



Press Release (Final)

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EU and Japanese Business Leaders call for a swift, equitable and comprehensive free trade agreement between the EU and Japan. Industry urges the EU and Japanese Authorities to step up efforts to work for a landmark deal.

With negotiators from the European Commission and the Government of Japan having just completed their tenth round of negotiations on a Free Trade / Economic Partnership Agreement, today business leaders from the EU and Japan met with European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker in Brussels. The high-level delegation from the EU-Japan Business Round Table (BRT) discussed ways in which the European Union, the Japanese Government and industry could boost trade and investment, create jobs and economic growth and address issues of global concern such as climate change.

BRT Japan-side Chairman, Kazuo Tsukuda (Senior Executive Adviser, Mitsubishi Heavy Industries), and BRT Member Markus Beyrer (Director-General, BUSINESSEUROPE), presented the Round Table's Recommendations to President Juncker. They focused on ways to improve the business environment and to enhance cooperation. Most importantly, both sides encouraged the Commission President as well as European and Japanese authorities to work towards a swift and comprehensive Free Trade Agreement / Economic Partnership Agreement.

Japan-side BRT Chairman, Kazuo Tsukuda said: "I feel truly fortunate having become co-Chairman of the BRT this year, as the EU and Japan are getting very close to concluding a comprehensive and promising FTA/EPA. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Fabrice Brégier, to my predecessor Hiromasa Yonekura, and to all the BRT Members whose commitment has helped us get so far in strengthening the EU-Japan business relationship. It is time now to redouble our efforts to clinch a fruitful, mutually beneficial FTA/EPA during this year. As stated in our Recommendations, the BRT also strongly supports the ongoing EU-Japan regulatory cooperation efforts, as a crucial enabler for increased economic exchanges and growth for both sides".

EU-side BRT Chairman and Airbus President and CEO, Fabrice Brégier said: "Over the last two days, the EU-Japan Business Round Table met in Brussels in what proved to be a fruitful and harmonious exchange of ideas to improve our business cooperation in many major industry sectors. European business is hoping for a swift, comprehensive and equitable trade agreement. Such an agreement would be a real landmark in EU-Japan relations. Europe's employees, consumers and industry would all benefit from closer ties between the world's largest economic area and the world's third largest economy".

Paving the Way for a renewed industrial Partnership

The BRT welcomes and supports the Authorities' determination to work for agreement in principle on a comprehensive and ambitious EU-Japan FTA/EPA during 2015. The BRT restates its longstanding conviction that an EU-Japan FTA/EPA will boost trade and investment, promote job creation and accelerate growth in both economies, and that it will also help create new opportunities for global economic growth. The BRT reiterates its call for the EU and Japanese Authorities to step up their efforts to tackle and resolve the substance of outstanding issues and to conclude a comprehensive, ambitious, high-level and mutually beneficial FTA/EPA as soon as possible, and reaffirms its commitment to making efforts to achieve this objective, such as making industry expertise available.

The BRT believes that an aim of a speedy conclusion must come together with a high level of ambition. Should a sufficiently high level of ambition seem difficult to achieve on the basis of the technical negotiations, the BRT urges, for the sake of our economies, political leaders at the highest level to intervene to resolve the deadlocks and bring the negotiations to a timely and ambitious conclusion.

The EU-Japan FTA/EPA can, together with the TPP and TTIP, play a leading role in promoting global trade rule-making, regulatory cooperation and standards' harmonisation and achieve an open, seamless global business environment that will create growth opportunities for the EU, for Japan, and for the rest of the world, thus helping to revitalise trade liberalisation efforts at the multilateral WTO level as well.

The BRT calls on the Leaders of the EU-Japan Summit to ensure that the FTA/EPA provides a solid and comprehensive framework for regulatory cooperation to address the sector-specific concerns of the business community. In addition, the BRT welcomes the EU-Japan Industrial Policy Dialogue between METI and DG GROW on 17 March 2015 which adopted a Joint Document for Regulatory Cooperation. As a long-standing advocate of regulatory cooperation, and recognising that this is a key issue for the future, the BRT hopes that this joint initiative will reinforce and complement the upcoming FTA/EPA and set the frame for a solid, forward-looking and long-lasting regulatory cooperation. The BRT is willing to support the EU and Japanese Authorities on regulatory cooperation matters.

The BRT also recommends that the EU and Japan initiate or facilitate new cooperation on a broad range of issues in innovation, energy, natural resources, environment and climate change, demography, financial markets, support for small and medium enterprises and human resources development, and also explore the many opportunities of cooperating together in or with third countries.

The BRT strongly supports the negotiation of an international agreement at COP21 that concretely tackles climate change while ensuring fair competition in a stable and predictable business environment. The BRT states its support to the deployment of affordable existing solutions, and asks for enhanced public measures encouraging investment in innovative

technologies in green energy and energy efficiency, areas where many BRT Member companies are already firmly engaged.

The BRT affirms the crucial role of energy in our economies, and asks the EU and Japan to promote policies to secure energy supplies and keep energy prices low while reducing GHG emissions. In this context, the BRT supports the restart of nuclear power generation in Japan subject to the agreement of the safety authorities, as well as the creation of a European Energy Union targeting the above-mentioned goals.

Finally, the BRT not only supports concluding bilateral FTA/EPAs with key third party economic partners, it also reaffirms its long-standing support to concluding the World Trade Organization's multilateral Doha Round as soon as possible. In that perspective the BRT applauds the decision reached by WTO Members in November 2014 to take forward the implementation of the Agreement on Trade Facilitation that was reached at the Bali WTO Ministerial Conference of December 2013.

Inquiries and Contact

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Background

The EU-Japan Business Round Table was created in 1999 to review factors affecting all aspects of EU-Japan business relations. Its members are senior executives from around 50 leading European and Japanese companies. Its main objective is to submit policy recommendations to Japanese and European authorities in order to develop trade and investment between the EU and Japan, and to encourage industrial cooperation on issues of common interest, such as innovation, energy or industrial standards.
www.eu-japan-brt.eu

During the meeting with European Commission President Juncker, Markus Beyrer of BUSINESSEUROPE attended on behalf of Fabrice Brégier, the EU-side BRT Chairman.