

NEW ZEALAND INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS FORUM
(www.nzibf.co.nz)

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FORUM SUPPORTS CLOSER TRADE WITH EUROPE

The New Zealand International Business Forum strongly supports the concept of closer trade and economic relations with the European Union, including a future free trade agreement.

The International Business Forum is a collaboration of senior New Zealand business leaders working to expand New Zealand's international business opportunities. The Forum's membership includes New Zealand's leading exporters to the European Union. The Forum was reacting to media reports from Brussels suggesting Prime Minister Helen Clark had raised closer economic relations with EU Commission President José Manuel Barroso.

International Business Forum Executive Director Stephen Jacobi said: "An even closer partnership with Europe makes perfect sense. The European Union is already a leading trading partner for New Zealand and is expanding its free trade agreements with countries in the Asian Pacific region. We are likeminded on many issues. There is also need to broaden our economic relationship with Europe beyond traditional agricultural exports and to develop new partnerships in services, technology and research, which can work to the benefit of both parties."

Mr Jacobi said the Forum planned to develop a focus on Europe alongside its other market priorities, Japan and Korea. The Forum also supported existing business strategies with Australia, the United States and China.

"Engagement with the rest of the world is critical to New Zealand's economic future. The Forum intends to focus its attention on New Zealand's main trade and economic priorities and work closely with the Government and other business organisations to move these key relationships forward".

Forum's Board members are from some of New Zealand's leading internationally oriented companies and from the country's high-level business organisations. The companies cover the dairy, meat, seafood, kiwifruit, technology and services sectors and the business organisations represent New Zealand's export, manufacturing and services industries.

For further information:

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About the NZ International Business Forum

The Forum is a business organisation which aims to generate wealth for New Zealanders by helping ensure that New Zealand enterprises are fully integrated and engaged in the global economy and New Zealand's global competitive position is maximised. To enable New Zealand business to exploit new opportunities in international markets, the Forum provides leadership, works with companies and other business organisations to implement key projects and articulates New Zealand's international business priorities to both the New Zealand Government and stakeholders. NZIBF brings together

business leaders from some of New Zealand's largest internationally oriented companies together with the country's principal business organisations. Collectively, these business leaders from the dairy, meat, seafood, kiwifruit, software and services industries represent companies and sectors with a combined turnover in excess of \$20 billion. The business organisations represent New Zealand's export, manufacturing and services sectors. Launched in June 2007, NZIBF is the first time that business leaders of this calibre have come together with the sole focus of expanding New Zealand's international business.

About NZ Europe economic relations

Taken together, the EU is New Zealand's second largest market after Australia and takes some 16 percent of our total exports valued at NZ\$4.744 billion (Dec 2005). It is our largest, highest value and in many cases our fastest growing market for key products like butter, sheepmeat, apples, and kiwifruit. New Zealand and the EU have recently concluded a Joint Declaration on Relations and Cooperation which commits both sides to expanding economic co-operation and fostering business exchanges.