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Title	<i>EU/JAPAN: Verheugen hopes to strengthen cooperation with Tokyo in combating piracy and counterfeiting</i>

On a visit to Japan on 13 and 14 July to explore new ways to strengthen economic cooperation with the second largest economic power in the world, Industry Commissioner Günter Verheugen called on Tokyo to give its support to the fight launched in Europe to counter piracy and counterfeiting. “We need strong political leadership and guidance” on protecting intellectual property rights, he said during a press conference on Thursday. Mr Verheugen mainly discussed with the Japanese authorities on how appropriate it would be to have a joint initiative to combat piracy and counterfeiting based on a “zero tolerance policy”. “The EU and Japan have to develop closer customs cooperation and joint IPR (intellectual property rights) enforcement in third countries. We have also to develop joint positions on IPR issues in bilateral dialogues with third countries”, Mr Verheugen said.

On Friday, the Commissioner met representatives from the European Business Council in Japan and the Japan Business Federation, a powerful business lobby also known as Nippon Keidanren. The agenda for discussions includes ways to improve the framework conditions for European and Japanese industries. Mr Verheugen also attended the annual meeting of the EU-Japan Business Dialogue Round Table.