO and stance on trade access and trade liberalization); related issues of agricultural subsidization (the CAP in particular); the Kyoto protocol and New Zealand's participation; EU policies on human rights and the International Criminal Court; the EU and global security; EU enlargement (in terms of new opportunities for trade and improving the global security climate); and, once again the €.

THAILAND

The issues with the most perceptible impact on Thailand were trade issues (mirroring the New Zealand position on the EU's stance on eliminating trade barriers and widening trade access); development of the EU economy in general; EU enlargement (in terms of possible competition between new Member States and developing



countries for access to the Single Market); Myanmar and the EU's involvement in the issue; and developmental issues (EU-Thai interactions in the areas of education, technology, cultural exchanges, and public health).

Enlargement

What kind of risks and opportunities arise out of the May 2004 enlargement?

AUSTRALIA

When it came to associated risks of enlargement, Australian business elites were comparatively phlegmatic. Most saw no obvious risks for Australia, although many pointed to internal risks for the Union. The lack of external risks posed by EU expansion was interpreted by one interviewee as evidence of the "increasing irrelevance of Europe to Australia... it's not something that occupies a lot of Australians' minds these days".⁷⁷ One respondent, somewhat despondently saw the lack of risk as not necessarily a positive thing but "just more of the same"⁷⁸ possibly implying lingering resentment from the UK's 1973 accession and ongoing impact on Australia. Those risks that were identified largely stemmed from the previously noted Australian preference for bilateral links with individual States. For example, one respondent suggested that: "the risks are that countries will join the EU ... where Australia had an effective bilateral going and those countries were of relatively free-minded, of free trading mind, then joining and having to play by the EU rules so they're the risks. ...So that's a concern for the industry."⁷⁹

Similarly, another spoke of losing business with current partners through the effects of the Single Market and EU regulations: "So if we have very, very strong relationship with a country that's not in the EU at the moment then the interests and the focuses of that new EU accession country could shift quite dramatically and we could be losing a lot of trade to the other EU members."⁸⁰ Another concern regarded the lower manufacturing costs of the new Member States. One respondent spoke of the need to understand and appreciate differences in the 'Wild East'.⁸¹ In contrast, some felt that the enlargement actually decreased risk or the perception of risk amongst business people:

"It probably does add a bit of comfort to people if they're doing business...if countries have been accepted into the EU it's because they've reached certain economic standards...they've reached some sort of threshold that the EU has said, yes, your economic management is good and your inflation is under control and your employment is this and whatever

*the economic measure are, so probably makes people think, okay they've got their act together now maybe I can consider doing business with that country."*⁸²

NEW ZEALAND

EU enlargement was interpreted by New Zealand elites from two angles – economic and political. In terms of economics, opportunities associated with enlargement predominated: the perceived risks were considered far less threatening, and advantages were seen as being "greater". The major concern that was voiced related to the threat of further restrictions on market access which could be extended if new EU Member States adopted similar practices. In this context, opportunities assigned to EU enlargement were two-fold. Firstly, with "increasing wealth in those new members over time" and "living standards com[ing] up"⁸³, the EU newcomers were seen as potential markets for New Zealand:

*"a lot greater population base that could potentially trade with New Zealand or buy New Zealand goods"*⁸⁴;

*"new trading opportunities [New Zealand] previously did not have, or we did not know it had"*⁸⁵ and; *"an expanded EU is going to be a very significant market to us; big opportunities to get our products and services into those markets, tourism."*⁸⁶

Secondly, the increase in EU Member States suggested to some a move towards reducing agricultural protectionism. As commented by a former Foreign Minister, the reality of the enlarged EU does mean that "the CAP cannot continue unchanged" and was perceived as a good thing for New Zealand:

*"With this expansion they can't sustain their common agricultural policies, and their massive subsidies scheme. I just don't see how they can do that. So there is a wake up call for France particularly, and Germany, and Britain, for that matter, I think it's good."*⁸⁷

In a political context, the EU expansion to 25 States was perceived as one more opportunity for a "more united Europe". The 2004 enlargement was seen as a positive development for the world ("for "global security...", Europe plays key role there"), for new Member States ("civil society moved in a progressive direction"), and a chance for the EU to claim its status as a political world power.⁸⁸

THAILAND

For Thailand, opportunities were also cast as risks. For example, several respondents argued that the lower cost of production and wages in the East meant that the new Member States “could become substitute production bases”⁸⁹ edging Thailand out of certain markets. “Like I’ve just said, the labour and cost of

supporting the idea that the EU is perceived mostly as foreign news: far away, foreign and irrelevant! And once again, the often expressed preference for bilateral dealings with nations (even when belonging to a union of states such as the EU) was evident, with the EU continuing to be seen as “irrelevant” to Australia as a unitary actor.



NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand’s elite almost unanimously expressed optimism about future EU enlargements. Some interviewees reported it did not pose “any great threat to New Zealand”⁹²; others noted it opens “opportunities in terms of trade and culture”⁹³ – future enlargements will “broaden the markets and market opportunities”⁹⁴ for both the enlarged EU and for New Zealand, and “anything which potentially brings down barriers to our trade which obviously ultimately it does, has to be a positive for us”.⁹⁵ Positive attitudes were also related to recognizing the “linkage between trade and economic integration and security”⁹⁶ that new EU Member States will gain – “at a level of principle, we would say that European integration is a good idea, it’s a move towards the development”.⁹⁷

Future EU enlargements were seen to have a similar challenge to the last expansion – “whether an enlarged Europe becomes very ‘Eurocentric’ in its view or whether it sees itself playing an engaging role in the international community”.⁹⁸ The challenge for New Zealand is to encourage the EU to be “international and outward looking, and to get the same focus for its broader role internationally”.⁹⁹

production in the East is cheaper than the West. Some of their industries may be a substitute of ours, making the West no longer need to export those products from us. That’s our risk.”⁹⁰ Additionally, the possibility of losing existing trade relations with the new Member States was seen as they shifted the balance of their trade internally within the Single Market. The abolition of trade barriers in the new Member States after they joined the Union was posited as a positive consequence, albeit that their abolition was “in order to adopt the EU ones.”⁹¹

How might any future EU enlargements change bilateral relations with the EU?

AUSTRALIA

The comfort factor was also seen as positive in relation to future enlargements. For example, it was suggested that EU membership would make Australian business people feel more comfortable about, and provide easier access to, the potentially lucrative Turkish market. Future enlargement promised to create a stronger economic platform for the EU to expand its market even further, but could cause inevitable digestion problems and risked generating a clash of cultures (Turkey) - suggesting possibly that Europe and European integration has a natural end point. But typically, future EU enlargements were not seen as having significant implications for Australia - perhaps

“Western Europe would become much larger and more important with every accession, if we want to take advantage of that, we would need to put some work into, which I am sure we will be ready to do and also we wouldn’t like to see our influence in our relationships with the EU diluted, we need to put quite a bit of work to make sure that we could effectively lobby our well established relationships.”¹⁰⁰

Representatives of business elite also shared their concerns about possible risks inherited in eastward enlargement of the EU: “Eastern Europe was certainly in our eyes seen as much more risky than Western Europe when you’re trading with them”.¹⁰¹

A possible Turkish accession to the EU occupied a special place in the elite’s responses. Turkey, as a candidate country,



was noted almost in every response. It was mentioned to have “quite a strong relationship”¹⁰² and an “ancient tie”¹⁰³ with New Zealand. A tragic shared history of Gallipoli, the “very famous battle where more New Zealanders lost their lives than in any other battle we ever had”¹⁰⁴, keeps the two nations respecting each other and commemorating their dead. This special connection is viewed as beneficial to New Zealand if Turkey accedes to the EU.

Other possible EU candidates (e.g., Ukraine which became more visible internationally after the recent events of the “Orange Revolution”) were admitted to be less known to New Zealand in general. However, the attitude towards possible accession to the EU of those countries was again positive: “We use whatever links we have to build friendship, if don’t have links – you make them”.¹⁰⁵

THAILAND

Thai business elites gave varied responses to the question of future enlargement. One believed that different sectors would face different types and degrees of impact but thought that the overall impact of any future enlargements would not be that significant. Another suggested that enlargement would “affect the volume of Thai exports and the volume of investment in Thailand”.¹⁰⁶ (This was presumably for the worse since this interviewee saw no opportunities and only risks emerging from the recent enlargement.) In terms of the future, another individual argued that enlargement was not the issue: “the important point is their regulations should be enforced on the basis of fairness, not on a protectionist stance. They should not discriminate or impose a double standard on non-EU countries. That’s not a fair game.”¹⁰⁷ Another respondent argued that existing risks posed by EU integration for third countries would be augmented by future enlargement, particularly if Turkey were to succeed with their accession ambitions:

“I think the economic impact will be immense. We produce the agricultural products that are also produced in Turkey. I fear of what may come. If Turkey enters the EU, they’ll be exempted from EU import tax. We may then lose our market. Turkey will also be using the same currency with the EU, the €.”¹⁰⁸

EURO

AUSTRALIA

Australian business elites were divided into two camps. While it was seen as a strong currency, “one of the two major forces”¹⁰⁹, respondents in the first camp believed that the US\$ was still “the international trading currency”¹¹⁰ and “is, in the foreseeable future, still going to dominate.”¹¹¹ While the € was thought to “compare well to the US\$”¹¹², the absence of Sterling from the €-zone meant it was seen as “limited by the fact that not everybody is using it.”¹¹³ An additional drawback was a belief that the € is not widely used outside of Europe. The € was consistently less favourably compared with the US\$ primarily because of the Greenback’s internationality and “the fact that the US\$ is the basis of so many other countries’ economies.”¹¹⁴ As one individual noted it has an established presence throughout Asia and South America:



“Oh, I think the € is gaining in prominence but the fact that, well I guess that a lot of South American countries have gone to the US\$ and China only really trades in the US\$ and a lot of Asian economies just use the US\$. If the € is to become as powerful as the Greenback, because there’s been that argument in the past that it could be ‘the’ currency, it’s got a long way to go.”¹¹⁵

And history, it seems, matters: “the US\$ has such a history and you know it’s been the benchmark for so long”.¹¹⁶ In contrast, those falling into the other camp saw the € as the emerging world currency and a real rival to the US\$.

“Well certainly I would see it as a reserve currency rivalling the US\$... many governments including our own use it as an important reserve currency you know comparable with the US\$. The big issue is the internal one of the EU of the extent to which economic and monetary union

is coherent in the 12...At the moment you have to say that the US is looking like an empire in decline both internally and externally."¹¹⁷

Such favourable appraisals were based on the perceived stability and the benefits for Australian businesses of working with a common currency in 12 and potentially 25 nation states: "it makes it easier for Australian companies to do business in Europe not have to deal with, deal in different currencies."¹¹⁸ While expressing some lingering nostalgia for the old individual currencies, one interviewee nevertheless felt that the introduction of the € was a positive for Europe and made it easier for Australian businesses and travellers. He also admitted to stirring the British saying, "When I'm in England...when I buy a beer at the pub I do try to give them € just to stir them up a little bit!...'What you don't accept €?'"¹¹⁹

NEW ZEALAND

Overall, the New Zealand elite were both positive and optimistic about the €'s benefits and its potential as a global currency: "I think it's really positioned itself on the international stage as one of the key currencies".¹²⁰ It was typically perceived as a stable currency, "less volatile than the US\$" ¹²¹ and "a lot stronger"¹²² too, positioning itself, in the minds of many of the interviewees, as a potential or actual rival to the mighty Greenback. One interviewee noted that "there's a rising perception of how the € will, the role that the € will play in the future, some even suggesting it could ... overtake the US\$. But, I think that could take some time."¹²³ The € was described by another respondent as a "counter balance to the US\$", as "unifying force inside Europe" and as a "stabilising force" on inflation rates.¹²⁴ The US\$ was still seen by a majority as the yardstick of comparative value in the foreseeable future. As renowned travellers Kiwi business elites, like their Aussie siblings, were quick to point to the fact that the introduction of the € means that "if you want to go over and visit Europe it means you don't have to change your money into all sorts of different currencies."¹²⁵ This was seen as one of the most obvious and real benefits for New Zealand. This was also advantageous from a business point of view: "it's worked well for us, and certainly when, you know, from an exporting countries' point of view, when you're only dealing in four or five currencies as opposed to twenty".¹²⁶ This meant that "for a lot of exporters the concept of the € is something that they like, and certainly for a lot of business people travelling to Europe the idea of having one currency is great, it makes it much easier."¹²⁷

The introduction of the € as international currency was mostly perceived in positive terms, yet, some interviewees voiced cautious attitudes towards the currency: "Big, big questions on it"¹²⁸; "the € is a huge challenge... I

think the jury is still out on this one... We need a few more years to see its impact".¹²⁹ The main issues were neatly summed up by one more cautious interviewee:

*"With not all members being a part of the €-zone, it is raising some questions about whether it will be a true competitor to the US\$ in the long term. Also, our concern is about the state of some key economies in Europe, and the inability of several central banks to keep policy settings within agreed levels which also raises some questions about the long term future of the €."*¹³⁰

Even so there were "a lot of positive dispositions with the €"¹³¹ so the jury was still out, if optimistic.

THAILAND

Stability was a common theme amongst Thai business elites when it came to discussing the performance of the € as an international currency; however, it was a highly contested attribute. "It's a new currency and it seems to be quite stable and reliable,"¹³² remarked one individual and another felt it was more stable than the US\$.¹³³ But what seemed "obvious"¹³⁴ to some was clearly not the case for others who felt that "the US\$ is more stable than the €"¹³⁵ and were worried about the impact of enlargement on the currency's longer-term prospects.¹³⁶ This was also a concern of those who felt it was currently stable: "I'm not sure whether the last enlargement will affect its stability in the long run or not."¹³⁷

The potential of the € to become an international currency to rival the US\$ was another hotly debated topic. The € was seen by one individual as possessing "the potential to become a reserve country or an international currency like the US"¹³⁸ and described by another as "inferior to the US\$."¹³⁹ As one business person explained, "although we sometimes trade in the €, it all depends on the US\$. Also, most markets use the US\$."¹⁴⁰



Spontaneous Images

AUSTRALIA

Images	Number of times mentioned
Bureaucracy / Brussels ¹⁴¹	6
Europe, continental Eropce, Western Eropce	6
Disunity/ internal debates (budget, constitution, economic), fragmented	6
Economic power, rationalization, prosperity, huge market	5
Trade barriers, agricultural subsidies, distortions, protectionism	5
Diplomatic collectivism, "United States of Europe", federalism, unity	4
"Troika" – the UK, Germany and France	4
The €	3
EU Parliament	2
Loss of identity / loss of statehood	2
Human rights	2
Nation-improving influence, force for good	2
Peace	2
EU enlargement	2
Complex negotiations, "lowest common denominator"	2
CAP	2

Images mentioned only once	
EU vs. US	market beaten by Asia and the US
history	animal welfare
socialism	environment
big idea	youthful and vibrant
bound to fail	sclerosis
flag	freedom of borders
exciting politics	attractive place to visit
Tony Blair	protesting French workers and farmers
doing business	

NEW ZEALAND

Images	Number of times mentioned
Bureaucracy	8
Brussels ¹⁴²	6
UK, especially UK accession to the EU	5
EU Officials / Member State leaders	4
Culture / Historic links	3
Unity	3
Trade issues, agricultural subsidies	3
CAP	2
EU enlargement, "march eastwards"	3
The €	3
A considerable economic power, giant economy, prosperous	3
Flag – a "circle of stars"	2
Ambivalence	2
Europe	2

Disunity, internal challenges	2
Peace and stability, never losing New Zealanders to a European war again	2
Diversity	2

Images mentioned only once

friendly	"old boys" club
safe	clean, organized, structured
inspirational	socialism
economic and political influence in the world	people
"troika" - the UK, Germany and France	food
diplomacy and democracy	lifestyle
courage	huge
vitality	angry French farmers

THAILAND

Images	Number of times mentioned
Trade, trade barriers, economic protectionism, inward looking market	6
Economic unity, high trade bargaining power	5
The €	4
One of the three big in the world, one of the three 'pillars', balance to the US	4
High living standards, unique lifestyle	4
Civilization, high level of development	3
High product standards, GMO concerns	3
Environment	3
Leader in technology	2
Political unity, confederation of independent states, example of integration	3
Disunity (internal problems, internal conflicts)	2

Images mentioned only once

ASEM	Bureaucracy / Brussels
security	bloc of European countries
human rights	"troika" - the UK, Germany and France
completely different from us	common identity
Airbus	culture
EU festival in Bangkok	nice place to live and visit
complex decision making	big
free movement of labour	old powers looking to restore their greatness



Sources of information on the EU

Overview of the preferred sources of information for learning about the EU for Asia-Pacific elites

The print media, newspapers (both local and international) and magazines (particularly *The Economist*) were a primary source of information about the EU mentioned by Asia-Pacific political and business elites. While Thai politicians preferred international newspapers and local English-language newspapers like *Bangkok Post* and *The Nation*, the Thai business elites also accessed Thai-language newspapers such as *Manager* and *Matichon*. A large proportion of Australian interviewees regard newspapers as their preferred sources of information about EU news - both local and international. Local newspapers named as preferred sources were, for example, *The Australian Financial Review*, *The Australian* and *The Age*. International newspapers mentioned as their choice for EU news were *The Guardian Weekly* and *The Financial Times*. Similarly, many New Zealand interviewees stated that the international print media, more specifically, international newspapers (for example, *The Guardian*) and magazines (particularly *The Economist*) were their preferred source for EU information.

Our findings also highlighted that personal contacts with European citizens, officials and institutions (for example, the Member States' Chambers of Commerce) were other important sources of information. Interestingly, the Internet is increasingly emerging as a preferred source of information on the EU. Several Australian interviewees even specifically mentioned the Europa website.

Last but not least, Asia-Pacific political and business elites also preferred to look for EU related information on television. Thai and New Zealand interviewees identified international channels like BBC and CNN as their popular source of news on the EU.

Local newspapers as a source of information on the EU

Most of the Thai respondents concluded that the *Thai Rath*, despite the fact of being recognised as a popular newspaper in Thailand, was not a reliable source for EU news. (Indeed, some interviewees were of the opinion that the newspaper was too sensational.) All of the other four newspapers analysed - *Matichon*, *Manager*, *Bangkok Post* and *The Nation* - were perceived as relatively reliable sources of information about the EU to varying degrees. One Thai respondent, however, brought forward an interesting point commenting that all five monitored newspapers were equally credible, since most of the

news was taken from similar foreign sources, and it was only the volume of coverage that was different.¹⁴³

Most Australian interviewees agreed that the *Australian Financial Review* and *The Australian* were regarded as the most reliable sources of news on the EU, while the *Sydney Morning Herald* was only perceived as a reliable source to a certain degree.

Most New Zealand interviewees did not differentiate between the five sampled newspapers in the degree of their reliability for information about the EU (although *The New Zealand Herald* and *The Press* were occasionally singled out as better). This consistency might correlate with the fact that 3 out of the 5 monitored New Zealand newspapers are now owned by the same company: Fairfax/Independent. However, there was a general feeling that New Zealand newspapers tend to put a strong 'British centric' spin on EU news.

Several shared their impression that in terms of international news coverage, the New Zealand press had yet to catch up with the international media standard. Others mentioned that New Zealand newspapers increasingly feature 'light' news on Europe - such as sport, travel and entertainment news - rather than 'hard' political news. As one interviewee noted: "Increasingly,



I have noticed [that newspapers'] analysis of [Europe] is influenced by travel, where the resorts are... If you are doing an article on Italy, for instance, it's not likely to be dealing with the relations between NZ and Italy; it's more likely to be the glorious Tuscan country side".¹⁴⁴

Even though that type of coverage could raise the general public's awareness of Europe, it risked a certain trivialisation of the EU image. Nevertheless, compared with other media forms, newspapers at least attempted in-depth critical analysis when covering the EU.



Local TV news bulletins as a source of information on the EU

Contrary to the findings from this project's public opinion surveys where TV was found to be the primary source of information about the EU¹⁴⁵, elites in New Zealand and Thailand did not prioritise TV primetime news in this way. Most of the Thai elite commented that they hardly watched Thai primetime TV news bulletins on Channel 7 and ITV. They noted the low level of all international news featured on local TV news. Instead, they preferred watching international news channels such as the BBC and CNN.

was not really of an international standard. Local New Zealand channels focused more on domestic news; hence, when respondents were looking for EU news, they relied on international news channels like the BBC and CNN.

Personal contacts within the EU as a source of information

National elites across the three countries demonstrated extensive and wide-ranging contacts with Europe involving educational links, travel, family and friends resident in the EU, business associations and political contacts. Through these contacts "first-hand" and "inner-circle" information is obtained. As one interviewee said, "Until recently, if I needed something I could call Brussels, and talk to people like Franz Fischler, or like Sir Leon Brittan..."¹⁴⁶

In Thailand, while politicians had rather extensive personal contacts, often resulting from educational backgrounds in Europe, the business elite had more limited personal contacts.

For New Zealand interviewees, both politicians and business people had extensive connections in Europe. Various and numerous family connections with Europe were typical. Some had parents or grandparents who had lived in or migrated from Europe: others had children or a spouse living there currently. New Zealand interviewees also reported extensive travel to Europe and appeared to display tender and nostalgic memories towards Europe and Europeans. As one interviewee commented, "the relationship is very special. Europe remains very much the part of who we are"¹⁴⁷.

In Australia, both politicians and business people reported extensive connections with people across Europe. Connections were both of professional and personal nature. Many Australian interviewees had friends or families there, although family connections were not as prominent as in the New Zealand case.

To sum up, the primary source of information about the EU for the Asia-Pacific political and business elites was the print media, newspapers in particular. In contrast, opinion surveys revealed that TV news was the leading source of information on the EU for the general public.

To a certain degree, elites in Thailand and Australia viewed their local newspapers to be reliable sources of information on the EU. In contrast, the New Zealand elite opted for international newspapers to access news on the EU. In addition, Thai and New Zealand elites did not value local TV news bulletins as sources of information on the EU, but instead opted for international TV news. And lastly, personal contacts were widely regarded as important sources for information on the EU across all three countries.



In Australia, interviewees unanimously selected ABC primetime news as a more reliable source of information on the EU than Channel 9 news bulletins.

Similar to their opinion on the domestic press, New Zealand interviewees commented that national TV news was heavily influenced by the British media and, again,

IV Recommendations

Four sets of recommendations designed to enhance the EU's profile and increase public awareness of the EU in the Asia-Pacific region were developed at the final Workshop of this project - "EU and the Dialogue between Cultures and Peoples: EU Perceptions in the Asia Pacific" – held at Te Papa, Wellington, New Zealand on November 25, 2005.

RECOMMENDATIONS for the Lead Research Organisation, the National Centre for Research on Europe, New Zealand

To:

- Continue the EU Perceptions project in New Zealand, Korea, Thailand
- Expand the EU Perceptions to new countries (Japan, China, Singapore)
- Expand the EU Perceptions to new themes (foreign policy and development)
- Promote greater visibility of this research at the level of EU institutions
- Engage with the FP7 "Europe in the World" thematic priority
- Develop collaboration with research centres in the EU
- Use the datasets to encourage MA/PhD theses regionally
- Maximise academic publications from the project
- Organise future conferences on the Perceptions focus
- Maximise webpage impact
- Promote Erasmus Mundus exchanges

RECOMMENDATIONS for the European Commission and Delegations

- Economic:
 - Increased budget allocation for outreach activities
 - Utilise EU "Diaspora" in third-countries to promote ties
 - Profile the EU's key development role for the region
 - Co-sponsor trade fairs
- Education:
 - Promote educational links
 - Introduce school teachers' awards
 - Lobby to incorporate the EU into the school curriculum
- Information:

- Extend cultural activities
- Establish a public EU information bureau
- Raise profile of new members and candidate countries
- Media:
 - Extend links between press officers and EU research centres
 - Increase EU Journalism/ VIP awards
 - Introduce outward EU journalists' awards
 - Introduce EU briefing workshops for journalists
 - Co-fund TV documentaries on EU topics
 - Strengthen PR/ media liaison role

RECOMMENDATIONS for NZ Parliamentarians / Government

- Increase the profile and support for the "Europe's Friends" parliamentary groups
- Hold regular NCRE presentations to Select Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence
- Utilise research-based expertise of NCRE for MFAT policy reports
- Introduce New Zealand Government co-funding for NCRE activities/ internships/ scholarships
- Enhance the dialogue with MEPs
- Promote sister-city local government links
- Develop civil society/ NGO EU-NZ links

RECOMMENDATIONS for the Asia-Pacific Media

- Increase limited TV coverage of the EU
- Explore cooperation with Deutsche Welle, Arte, EuroNews networks
- Develop documentaries/ features on EU issues
- Focus on the information gap on the new Member States
- Relate EU developments more to local/ domestic issues
- Focus on growing European knowledge-wave migration impact
- Use of European-based correspondents (other than London)
- Present the European Single Market as the bilateral framework

V Methodological and Technical Specifications of the Survey

The sampling strategy, data collection methodology, and data analysis techniques were chosen to guarantee the “output of the rigorous and reliable data which could be used in providing evidence-based policy recommendations”¹⁴⁸ and thereby ensure a reliable measure of the EU–Asia-Pacific dialogue. The survey of national decision-makers’ opinions of the EU was conceived as a series of ‘snap-shots’ of perceptions across time and across diverse elite groups. This approach corresponded to the goals of the project – to identify the comprehensive range of perceptions of and attitudes towards the EU that exist in Asia-Pacific public discourse.

Sampling procedures

The sampling strategy for the elite interviews involved a random selection of key national informants in each country and across the sectors. This approach allowed for a better categorization and integration of the results and provided an insight into the nature of current links domestic elites had with the EU, as well as their personal knowledge, perceptions, and attitudes towards the EU. The interviews took place in relevant political and economic centres: for Australia - Canberra, Sydney, Melbourne, and Adelaide; for New Zealand - Wellington, Auckland, and Christchurch; and for Thailand, Bangkok. The analysis involved comparison between perceptions of the EU expressed by elites in the business, political and media sectors. The interviews occurred during July-September 2005. In the course of the study, a total of 71 Asia-Pacific business, political and media elite members were interviewed (see Table 1). The named list of the interviewees for each country is given in the Appendix.

Table 1: Numbers of the interviewed elites

	Australia	NZ	Thailand	Total
Policy-makers	9	8	5	22
Business elite	10	8	5	23
Media elite	8	8	10	26
Total	27	24	20	71

- ‘Policy-makers’ were identified as current members of national parliaments representing different political parties.
- ‘Media elite’ were identified as editors/news directors and lead reporters of the media outlets that were established as the national leaders in the EU coverage.
- ‘Business elite’ were identified as members of national business round tables, and other official business networks.

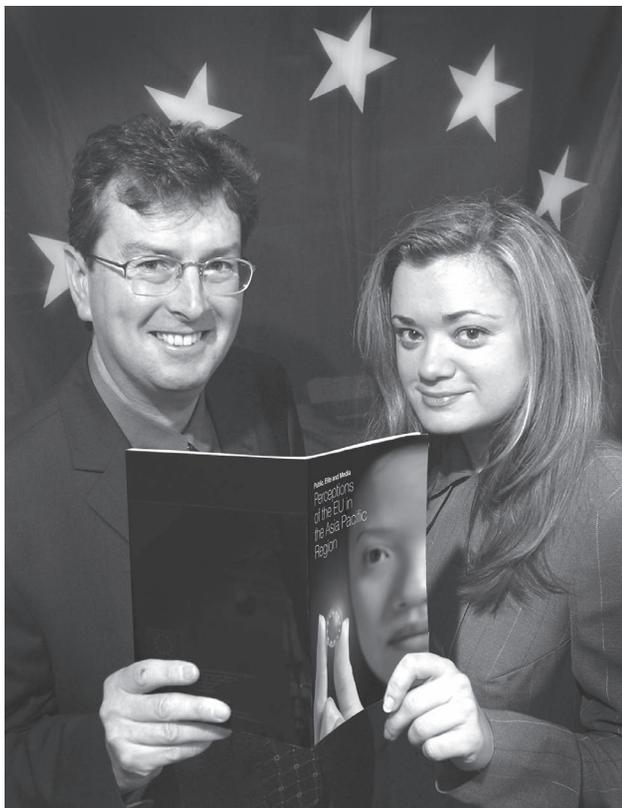
Data gathering

Individual face-to-face semi-structured on-record interviews were employed as a data collection technique.¹⁴⁹ This technique has proven to be effective for approaching ‘key informants’ – it is more personal,

flexible, respects privacy and status, and generates greater openness and trust between interviewer and interviewee.¹⁵⁰ The study used two questionnaires – one for business and political elites, and another for media elites. The question order rotated depending on the flow of conversation. Each interview lasted an average of 45 minutes.

Data analysis methods

The study utilizes qualitative interpretative methodology capitalizing on its strong insight and interpretation. To improve the reliability of this particular attitudinal research, the collected data was analyzed using content analysis methodology incorporating cognitive semantics tools. The employed methodology revealed the categories that ‘mapped’ the concept ‘EU’ via re-construing mental ‘schemata’ of the concept.





Footnotes

- ¹ Castells, M. (1996) *The Information Age – Economy, Society and Culture: The Rise of the Network Society*. Vol.1. Oxford: Blackwell.
- ² Khanna, P. (2004) "The Metrosexual Superpower", *Foreign Policy*, 143: 66-69
- ³ De Gouveia, P.F. and Plumridge, H. (2005) *European Infopolitik: Developing EU Pubic Diplomacy Strategy*. London: The Foreign Policy Centre.
- ⁴ Manners, I. and Whitman, R. (2003) "Towards Identifying the International Identity of the European Union: a Framework for Analysis of the EU's Network of Relations", *Journal of European Integration* 21(2): 231-49, p.235
- ⁵ Naveh, C. (2002) "The Role of the Media in Foreign Policy Decision-Making: A Theoretical Framework". *Conflict & Communication online* 2, http://www.cco.regener-online.de/2002_2/pdf_2002_2/naveh.pdf, accessed 20/12/04; Peña, M. (2003) 'News Media and the Foreign Policy Decision-Making Process, CNN or Washington', *Razón y Palabra* 32 (April/May) <http://www.cem.itesm.mx/dacs/publicaciones/logos/anteriores/n32/mpena.htm#mp#mp>; accessed 25/06/04
- ⁶ Brecher, M. (1968) *India and World Politics: Krishna Menon's View of the World*. New York and Washington: Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers.
- ⁷ Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Advancing the National Interest; Australia's Foreign and Trade Policy White Paper*, 2003, www.dfat.gov.au/ani/; accessed 04/05/03
- ⁸ Murray, P. (2002) "Australian's Relations with the European Union: Branch Office or Independent Actor?" in C. Saunders and G. Triggs (eds.), *Trade and Cooperation with the European Union in the New Millennium*, The Hague: Kluwer Law International, p. 166.
- ⁹ Ambassador P. Mazzocchi (2003) "The European Union in Australia - A Message From the Ambassador", *European Commission's Delegation to Australia and New Zealand website*, www.ecdel.org.au/about_us/intro_mazzocchi.htm; accessed 23/04/04
- ¹⁰ Ibid.
- ¹¹ European Commission's Delegation to Australia and New Zealand, 'Stocktake of Australia-EU Cooperation and Dialogue under the 1997 Joint Declaration on Relations Between Australia and the European Union Signed on 26 June 1997', http://www.ecdel.org.au/pressandinformation/2003_ministerials/Stocktake_joint_declaration.htm; accessed 30/03/04
- ¹² Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 'Europe Branch Statement', www.dfat.gov.au/geo/europe/bstatement.html; accessed 07/05/04
- ¹³ Downer, A. (2003) "EU Enlargement: Meeting the Challenges of the Global Security and Trade Environment", Speech at the National Europe Centre Conference on EU Enlargement, Canberra, 16 April www.foreignminister.gov.au/speeches/2003/030416_eu.html; accessed 07/05/04
- ¹⁴ Barker, G. (2004) "Stretching a Friendship", *Australian Financial Review*, 31 January, p. 20
- ¹⁵ Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (2003) *Advancing the National Interest; Australia's Foreign and Trade Policy White Paper*, www.dfat.gov.au/ani/; accessed 14/05/03.
- ¹⁶ The Age, 'Asia, Pacific Focus for Latham Foreign Policy', 7 April 2004.
- ¹⁷ Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Australia-United States Freed Trade Agreement (AUSFTA): Advancing Australia's Economic Future*, http://www.dfat.gov.au/trade/negotiations/us_fta/ausfta_brochure.pdf; accessed 8/06/2004.
- ¹⁸ Murray, P. (2002) "Australian's Relations with the European Union: Branch Office or Independent Actor?" in C. Saunders and G. Triggs (eds.), *Trade and Cooperation with the European Union in the New Millennium*, The Hague: Klumer Law International, p. 163.
- ¹⁹ Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Advancing the National Interest; Australia's Foreign and Trade Policy White Paper*, 2003, www.dfat.gov.au/ani/; accessed 14/05/03.
- ²⁰ Ibid.
- ²¹ Downer, A. (2003) 'EU Enlargement: Meeting the Challenges of the Global Security and Trade Environment', Speech at the National Europe Centre Conference on EU Enlargement, Canberra, 16 April www.foreignminister.gov.au/speeches/2003/030416_eu.html; accessed 07/05/04.
- ²² Ibid.
- ²³ Ibid.
- ²⁴ Statistics NZ (2005) <http://www.stats.govt.nz/NR/rdonlyres/126E9F25-1F92-4095-8BBF-5199E7E4A65E/0/NZETSJun05.pdf>, accessed 08/08/05; <http://www.stats.govt.nz/products-and-services/ext-trade-stats/june-05.htm>; accessed 08/08/05
- ²⁵ NZ Government, Ministry of Foreign Affairs <http://www.mfat.govt.nz/foreign/regions/europe/countrypapers/euunion.html#Political>; accessed 02/04/05; Clark, H. (2003), 'The New Zealand – EU Relationship: New Challenges and Opportunities', Address to The European Policy Centre, Brussels, 24 April 2003
- ²⁶ Statistics NZ (2003) <http://www.stats.govt.nz/products-and-services/Articles/NZinvestrelationship-Nov03>; accessed 15/10/2004.
- ²⁷ NZ Government, Ministry of Foreign Affairs <http://www.mfat.govt.nz/foreign/regions/europe/countrypapers/euunion.html#Political>; accessed 11/08/05
- ²⁸ Clark 2003
- ²⁹ 2.3 million Australians were born in Europe and a further 2.6 had one or both parents born there. See Paul Keating, 'A Prospect of Europe', Sydney 9 April 1997, <http://arts.unsw.edu.au/cec/Europe.html>; accessed 12 November 2004. Although the percentage of the Australian population born in Europe (including the USSR) has declined steadily over the past decade, European-born Australians make up over 50% of the population born overseas. Calculated from the national summary table produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. See, Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Australian Social Trends: Population*, <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/94713ad445ff1425ca25682000192af2/27c5532c626ff114ca256ea20015c008!OpenDocument>; accessed 16/01/05. (Assume this includes UK and Ireland even though they are given a separate listing.)
- ³⁰ Statistics NZ (2002) <http://www.stats.govt.nz/products-and-services/Articles/census-snpst-cult-diversity-Mar02.htm>; accessed 09/08/05
- ³¹ They were followed by Welsh (3,342), Russian (3,084), Italian (2,919), French (2,784), Croatian (2,502), Swiss (2,304), Greek (2,271), Polish (1,947), Danish (1,830), South Slavs (former Yugoslavia) (1,539), Celtic (1,509), Spanish (1,332), and Swedish (1,029). Other Europeans accounted for 10,662.
- ³² Clark 2003
- ³³ Thailand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <http://www.mfa.go.th/web/59.php>; accessed 10/11/2005
- ³⁴ The EC Delegation to Bangkok, <http://www.deltha.cec.eu.int/en/index.htm>; accessed 11/11/2005
- ³⁵ John Tinney, Lecturer, Swinburne University, Former Head of Austrade
- ³⁶ Christine Gibbs Stewart, General Manager, International Trade, Australian Business Limited
- ³⁷ Kevin McDonald, General Manger Operations, Acting CEO, Australian Business Limited
- ³⁸ David Inall, Executive Director of the Cattle Council of Australia
- ³⁹ Tony Hill, Head of International Coverage, ABC News
- ⁴⁰ Bob Kearsley, Channel 9
- ⁴¹ Jack Waterford, Editor in Chief, Canberra Times
- ⁴² Rowan Callick, Asia Pacific Editor, Australian Financial Review; Ben Potter, Melbourne Bureau Chief, Australian Financial Review
- ⁴³ Rowan Callick, Asia Pacific Editor, Australian Financial Review
- ⁴⁴ Harry Duynhoven, Minister, MP, Labour
- ⁴⁵ Peter Dunn, MP, United Future, party leader



- ⁴⁶ Martin Gallagher, MP, Labour
⁴⁷ Harry Duynhoven, Minister, MP, Labour
⁴⁸ Lockwood Smith, MP, National
⁴⁹ Keith Locke, MP, Green
⁵⁰ Locke
⁵¹ Dunn
⁵² Dunn
⁵³ Dunn
⁵⁴ Jim Grennell, Export Development Manager, Wrightson Seeds
⁵⁵ John Upton, Marketing manager for Horizon Meats, Auckland
⁵⁶ Grennell
⁵⁷ Cate Hlavac, Regional Manager, Canterbury, NZ Trade and Enterprise
⁵⁸ Charles Finney, Head of Wellington Regional Chamber of Commerce
⁵⁹ Finney
⁶⁰ Hlavac
⁶¹ Finney
⁶² Charlie Pedersen, National President, Federated Farmers
⁶³ Grennell
⁶⁴ Finney
⁶⁵ John Gardner, *The New Zealand Herald* (2004)
⁶⁶ Gardner
⁶⁷ Gardner
⁶⁸ Paul Thompson, *The Press*
⁶⁹ Simon Kilroy, *The Dominion Post*
⁷⁰ anonymous, Thai politician
⁷¹ M.L. Ladadip Devakul, tourism
⁷² Thanong Khanthong // Ms. Achara Deboonme, *The Nation Business Editors*
⁷³ Thanong Khanthong // Ms. Achara Deboonme, *The Nation Business Editors*
⁷⁴ Bavorn Tosrigaew, Thai Rath Foreign Editor
⁷⁵ Saowaros Ronakit, Matchon Biz
⁷⁶ Preeyanood Phanjawong, Channel 7
⁷⁷ Geoff Allen, CEO, Allen Consultancy Group
⁷⁸ Allen
⁷⁹ Inall
⁸⁰ Vincent Price, Government Strategy and Market Development, Kronos
⁸¹ Peter Dreher, Lawyer and President of Australian Business in Europe, Madgwicks
⁸² Christine Gibbs Stewart, General Manager, International Trade, Australian Business Limited
⁸³ Gallagher
⁸⁴ Grennell
⁸⁵ Dynhoven
⁸⁶ Gallagher
⁸⁷ Smith
⁸⁸ Smith
⁸⁹ Orapin Banjerdrongkajorn, Woodcraft
⁹⁰ anonymous, tapioca products
⁹¹ Banjerdrongkajorn
⁹² Locke
⁹³ Duynhoven
⁹⁴ John Carter, MP, National
⁹⁵ Upton
⁹⁶ Smith
⁹⁷ Dunn
⁹⁸ Dunn
⁹⁹ Gallagher
¹⁰⁰ Jim Sutton, Minister, MP, Labour
¹⁰¹ Grennell
¹⁰² Tim Barnett, MP, Labour
¹⁰³ Duynhoven
¹⁰⁴ Duynhoven
¹⁰⁵ Duynhoven
¹⁰⁶ Prasert Jensiriwanich, Machinery
¹⁰⁷ Jen Namchaisiri, Garment and textile
¹⁰⁸ anonymous, tapioca products
¹⁰⁹ Allen
¹¹⁰ Inall
¹¹¹ Allen
¹¹² McDonald
¹¹³ Inall
¹¹⁴ Allen
¹¹⁵ Stewart
¹¹⁶ Inall
¹¹⁷ Tinney
¹¹⁸ Stewart
¹¹⁹ Price
¹²⁰ Anne Berryman, General Manager, Meat and Wool NZ
¹²¹ Upton
¹²² Hlavac
¹²³ Grennell
¹²⁴ John Walley, CEO of the Canterbury Manufacturers' Association
¹²⁵ Hlavac
¹²⁶ Upton
¹²⁷ Finney
¹²⁸ Finney
¹²⁹ Smith
¹³⁰ Finney
¹³¹ Finney
¹³² Jensiriwanich
¹³³ Devakul
¹³⁴ Namchaisiri
¹³⁵ Banjerdrongkajorn
¹³⁶ Banjerdrongkajorn
¹³⁷ Devakul
¹³⁸ Namchaisiri
¹³⁹ anonymous, tapioca products
¹⁴⁰ anonymous, tapioca products
¹⁴¹ Meaning "Brussels" in most of Australian responses was synonymous to the meaning "bureaucracy"
¹⁴² In the responses of NZ elites meaning "Brussels" was more closely associated with the meaning "city". Most of the interviewees visited Brussels for business purposes.
¹⁴³ Korn Chatikavanij, MP, Democrat Party
¹⁴⁴ Dunn
¹⁴⁵ Holland, M. and Chaban, N. (2005) *The EU Through the Eyes of the Asia-Pacific*, NCRE Research Series No. 4: 46-51.
¹⁴⁶ Smith
¹⁴⁷ Smith
¹⁴⁸ Enticott, G. (2004), "Multiple Voices of Modernization: Some Methodological Implications", *Public Administration* 82(3): 743-756.
¹⁴⁹ This particular method of information gathering was preferred to the mailed questionnaire (a method employed by the CERC, University of Melbourne, research of elite perceptions of the EU in Australia in 2000), as well as to the focus group discussions (a method used by the survey team A.A.R.S. Progetti S.r.l. when studying the elite perceptions on the EU in South East Asia in 2003). The choice of that particular method was driven by the consideration that written responses have a relatively low return rate due to the elites' reservations to put anything in writing, general lack of time, and huge amount of information the elites are exposed to in which the request to fill out the questionnaire could be lost. Flexibility of schedule in arranging face-to-face interviews, undivided attention to the interviewee by the researcher during the conversation, and more open atmosphere during the individual interviews decided for that particular method against the focus group discussion one.
¹⁵⁰ Walker, R.M. and Enticott, G. (2004) "Using Multiple Informants in Public Administration: Revisiting the Managerial Values and Actions Debate", *Journal of Public Administration, Research and Theory*, 14: 417-3



VI Appenidix: List of the interviewed elites

AUSTRALIA

The Hon. Bruce Billson, Federal Member for Dunkley, The Liberal Party of Australia, Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs and Trade
 Anthony Albanese, Shadow Minister for Environment, House of Representatives (ALP)
 Lindsay Tanner (ALP), Member for Melbourne, House of Representatives
 Senator Grant Chapman (LIB), Head of the EU-Australia Parliamentary Friendship Group
 Anne McEwen, Senator for South Australia (ALP)
 Warren Entsch, Parliamentary Secretary for Industry, Tourism and Resources (LIB)
 Andrew Buttsworth, Chief of Staff to Senator the Hon Robert Hill, Minister for Defence
 Senator Lyn Allison, Leader of the Democrats
 Laurie Ferguson MP, Federal Member for Reid, Shadow Minister for Immigration
 Geoff Allen, CEO, Allen Consultancy Group
 Christine Gibbs Stewart, General Manager, International Trade, Australian Business Ltd
 Kevin McDonald, General Manger Operations, Acting CEO, Australian Business Ltd
 David Inall, Executive Director of the Cattle Council of Australia
 Vincent Price, Government Strategy and Market Development, Kronos
 Egon Vetter, EWW Management
 John Tinney, Lecturer, Swinburne University, Former Head of Austrade
 JC (Interview is off the record. Interviewee asked to be de-identified.)
 Lindsay Frost, Director International Sales, The Neo Group
 Peter Dreher, Lawyer and President of Australian Business in Europe, Madgwicks
 Rowan Callick, Asia Pacific Editor, Australian Financial Review
 Tony Hill, Head of International Coverage, ABC News
 Dennis Shanahan, Political Editor, The Australian
 Emma McDonald, Political Reporter, Canberra Times
 Bob Kearsley, Channel 9
 Peter Wilson, Europe Correspondent for The Australian
 Jack Waterford, Editor in Chief, Canberra Times
 Ben Potter, Melbourne Bureau Chief, Australian Financial Review

NEW ZEALAND

Jim Grennell, Export Development Manager, Wrightson Seeds
 Anne Berryman, General Manager, Meat and Wool NZ
 John Upton, Marketing manager for Horizon Meats, Auckland
 Cate Hlavac, Regional Manager, Canterbury, NZ Trade and Enterprise
 Charles Finney, Head of Wellington Regional Chamber of Commerce
 Charlie Pedersen, National President, Federated Farmers
 John Walley, CEO of the Canterbury Manufacturers' Association
 James Saruchera, Group Manager, Electronics South, Canterbury Development Corp
 Tim Barnett, MP, Labour
 Harry Duynhoven, Minister, MP, Labour
 Jim Sutton, Minister, MP, Labour
 Lockwood Smith, MP, National
 Peter Dunn, MP, United Future, party leader
 John Carter, MP, National
 Martin Gallagher, MP, Labour
 Keith Locke, MP, Green
 Mark Jennings, TV 3
 Paul Thompson, The Press
 Siman Kilroy, The Dominion Post
 Tony Haas, Asia-Pacific News
 Bill Ralston, TV 1
 John Gardner (2004), The New Zealand Herald
 Debora Hill Cone, National Business Review
 Fran O'Sullivan, The New Zealand Herald

THAILAND

Korn Chatikavanij, Democrat
 Jon Ungpakorn, Senator
 Krisak Chunhawan, Senator
 Japabob Penkhae, Thai Rak Thai
 Prof. Dr. Likhit Dhiravegin, Thai Rak Thai Party/ Vice Chairman of the Parliamentary Foreign Committee
 Jen Namchaisiri, Garment and Textile
 Orapin Banjerdrongkajorn, Woodcraft
 Prasert Jensiriwanich, Machinery
 Anonymous, Tapioca products
 M.L. Ladadip Devakul, tourism
 Kavi Chongkittavorn, The Nation Foreign/Chief Editor
 Nares Prabtong, TV - news1
 Saguan Pisalrasmee, Manager
 Pairat Pongpanit, Matichon
 Saowaros Ronakit, Matichon
 Bavorn Tosrigaew, Thai Rath
 Preeyanood Phanjawong, Channel 7
 Tanita Saenkhum, The Nation
 Thanong Khanthong // Ms. Achara Deboonme, The Nation
 Chib Jitniyom, ITV – Foreign News Editor



National Centre for Research on Europe
European Union Studies Association of New Zealand

University of Canterbury
Private Bag 4800
Christchurch, New Zealand
Phone: +64 3 364 2348
Fax: +64 3 364 2634
Email: martin.holland@canterbury.ac.nz



DG Education and Culture,
European Commission



NCRE Research Series No. 5
ISBN 0-473-10984-0