



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 co-chaired by Messrs. Tadashi Okamura (Advisor to the Board, Toshiba) and Jean-Yves Le Gall (Chairman and CEO, Arianespace), met in Tokyo on 19 and 20 April 2010. On this occasion, the EU-Japan Business Round Table agreed a 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.”

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

EU-JAPAN BUSINESS ROUND TABLE

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1. Mr. Tadashi OKAMURA (Co-Chairman of the Round Table)
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President, **Japan Business Council in Europe**
(JBCE)
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Special Advisor, **SUMITOMO Corporation**

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