The European Union Delegation in Australia

in conjunction with the Melbourne Press Club, the University of Melbourne, the EU Centres at RMIT University and Monash University, and the Australian Institute of International Affairs

Presents

Vice-President Neelie Kroes,
European Commissioner responsible for the Digital Agenda

“European Parliament elections: Future Directions for Europe and Implications for Australia”

Date: Wednesday 18 June
Time: 5.30pm – 7:30pm
Venue: RMIT University - Kaleide Theatre (Building 8), 360 Swanston Street, Melbourne

The recent European Parliament elections have been described as “an earthquake” for Europe, with a rise in euro-sceptics from both the Left and the Right. What does this mean for Europe and what are the implications for the new European Union leadership and for the future direction of Europe? What are the implications for Australia?

Neelie Kroes is Vice-President of the European Commission, and Commissioner responsible for the Digital Agenda.

Her current portfolio includes the information and communications technology (ICT) and telecommunications sectors.

Previously Commissioner Kroes earned an international reputation as European Commissioner for Competition, a role she held from 2004 to 2009.

Before this she was a member of the Dutch Parliament, serving as Minister for Transport, Public Works and Telecommunications in the Netherlands.

Ms Kroes was President of Nyenrode University, has served on various company boards, and has worked with charity groups, advising the Nelson Mandela Children’s Fund and World Cancer Research Fund.

She is active on social media, and has an ongoing interest in mental health issues.

A Q and A session will follow the Vice-President’s address.

Light refreshments served

RSVP to delegation-australia@eeas.europa.eu by 16 June 2014
Background

Neelie Kroes was born in Rotterdam in 1941.

After being passed over for the leadership of her family’s transport logistics business because she was a woman, and having been told to quit her job as an economics lecturer because she was getting married, Kroes decided to get political.

By the age of 36 she was a Minister in the Dutch Government, where she was responsible for a number of liberalisations and privatisations in the 1970s and 1980s in the telecoms and transport sectors.

In 1991 Kroes was appointed President of the business-focused Nyenrode University and served on various company boards, including Lucent Technologies, Volvo, P&O Nedlloyd, and Brambles which brought her regularly to Australia.

In 2004 Kroes was appointed EU Competition Commissioner and was re-nominated in 2009 with a 94% approval rating from the Dutch public, and elevated to the post of Vice President.

EU achievements

- As EU Competition Commissioner Neelie Kroes’s investigations fined Microsoft a total of A$3.1 billion in four separate decisions;
- Kroes issued a world record antitrust fine against Intel of A$1.5 billion in 2009;
- In 2008-2009 Kroes split-up the Royal Bank of Scotland, and ING bank, and oversaw the rescue of more than 100 European banks in the crisis that followed the collapse of Lehman Brothers;
- In 2013 Kroes announced that Europe had achieved 100% broadband coverage under her watch as Digital Commissioner, and announced the biggest scientific award in history, a A$3 billion prize to develop the wonder material Graphene, and to create a full simulation of the human brain;
- Kroes has delivered regulation that has reduced mobile roaming charges in Europe by 90% since 2008, and proposed to abolish them completely in 2015.

Visit Commissioner Kroes’ website: http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/kroes/