



EU-JAPAN BUSINESS ROUND TABLE

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EU-JAPAN:

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The EU-Japan Business Round Table, which is composed of business leaders from the European Union and Japan, calls upon European and Japanese leaders to advance at the EU-Japan Summit on 4 May the development of the strategic EU-Japan partnership. Both sides agree that effective and close cooperation between the EU and Japan is necessary in order to overcome the current financial and economic crisis. Moreover, they urge political leaders to refrain from any protectionist measures, use the WTO to fight against those tendencies and to move towards a swift and ambitious conclusion of the Doha round. Business leaders reaffirm their commitment to a successful outcome of the international climate negotiations which need to take into account the difficult economic and financial circumstances companies are confronted with in the current crisis.

Fight against protectionism

In the current global economic downturn, Japan and the European Union should work together towards further liberalisation of trade and investment and preventing protectionism. Protectionist rhetoric and some very real protectionist measures in several countries around the world have had a chilling effect on the trade and investment strategies of companies. The European and Japanese business communities urge their leaders to follow-up on their commitments at the London G20 meeting to both prevent both the closing of world-wide markets and the introduction of new restrictions on investments, market access and mobility for workers. Moreover, the European and Japanese authorities should give their strong support to the role of the WTO in the fight against protectionism and request WTO members and countries negotiating WTO accession to explain, justify or defend any future protectionist measures before the WTO monitoring system.

The EU-Japan Business Round Table also calls for the relaunch of the Doha negotiations, based on the current negotiating texts, to finalise an ambitious agreement of the Doha round that must lead to substantial new business opportunities for European and Japanese companies. It furthermore calls upon its authorities to consider the positive effects of early harvest agreements in those areas where consensus already exists or could be reached quickly.



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Bilateral cooperation

The EU-Japan Business Round Table attaches great importance to the further strengthening of bilateral cooperation. It values in that perspective the efforts that have been made by both authorities in the various bilateral dialogues that aim at reducing various obstructions hampering trade and foreign investment.

Given the fact that the Ten-Year Action Plan is coming to an end in 2011, the EU-Japan Business Round Table calls upon the political authorities to undertake an in-depth reflection on how and with which objectives EU-Japan economic cooperation should be organised in the future. The EU and Japan should set realistic and achievable targets on specific issues, based on a straightforward timeframe. The Joint Taskforces Report, prepared on the occasion of the last EU-Japan Business Round Table meeting in July 2008, provides a list of issues of interest to both sides. On the basis of this report, European and Japanese authorities should start discussions to strengthen economic cooperation between the EU and Japan. The new economic cooperation structure should also include a revision mechanism in order to measure progress on an annual basis. Finally, the Japanese and European authorities should closely cooperate with the European and Japanese business communities in their economic cooperation activities.

Climate change

European and Japanese business leaders are committed to a successful outcome of the international climate negotiations in the current challenging economic circumstances. In particular, the EU-Japan Business Round Table strongly recommends that authorities discuss how to move ahead on green financing in the current constrained financial conditions. An international framework agreement at the Copenhagen Climate Conference (COP 15) in December 2009 needs to move international cooperative action on climate change forward, while addressing economic recovery and promoting energy security. This framework must include all major carbon-emitting countries and should also give equal attention to mitigation, adaptation and deforestation. An international post-2012 agreement must not put at risk the future competitiveness of European or Japanese industries and needs to provide for a global level playing field and avoid carbon leakage.

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