



## DRAFT Minutes

**Annual General Meeting of the New Zealand Europe Business Council.  
Tuesday 16 April 2024 at 5.30 – 7.30 PM at Europe House, AUT, Wakefield  
Street, Auckland.**

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Meeting began at 5.30 PM

### 1. Welcome

Frank Olsson, President welcomed all members, present and joining via Zoom.

### Attending

NZEBC AGM 2024 Attendees				
Company name	First Name	Last Name	Member Status	Country
German-New Zealand Chamber of Commerce Inc.	Monique	Surges	Full Member	Germany
Consulate of Hungary	Petra	Lipoth	Associate Member	Hungary
Consulate of Poland	Boguslaw	Nowak	Associate Member	Poland
Consulate of the Slovak Republic	Peter	Kiely ONZM	Full Member	Slovakia
Honorary Consul of Romania	Marian	Ioan	Associate Member	Romania
Consulate of Switzerland	Adrian	Blaser	Full Member	Switzerland
Italian Chamber of Commerce in New Zealand (ICCNZ)	Admir	Mullaaliu	Full Member	Italy
New Zealand MFAT  Manatū Aorere (Auckland office)	Tom	Butler	Associate Member	MFAT, NZ
Embassy of the Republic of Lithuania to Australia and to NZ	Minijus	Samuila	2nd contact	Lithuania
POLANZ, Polish - New Zealand Business Association Inc.	Piotr	Bieganski	Full Member	Poland
EU Delegation to NZ ZOOM	Ekaterina	TOPTANOVA	Associate Member	EU
Embassy of Greece in Australia ZOOM	Chrysa	Prokopaki	2nd contact	Greece
Consulate of the Czech Republic	Gregory	Shanahan	Full Member	Czech Republic
British New Zealand Business Association	Philip	Wood	Full Member	UK
New Zealand Scandinavia Business Assn. Inc.	Frank	Olsson	Full Member	Sweden

French New Zealand Chamber of Commerce	Thibault	Beaujot	Full Member	France
Dutch Business Association	Martijn	Bakker	Full Member	Netherlands
Honorary Consul for Italy in Auckland	Lindsey	Jones	Associate Member	Italy
French New Zealand Chamber of Commerce	Melanie	Feisst	2nd contact	France
French New Zealand Chamber of Commerce	Madeleine	Colombie	2nd contact	France
Honorary Consul for Italy in Auckland	Tony	Pigou	Guest	Italy
French New Zealand Chamber of Commerce	Frederik	Cornu	2nd contact	France
Contractor to EU Delegation in Wellington ZOOM	Catherine	Grant	2nd contact	EU

## Apologies

NZEBC AGM 2024 Apologies				
Associated Company	First Name	Last Name	Member	Country
Consulate of Finland	Chris	Linton	Full Member	Finland
EU Delegation to NZ	Diane	Lacoste	Associate Member	EU
Consulate of Sweden	Catharina	Andersson	Associate Member	Sweden
University of Auckland / Europe Institute	Maureen	Benson-Rea	Associate Member	UoA, NZ
Embassy of Switzerland	Viktor	Vavricka	Associate Member	Switzerland
Honorary Consul of the Federal Republic of Germany	Erich	Bachmann	Associate Member	Germany
Czech New Zealand Business Association	Michal	Kadlec	Associate Member	Czech Republic
Consulate of Austria	Reinhold	Goeschl	Associate Member	Austria
Consulate of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg	Marie	Gaspar	Full Member	Luxembourg
Irish Business Network of New Zealand	Brian	Walsh	Full Member	Ireland
New Zealand MFAT   Manatū Aorere	Glenys	Karran	Associate Member	MFAT, NZ
Consulate of Ireland Auckland	Niamh	McMahon	Associate Member	Ireland
Honorary Consul for Latvia	Dermot	Ross	Associate Member	Latvia
Embassy of the Republic of Lithuania to Australia and to NZ	Minijus	Samuila	2nd Contact	Lithuania
Consulate of the Netherlands	Sake	Hitman	Associate Member	Netherlands

Moved that the apologies be accepted. Marian Ioan/ Phil Wood CARRIED

## **2. Minutes of the 2023 AGM**

The minutes, approved by the committee, were circulated with the invitation.

No matters arising from the minutes.

Moved

that the minutes be accepted Thibault Beaujot / Marian Ioan CARRIED

## **3. President's Report**

Over the last two years, partly resulting from the War in Ukraine, Europe has been weathering a series of shocks to its energy supplies and to energy prices. Despite this, it has shown resilience. These shocks have been testing and exposing vulnerabilities, but also showcasing flexibility and resilience. Some green transition measures have accelerated in the energy sector, and firms have shown an ability to weather price hikes, though the fiscal cost to governments has often been high. However, with the energy sector transition still ongoing, the susceptibility to risks remains. New Zealand too has experienced many challenges with low growth and high inflation.

NZEBC was founded in 2005 so we are now into its 20<sup>th</sup> year. The question arises: how can we lift the game and how else can we serve our mission to promote trade, investments, research and other relationships between Europe and New Zealand.

Our big event in the past year was the Europe Business Summit 26<sup>th</sup> July with close to 150 participants. Our partner in this was particularly Auckland Chamber of Commerce who generously availed all its resources to get the event off the ground. The event attracted visitors from EU, Australia, Wellington with most visitors being residents in Auckland. Thank you to Simon Bridges, CEO of Auckland Chamber of Commerce for his support including opening and closing remarks, to Peter Kiely for securing and the interviewing the main speaker Mr. David McAllister MEP, Monique Surges for her speech and contribution to sponsorships as well as board members, Thibault Beaujot, Matijn Bakker and others for appearing on a speakers panel. All who participated commented on the good quality of the event and the pace at which it moved forward. It was a good example of how we as members of the Council and the board can work together for good results. This was something we would like to do again, if not this year so very likely next.

The big event this year is the coming into effect on the 1<sup>st</sup> of May of the EU-NZ FTA after six years of negotiations making it one of the quicker FTAs. Unfortunately, Australia's negotiations went off track earlier this year which inevitably causes uncertainty and delays for them. The new deal will be celebrated in Auckland at a function hosted by Trade Minister Todd McClay on 15<sup>th</sup> May 5-7PM. This is when the real work starts as implementing the FTA

well is the key to capitalizing on the opportunities. FTA implementation will be at the forefront on NZEBC tasks for several years. No time to lose.

On 9<sup>th</sup> of April, 2024 the new head of the EU Delegation in New Zealand, Ambassador Lawrence Meredith gave an online presentation to our members followed by a discussion focusing on the FTA and its implementation. Growing the Europe NZ relationships regarding trade and a range of other issues will be the aim of the FTA.

Implementation results are directly proportionate to the effort that goes into it. There needs to be awareness of tools like access to market. If you don't tap into it, it won't happen. You get out of it what you put into it. For International partnerships resilience is as important as trade. Local added value in sourcing is important – and not only extracting value and raw materials. All trading partners need to be treated with respect.

Full integration of FTA rules and opportunities will be captured over the medium term of five years and beyond. Many businesses are looking at balancing concentration on China trade, with Europe and rest of Asia being well positioned to benefit from this trend.

In June 2023 I attended the annual EBO meeting in Brussels. The organization is growing and we now have 54 members all over the world with ca 500 people employed. We all need to amplify what is done in Brussels. Good for all to remember that we represent all of Europe rather than any one country. Europe is currently at or close to recession, and many people are experiencing financial challenges. The war in Ukraine comes with enormous direct suffering and destruction and also has a big negative impact on European economy. At this point there is no end in sight.

On-line EBO meetings have continued during the year, some from Brussels and some for Asia-Pacific Region. The Brussels meeting at noon Europe time start translates to midnight NZ time for two hours. The Pacific ones are more aligned to our time zone. The co-operation is improving as we go.

Late October we sent out a newsletter to all members covering the FTA, the Europe Business Summit and the review of the constitution including the issue of corporate memberships.

Review of our constitution: We are required to review and update our constitution to comply with new rules. Deadline for that update, now well under way, is before 1926. This gives us an opportunity to review also the content of the constitution including the narrow definition of who are eligible members of our council. As it currently stands membership is

limited to business councils and also to ca 30 European countries. This caps our membership at ca 50 members.

In the process of reviewing the NZEBC constitution I have suggested we use the opportunity to consider including business memberships in our constitution. A business membership model would bring some new thinking to the board, provide potential to lift our income and develop services and activities that expand our purpose and impact.

Since last year's AGM the issue of business membership has been on the agenda at each meeting. In August I had an online meeting with Jason Collins, CEO of AEBC (Australia Europe Business Council) and Chair of EBO Global organization (European Business Organizations). AEBC decided to include Corporates many years ago not to compete with National Chambers of Commerce but as a complement focusing on advocacy.

Although there were concerns from the German Business Chambers in Australia it is now working well for all parties. The majority of EBOs have corporate memberships. In September we had a members' meeting where Jason Collins presented how it works in Australia. This online presentation was recorded and made available to members. In October Peter Kiely and I met with Jason again in Sydney for further discussions. And, finally, we invited Jason to be the speaker at our end of year function. His insights and advice were well received.

Each NZEBC membership country has the right to one full membership with voting rights. Full membership fee has in the past been set at \$ 100 and \$ 50 for associate members without voting rights. We should encourage each country to have one full member. Many countries do not have a full member. We must ask: what is the point/ purpose of associate members? It works as a disincentive to attending NZEBC when having no say.

During the year past we have had four minuted board meetings besides a couple of information meetings.

At the end of November 2023, we collaborated with Hungary on a well-attended event to emphasize that an establishment in Hungary by a foreign business/ investor has the same access to the EU market as any place else in EU. The sum of the smaller countries makes up a significant part of EU and as all are interdependent it is worth considering along with investing in one of the major countries. Hungary promoted a lifting the profile of the smaller countries within the European market.

In terms of business membership, an opening by the NZEBC to allow business from the majority of our country members who do not have any chamber to join NZEBC. Lifting the

current limitations on NZEBC to also accept business members would enable companies from these countries to join our organization. On 12<sup>th</sup> of October the Czech and Slovak Republics had a joint celebration of 30 years of Independence which Peter Kiely, Gregory Shanahan and I attended in Sydney. I also attended a Swiss function in Wellington on the 8<sup>th</sup> of August celebrating 60 years of the establishment of a Swiss Embassy in Wellington. Travel costs are borne by each individual.

On the 16<sup>th</sup> of February 2024 we filed a submission on the European Union Free Trade Agreement Legislation Amendment Bill. Thanks to Peter Kiely, Gregory Shanahan and Maureen Benson-Rea for the effort that went into this.

I would like to thank all who contributed their time to the NZEBC meetings and activities. Special thanks to Peter Kiely for Hosting all our meetings and to Adrian Blaser who has contributed greatly to the efficient running of the organization. Thanks also to MFAT who have been supportive and a good partner in helping us pursue our aims. And thank you to Maureen Benson-Rea and her post-graduate student Christian Dietrich who have been very supportive, latest with the survey of businesses trading with Europe. Survey results to be reported today.

Finally, I am excited about the new FTA implementation phase and I am looking forward to the EBO conference in Brussels which this year is extended from three to five days in June. The EBO membership is very useful for ideas and co-operation with other organizations around the world, all pursuing increased trade and relationships with Europe and their home country.

Moved that the president's Report be received. Gregory Shanahan/ Peter Kiely CARRIED

#### 4. Financial Report and Annual subscription

##### NEW ZEALAND -EUROPE BUSINESS COUNCIL INCORPORATED

Society No 1732763

Incorporated 22nd day of November 2005

##### Statement of Revenue & Expenses

as at 31 December 2023

Opening Balance from 2022 financial year		25,541.31
Total Income Associate Member Subscriptions 2023	1,500.00	
Total Income Full Member Subscriptions 2023	1,500.00	
Total income from events		
MFAT funding		
Total interest on savings	474.18	
subs in advance		
	3,474.18	3,474.18
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>		<b>29,015.49</b>
Total Tax on interest	213.32	
Event catering AGM	118.47	
Event catering February Meeting	855.02	
Business Summit 2 pax accompanying McAllister	575.00	
Event Catering December	372.82	
EBO Membership subscription 2023 and 2024	705.54	
Bank fees		
Lynch & Associates Constitution rewrite		
Total website maintenance expenditure	711.86	
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>3,552.03</b>	<b>3,552.03</b>
<b>NET SURPLUS</b>		<b>25,463.46</b>
Savings Account balance 1 Jan 2023	19,726.00	
Cheque account balance 1 Jan 2023	5,815.31	
Accumulated Funds start of year		25,541.31
plus income	3,474.18	
minus expenditure	3,552.03	-77.85
Accumulated funds & liabilities		25,463.46
Represented by cash at bank -Savings account	19,986.86	
Represented by cash at bank -Cheque Account	5,476.60	
<b>NET ASSETS YEAR END 2023</b>		<b>25,463.46</b>
Date: 27/02/2024		0.00
Signed: President	Treasurer	
Frank Olsson	Adrian Blaser	

Moved that the Financial Report be accepted Thibeault Beaujot/ Martijn Bakker CARRIED

## **5. Election of Officers**

As required under the constitution, all current committee members stood down. Nominations were received for the following:

**President** - Frank Olsson

**Vice President** – Peter Kiely

**Treasurer** - Adrian Blaser

**Committee:**

Martijn Bakker

Thibault Beaujot

Maureen Benson-Rea

Piotr Bieganski

Admir Mullaaliu

Gregory Shanahan

Monique Surges

Moved that President, Vice President and Treasurer be confirmed together with other board members as listed: approved by acclamation.

Robert Holubicki from POLANZ was thanked for his services to our organization and Piotr Bieganski, President of POLANZ, was welcomed to the board. Monique Surges was also welcomed back to the board.

## **6. Members and Membership fees.**

There is no need to increase membership fees as the NZEBC is presently covering its expenditure with strict cost control.

Every member country to be encouraged to have one full member with voting rights. Total members in the database stands at 47 (17 Full Members, 30 Associate Members).

**Full Membership Fee; \$100.00 and Associate Membership; \$50.00**

Moved: That the Membership fees remain unchanged. Peter Kiely/ Monique Surges  
CARRIED

## **7. Appointment of auditor**

Due to the simplicity of the NZEBC accounts and audit seems excessive to the members. In response to a question Adrian Blaser said he thought the new regulations would allow this to continue

Moved: No auditor be appointed. Phil Wood/Marian Ioan CARRIED

## **8. Update on the New Constitution**

Adrian gave an update on the new constitution which is designed to clarify liabilities of directors. In our type of organization, the changes will not have any major impact. The



process of changes to achieve compliance with the new requirements has been concluded. Now we have the opportunity to consider other changes such as NZEBC memberships. In terms of dead line for the new constitution, approval by the 2025 AGM would suffice.

Moved that Adrian's report be accepted: Gregory Shanahan/ Martijn Bakker CARRIED

## **9. General Business:**

We have been called upon by the EU Delegation in Wellington to provide names for invitation to the 15<sup>th</sup> May afternoon event hosted by Minister Todd McClay celebrating the new EU – NZ FTA. The National Chambers and EU Embassies have also been asked to provide names by Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> April. Adrian Blaser was asked to clarify/ provide names whilst trying to seek some co-ordination.

Business delegation to visit Bucharest – Budapest – Warsaw 13<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> September. This is a great initiative from these countries and we wish them all possible success.

Thank you to all who have committed time and energy to the progress of NZEBC including our board and our members, the New Zealand Delegation in Wellington, and the Ministry of foreign Affairs and Trade and the Auckland Chamber of Commerce for its invaluable support of the Europe Summit last July.

Gregory Shanahan kindly added a vote of thanks to Frank for his commitment of time and energy to building good relations with all and progressing the purpose of NZEBC.

The formal AGM ended 6.30 PM / Minute Keepers Frank Olsson/ Adrian Blaser

## **Post AGM function and discussion**

The formal AGM finished 6.30 PM and was followed by a presentation by Christian Dietrich of the results of a recent survey. Although the response rate to the survey was low, the questions and results were very interesting and it will be a good base for repeat surveys. Thanks to Christian and the guidance provided by Maureen Benson-Rea and Monique Surges.

The last part of the meeting was devoted to a discussion on extending our very narrowly defined membership to also include business. This discussion to be continued by the incoming board.

**The meeting ended on time at 7.30 PM**