

Le Comité mixte de coopération Canada-Union européenne se réunit

OTTAWA – The first meeting of the EU-Canada Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) took place today in Ottawa. The Joint Cooperation Committee, along with the Joint Ministerial Committee, have been established by the EU-Canada Strategic Partnership Agreement and will provide impetus to our relationship, as well as assess implementation of the Agreement, which is being provisionally applied since 1 April 2017. The first EU-Canada Joint Ministerial Committee is due to take place in Brussels later this year.

This first Joint Cooperation Committee provided an opportunity for the European Union and Canada to take stock of developments in our broad and deep relationship, including on a number of issues linked to the numerous thematic and geographic dialogues that have taken place over the past months. Dialogues on matters relating to defence and security, human rights, energy, innovation, science and technology, on the Middle East and North Africa, and on Sub-Saharan Africa, among others, have taken place, allowing the European Union and Canada not only to exchange information but also to ensure coordination whenever possible and to explore ways to expand the areas in which we concretely work together. The Joint Cooperation Committee also proposed recommendations for the establishment of new areas of cooperation, including on employment and social affairs.

Both the European Union and Canada reaffirmed their strong commitment to ambitious climate policies in fulfilment of the Paris Agreement on climate change. This will include the strengthening of existing partnerships, seeking new alliances and contributions, and continued support to those who are particularly vulnerable. Both sides stressed the importance they attach to tackling global challenges responsibly, as well as to a rules-based global order and effective multilateralism, in particular within the framework of the United Nations. They agreed on the need for the European Union and Canada to remain engaged and coordinated in multilateral fora, including the United Nations and the G20, as well as the G7, which will be chaired by Canada in 2018. The possible participation of Canada in ongoing EU military and civilian missions and operations around the world, as part of its Common Security and Defence Policy, was also raised. The need to continue championing a progressive free and fair trade policy was also discussed.

The Joint Cooperation Committee therefore confirmed the excellent state of the close and long-standing partnership between the European Union and Canada, which is based on shared democratic values, a responsibility to defend human rights and dignity for all, and social protection. As foreseen under the Strategic Partnership Agreement, the European Union and Canada will continue to champion and uphold these values and principles through regular dialogues, constructive cooperation and concrete action.

The Joint Cooperation Committee was co-chaired by Ms. Edita Hrdá, Managing Director for the Americas in the European External Action Service, and by Ms.

Alexandra Bugailiskis, Assistant Deputy Minister for Europe, the Middle East and the Maghreb at Global Affairs Canada. European Union Member States and Canadian provinces also participated.

More information:

[Factsheet](#) on the EU-Canada Strategic Partnership Agreement

[Factsheet](#) on EU-Canada relations

[Website](#) of the European Union Delegation to Canada

[Remarques du président Donald Tusk avant les réunions du Conseil européen](#)

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Statement by the Spokesperson on the announcement of Parliament

Today's announcement in Kabul by the Independent Electoral Commission of the date for Parliamentary elections in Afghanistan opens the way for an overdue step forward for democracy in the country.

The broad consultations with Afghan political stakeholders underline the Government's commitment to ensure a transparent electoral process. We expect the Independent Electoral Commission, political stakeholders and civil society to continue working closely together towards inclusive, transparent and credible elections, and to further democratic developments.

Key decisions on electoral reform will now have to be taken by the Afghan authorities in a timely manner. Broad-based political support for and clear communication on these reforms will help to restore public confidence in the elections and electoral bodies.

The European Union is committed to supporting the Afghan electoral process and the right of Afghan citizens to exercise their civic and democratic rights, and intends to adopt a €3.5 million project to strengthen Afghanistan's electoral institutions, funded under the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace. This project will help to enhance the integrity of the electoral process, and will complement existing and upcoming European Union electoral assistance in Afghanistan.

The European Union is committed to a peaceful, stable and democratic Afghanistan, to the benefit of all Afghans, of the region and beyond.

Interview with Jonesy and Amanda, WSFM101.7 – Pure Gold

AMANDA:

Let's see what gets the Ghoulies of Malcolm from Canberra. Hello Malcolm, what gets your Ghoulies?

PRIME MINISTER:

The years of inconsistent and unfair school funding gets my Ghoulies. Or it got my Ghoulies until 2 o'clock this morning. We've changed it and made it

right.

[Laughter]

AMANDA:

Good morning Prime Minister. Now how does this happen? Because I know you're all about to go on your six week winter break, so it had to be resolved last night. But how can you do any thinking at 2am in the morning?

PRIME MINISTER:

You just have to stay alert all the time but you know it is a great win for kids, it's a great win for schools.

What we've delivered here is one of the biggest reforms – I would say – at the federal level, the biggest reform to education in our nation's history.

We're investing an extra \$23 billion in schools over the next decade but for the first time every student in every state in every school will benefit from genuine needs-based funding.

So the money the Labor Party had under Gillard, you know, they had 27 different deals with different school systems, different jurisdictions which were all inconsistent.

What we're replacing that is with a single national, consistent, transparent needs-based model. It's a really big reform. Massive.

JONES:

Extraordinary. You know it's extraordinary how much you sound like the Prime Minister Malcolm. It's amazing!

[Laughter]

PRIME MINISTER:

That's right.

AMANDA:

I'll tell you what, it was quite momentous last night because we had Larissa Waters from the Greens breastfeeding as the vote was going down. She's the first politician to do that. Did you look at that and think: 'I'm starving, let's get some pizza'?

PRIME MINISTER:

No, look, seeing mothers with babies like that, it just melts my heart. I think it's wonderful. The more kids we have around the House down here in Canberra the better.

JONESY:

Exactly. Well you go and get some shut-eye Prime Minister!

AMANDA:

What are you going to do in your six weeks off?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well look I am going to take a little time off with Lucy, a little break.

But it's work – I mean we'll be going to the G20 in Germany which is the big international meeting of the top 20 economies. But also the reality is that politicians probably work harder and do more, or certainly they work as hard but certainly do a lot more miles when Parliament is not sitting because you're running around the countryside even if it's just your electorate. It is a very busy job being an MP or a Senator.

JONESY:

Will you be wearing lederhosen when you're over in Germany? I can imagine Donald Trump and you standing there side by side in lederhosen.

PRIME MINISTER:

No, I think I'll stick to my regular routine of suits. The exotic attire is best left to others.

AMANDA:

Don't they force you to wear something though when you go to those G-meetings?

PRIME MINISTER:

Yeah sometimes they have some sort of item of clothing that everyone wears but you know, the reality is that the G20 is focused on economic growth, as we are, and it will be focused on issues of trade, and how do we make sure we keep the global economy moving – that's what is critical.

You know, everything we are doing here, Amanda, is focused on securing our future. So, you know, we talked about schools a moment ago and the new funding arrangements which are for the first time consistent and needs-based et cetera, but the next stage is to ensure that we get the quality outcomes from that investment. Gonski 2.0 has David Gonski chairing the second stage of his work which is going to be focused on how we use that extra money to get the better educational outcomes for our kids because we have over many years been spending more on schools but we have not been getting better results.

JONESY:

There you go. Well, when you see Donald just say: 'Oh mate you didn't see that thing I did at the Ball.'

AMANDA:

Look at my lederhosen instead!

JONESY:

Have a look at my lederhosen, Donald!

[Laughter]

PRIME MINISTER:

Yes, that's right – okay.

AMANDA:

Well we appreciate you calling in.

JONESY:

Yes.

PRIME MINISTER:

Yeah it's great to talk. Okay thanks a lot.

[ENDS]

Interview with Chris Smith, 2GB

CHRIS SMITH:

I have the Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull on the line, right now. Prime Minister thank you very much for your time.

PRIME MINISTER:

Good morning.

CHRIS SMITH:

Federal Education Minister Simon Birmingham has described your passing of Gonski 2.0 as an historic opportunity but boy oh boy, it came at a cost didn't it?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well yes, it was a long debate and it is a very substantial increase in funding for schools – an extra \$23.5 billion from the Commonwealth on schools

over the next decade.

But Chris, this is a very historic achievement. This is real reform. For years, we've had school funding that has been inconsistent, it hasn't been transparent, it's been one deal, one special deal after another. Labor of course had 27 separate and sometimes secret deals with complete inconsistency.

What we've delivered now for the first time in the history of the Commonwealth is consistent, national, transparent, needs-based funding.

So if a school has the same needs, it gets the same level of funding whether it's in New South Wales or in Victoria, whether it's a Christian school, whether it's a Protestant Christian school or whether it's a Catholic school and of course the public schools are treated on the same basis all around the country as well.

CHRIS SMITH:

But you hadn't planned to spend an extra five thousand million dollars on this, had you?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well certainly it wasn't what we planned to do, Chris, but I have to work with the Parliament the Australian people elected and that means that sometimes we have to reach compromises.

CHRIS SMITH:

But every time we go to the crossbenchers, you're pulling out cheques for billions of dollars out of your back pocket.

PRIME MINISTER:

Well not always but often that is what you need to do to get legislation passed. Chris, the alternative is that you don't get anything done.

I mean, you know, cast your mind back to the last Parliament, the Parliament before the election – the Senate, we struggled to get anything through the Senate. Since the election, when many people said, you know there were some people that said my Government was in office but not in power. They said: 'Oh look, you've got only one vote majority in the House, you're in a minority in the Senate, you won't get anything done.' Look at what we've achieved.

CHRIS SMITH:

Sure.

PRIME MINISTER:

And the way you do that is you've got to respect the Australian people. They've elected the senators that they did and we work with them.

CHRIS SMITH:

Okay, you've still lost the Catholics from all reports today. Would it have been better in hindsight to get them into the negotiation room before you got this together?

PRIME MINISTER:

I wouldn't accept that generalisation.

CHRIS SMITH:

Well that's what they say.

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, depends who you mean by 'they'. We've had strong support from Catholic principals, Catholic parents, around the country. The fact is that funding, money for the Catholic sector is growing. It is well over \$3 billion over the decade, over \$80 billion in total funding over the decade.

So it's a very substantial increase going to the Catholic sector as indeed it is to the government sector and of course, the independents.

But the important thing is and this is fundamental, you know, if you think about the values of Catholic education, fundamental to that is fairness. Catholic social justice speaks to fairness. And what we're doing here is ensuring that all schools, whatever their denomination or affiliation, are treated on the basis of needs. It's common sense, I mean the Government has got scarce resources – it should be allocating them on the basis of need and that's what we're doing.

CHRIS SMITH:

Can you give some guarantee though that we'll see the result, say, in 5 years' time? Because the history of this in the last 15 years, and we learned this from some international education studies that came through in December and January that despite the bucket-loads of money we've thrown into education over the past 15 years, our results just continually go down the gurgler.

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, Chris, thank you, hooray. You've raised the most important point and that's what Gonski 2.0 is really about. The real issue is we've now got the funding right – it's national, it's consistent, its needs based, its fair. What we now need to do is make sure that we get the educational 'bang' for the taxpayer buck. That our kids get to the top of the class where they should be.

CHRIS SMITH:

Please!

PRIME MINISTER:

Now Gonski, David Gonski is chairing a second panel which is going to look at precisely this question. This is what we should be debating. The funding wars should now be over. We should be focusing on what we do to make sure we get better teachers, teachers with better support, better qualifications, and we get better outcomes in our classrooms.

But you're absolutely right – we've been spending more, and getting worse results. Now that doesn't mean that more money means worse results. What it means is, we are not getting the value out of the investment that we are making.

CHRIS SMITH:

I wonder whether there's a link between what you've achieved with Gonski this week and what Pauline Hanson has raised. In that, it seems as if the experts are admitting that we're not teaching teachers to deal with kids with special needs, whether it's autism or disabilities or whatever. We're not teaching the teachers well enough. I wonder whether we can dedicate \$23.5 billion, some of it anyway, to getting the teachers taught better to deal with those situations?

PRIME MINISTER:

Look the whole objective Chris, of all of our disability policies, the National Disability Insurance Scheme, the substantial loadings that we pay to schools with kids with disabilities and of course, disabilities range from very severe to mild –

CHRIS SMITH:

Very broad.

PRIME MINISTER:

You can't generalise about it. But the whole object is to ensure that people with disabilities maximise their potential and lead a full and rewarding life, to the maximum of their potential, in the community. So that's why with kids who have disabilities – and there will be well over 400,000 receiving support loadings with respect of disabilities through the school system across the country as part of our new policy – what we want them to do is of course, is to participate in their schools, to get the support they need, so that they can then lead the fullest and most productive and most satisfying lives.

CHRIS SMITH:

But there are circumstances where some who have extreme disabilities can be disruptive in the classroom and that is another thing that needs to be, I guess, handled and it might best be handled outside of mainstream school.

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, Chris, look, I don't want to get into an argument about, sort of at a theoretical level – the object of everything we want to do with children or indeed adults with disabilities is to ensure that they are playing the maximum part they can to maximize their abilities and talents in the community and that is why you see kids with disabilities are doing well in schools because they are provided with some extra support and assistance where they need it and I think teachers are very alert to that.

I know there has been the suggestion that there should be some sort of segregation – we do not accept that, we reject that. Obviously you can't generalise about every case but as a principle what we want is children who have disabilities to be given the maximum opportunity to do their best in the community, in the mainstream, in the classroom.

CHRIS SMITH:

Okay – you've got a pay rise overnight.

PRIME MINISTER:

Yes, that's right.

CHRIS SMITH:

Yeah, and I would've thought we should be paying the prime minister \$1 million anyway so I have got no problem with what you're earning.

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, I'm not complaining.

CHRIS SMITH:

No, no – of course not. But I tell you what a lot of people out there who live in the real world are and they are saying: 'Well, hang on – we've got debt and deficit and it is nothing to be proud of. We're shaving the cream off super for some. Spending continues to grow. We've got a Medicare freeze. Power prices just about to explode. And in 17 months the pollies have got a 2 per cent pay increase and another 2 per cent pay increase.' David Leyonhjelm says it is badly timed. Would you agree?

PRIME MINISTER:

It's a decision by the Remuneration Tribunal and there is never a good time to increase the pay of politicians but the alternative to having an independent tribunal set the politicians pay is to have the politicians setting it themselves and no-one would want that.

So it is I believe a 2 per cent increase over 18 months. That's from the last time. But you know, it's the Remuneration Tribunal's decision and-

CHRIS SMITH:

Sure – you wonder whether they are in the real world when everyone is not having increase in wages. But anyway, one quick thing before we let you go – Neil Prakash, the Islamic State member is telling a Turkish court that he doesn't want to come back to Australia. Would you welcome that outcome?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, we want him to come back here to face the music in an Australian court and then have a very, very long term of imprisonment for his crimes.

I mean, he is one of the worst, worst examples of terrorist financing and organisation. Because we do have an extradition treaty with Turkey, we have the prospect, the ability to bring him back to Australia to face the music. Can I just say to you Chris – as far as we are concerned we will track terrorists down wherever they are. And he is an Australian. He may have thought he was safe over there. He very narrowly escaped being killed. He is now in a Turkish jail and we are seeking to bring him back here to face the music in an Australian court.

CHRIS SMITH:

Okay – I appreciate your time this morning. Have yourself a good weekend.

PRIME MINISTER:

Thank you, same to you.

[ENDS]