

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**EU AND AUSTRALIA SERVICES INDUSTRIES APPLAUD  
THE CONCLUSION OF EU-AUSTRALIA FTA NEGOTIATIONS**

*Brussels & Canberra, 24 March 2026* – The European Services Forum (ESF) and the Australian Services Roundtable (ASR), representing the interests of European and Australian services industries in international trade and investment negotiations, welcome announcement today of a conclusion to the EU-Australia comprehensive free trade agreement (FTA) negotiations.

ESF and ASR expect this FTA to yield multiple benefits for both our economies by reducing long-standing barriers to trade, investment and innovation, increasing services market access and regulatory cooperation as well as standards alignment across the services and digital economy. Beyond the headlines on agriculture and commodities, ESF and ASR draw attention to the fact that services have a bigger and faster growing share of two-way trade than any other sector.

*“We already have deep services business transaction and interaction”, said Pascal Kerneis, Managing Director of the ESF. “Services exports from Australia to the EU27 were €10.9 billion (50.4% of total Australian exports (goods & services) to the EU in 2024. In Australian terms, this makes the EU a relatively much more important services market than most other destinations. Meanwhile services exports from the EU to Australia amounted to €31 billion (44.4% of total EU exports).”*

*“The bilateral relationship is now set to intensify further on the services side”, said Jane Drake-Brockman, Executive Director of ASR. “At the global level, digital services are taking a rapidly growing share in services trade, a trend which ESF and ASR fully expect to see reflected at the bilateral level, facilitated by the ambitious digital trade provisions in the agreement.”*

In times of geopolitical tension, we congratulate our negotiators and decision-makers for dedicated focus on the big picture in order to deliver balanced and appropriate compromise on outstanding sensitive matters. The FTA will help both parties to diversify supply/production chains. The services business reality is that this FTA will contribute to international services value chain robustness and resilience across all modes of services delivery (whether online or via movement of people) especially in professional services, in knowledge-intensive business services (including environment-related services) and in all digitally-enabled services trade.

The ESF and ASR now urge the two parties to fast track all legal procedures towards ratification of the agreement to allow early implementation. ESF and ASR will closely monitor the implementation of this crucial deal. Having delivered a big commercially-meaningful bilateral deal today, for which we thank them, our respective Trade Ministers travel immediately to the WTO Ministerial Council Meeting in Yaounde, Cameroon. We expect them to work in similarly close collaboration in the multilateral forum, especially on digital trade and electronic commerce, on which the business credibility of the WTO now hangs.

Brussels

24 March 2026

Canberra

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