



Joint Statement on Japan Postal Reform Preliminary Draft

March 2, 2010

*American Chamber of Commerce in Japan
American Council of Life Insurers
Americas Health Insurance Plans
American Insurance Association
Association of Bermuda Insurers and Reinsurers
Canadian Life and Health Insurance Association
Coalition of Service Industries
Comité Européen des Assurances (Association of European Insurers and Reinsurers)
European Business Council in Japan
Foreign Non Life Insurance Association of Japan
Property Casualty Insurance Association of America
U.S. Chamber of Commerce
U.S. - Japan Business Council*

On February 8, the Government of Japan released a “Postal Reform Preliminary Draft” (“Preliminary Draft”) that lays out the government’s framework for Japan Post restructuring. According to the government, the contents of the Preliminary Draft constitute the basis for deliberations on a final government legislative draft to be submitted to the Diet in March 2010.

The Preliminary Draft contemplates a number of measures that, if implemented, would be inconsistent with Japan’s international obligations and best practices to provide a level playing field between the Japan Post entities and private banks, insurers, and delivery companies and to refrain from special favors that would give Japan Post an unfair competitive advantage. For example, it contemplates:

1. Implementing special measures such as exemptions from consumption taxes, stamp taxes, etc., to compensate the Japan Post Group for the costs it incurs as a result of universal service obligations imposed by the government.
2. Raising or eliminating the per-person deposit and coverage limits currently imposed on Japan Post Bank and Japan Post Insurance’s businesses.
3. Permitting the Japan Post entities to enter new business areas, including those where foreign companies are strong.
4. Providing Japan Post Bank, Japan Post Insurance, and Japan Post Services special legal and regulatory exemptions, including from provisions of the Banking Law, Insurance Business Law, and Road Traffic Law.
5. Allowing Japan Post to compete on an un-level playing field with foreign express delivery companies.

For years, industry groups have engaged Japan regarding Japan Post reform, repeatedly emphasizing the need to establish a level playing field with the private sector across the broad spectrum of Japan Post’s competitive services, including banking, insurance, express delivery, and other services. Industry groups have long expressed the view that there should be no new or modified products or services introduced by Japan Post until a level playing field is established between Japan Post and private companies in accordance with Japan’s international obligations.

The organizations listed above – representing a broad and global group of stakeholders – have a large stake in any restructuring of Japan Post. The organizations strongly urge the Government of Japan to use the time remaining before the new postal legislation is finalized as an opportunity to ensure a level playing field. In this effort, we urge the governments involved to commit to a process with Japan that facilitates the adoption of such measures and would bring Japan into full compliance with its national treatment obligations under the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), a cornerstone of multilateral efforts to liberalize international trade in services, as well as adoption of international best practices of open competition to benefit consumers – before existing restrictions on Japan Post are removed or it is allowed to expand its existing operations or enter new lines of business.



欧米など 13 団体、郵政改革素案に懸念表明＝公正な競争条件確保を

在日欧州ビジネス協会屋米商工会議所や米生命保険協会など欧米を中心とした 13 団体は、26 日、日本政府が今月 8 日にまとめた郵政改革素案への懸念を表明する共同声明を発表した。

素案には「日本郵政グループと民間銀行や保険、運送会社間の公正な競争条件確保という国際的な義務と矛盾するような、さまざまな案が盛り込まれている」とし、最終的な法案策定までに改善するよう要請した。

声明は①消費税や印紙税の免除など、全国一律サービスに伴う経費負担を軽減するための特別措置、②貯金の預け入れ限度額の引き上げもしくは撤廃、③郵政グループの業務範囲の拡大など 5 項目を挙げ、世界貿易機関(WTO)のサービス貿易一般協定(GATS)に沿った見直しを求めた。(了)

About the EBC:

The European Business Council in Japan (EBC) is the trade policy arm of the 18 European national chambers of commerce and business associations in Japan. Established in 1972, the EBC works to improve the trade and investment environment for European companies in Japan. The EBC currently represents more than 3,000 local European companies and individuals who are members of their national chambers of commerce. Approximately 350 of these companies participate directly in the EBC's 28 sector-based committees. The EBC is registered with the Ministry of Economy Trade and Industry as the European (EU) Chamber of Commerce in Japan.

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