



EU-Japan Business Round Table

Press Release

Tokyo, 20 April 2010

“EU-Japan business: gearing up for the next decade”

The EU-Japan Business Round Table, a forum of some 50 Japanese and European business leaders, met in Tokyo on 19 and 20 April 2010 under the co-chairmanship of Messrs. Tadashi Okamura (Advisor to the Board, Toshiba) and Jean-Yves Le Gall (Chairman and CEO, Arianespace). On this occasion, the EU-Japan Business Round Table agreed this set of recommendations, to be handed over to Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama, President Herman Van Rompuy and President José Manuel Barroso at the official residence of the Prime Minister of Japan in Tokyo.

Business leaders request a new start for EU-Japan economic relations

The EU-Japan Business Round Table Business discussed the future of the EU-Japan economic relationship after the “2001-2011 EU-Japan Action Plan” elapses next year. A set of specific recommendations was agreed. **In particular, the EU-Japan Business Round Table urges authorities to “reset” the EU-Japan bilateral relations by establishing the right framework**, and making the EU-Japan strategic partnership a reality in the economic sector in order to enhance trade and investment.

Is a bilateral trade and investment agreement the answer?

The Round Table recommends that, if it is concluded at the EU-Japan Summit on 28 April 2010 in Tokyo that sufficient progress has been made towards effective solution and implementation of specific non-tariff issues identified by Summit leaders when they met last year, the EU and Japanese Authorities should discuss with all stakeholders whether a binding trade and investment agreement would be able to deliver where current dialogues have not.

More specifically, the Business Round Table recommends that both authorities start negotiations on a balanced and mutually beneficial bilateral agreement, as soon as the EU and Japanese Authorities agree that the right conditions are met, in order to promote an ambitious expansion of trade and investment between the EU and Japan.

“Priority is innovation, industrial and research cooperation”

The Round Table also urged authorities to address the challenges posed by climate change and by the fast-growing demand for energy, raw materials and food resulting in harmful supply shortages. Finally, it urged them to promote cooperation in industrial research and development, as well as joint programmes enhancing EU-Japan cooperation in next-generation technologies.

Mr. Okamura added: “We analysed today the impact of 10 years of Business Round Table recommendations and were glad to note that they have all been studied and answered to by authorities, underlining the quality of the dialogue between governments and business. However, the impact of these recommendations has not always been as satisfactory for business as we would have hoped, and we are therefore seeking a stronger framework for EU-Japan economic relations in the future.”

Mr. Le Gall added: “This year, our meeting was held at a key juncture, as a new European Commission and a new Japanese Government are about to rethink completely the bilateral relations. Business leaders urge leaders of both sides to set a new framework able to significantly reduce the regulatory barriers that hinder the development of trade and investment between the EU and Japan.”

Contact Persons:

EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation (Japan)

Ms. Keiko Sato, tel +81 3 3221 6161, fax 3221 6226, keiko.sato@eu-japan.gr.jp

EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation (Europe)

Ms Hilary Jones, tel + 32 2 282 00 41, fax + 32 2 282 00 45, h.jones@eu-japan.eu

Toshiba

Mr. Yoshiyasu Fujimaki, yoshiyasu.fujimaki@toshiba.co.jp

Arianespace

Mr. Jean-Louis Claudon, jl.claudon@arianespace.com

Background Information on the EU-Japan Business Round Table: www.eu-japan-brt.eu