

Brussels, 20 October 2011

EU–Japan Economic Integration Agreement

Dear Mr. Van Rompuy,

It is a pleasure to witness the progress of formal and informal meetings between high-level representatives from the EU and Japan, including the recent 22 September UN General Assembly meeting in New York. In this context, the Japanese Business Council in Europe (JBCE) is confident that Japanese Prime Minister Noda will continue working towards even closer political and economic ties between these two major economies.

Over the past few years, the EU and Japan have made great efforts to conclude pan-regional FTAs, in order to open vast opportunities in the areas of investment and employment, and demonstrating the strong political will of both regions. The JBCE warmly welcomed the launch of the scoping exercise following the 20th EU-Japan Summit held in Brussels on 28 May 2011. Looking back at this Summit, we can agree that a new momentum has been generated. Therefore, the JBCE urges both the EU and Japan to launch negotiations as soon as possible, and hopes that the negotiations will begin early in 2012 after the successful completion of the scoping exercise. As the EU and Japan share common values and common challenges, closer ties would bring mutual benefits for both. The JBCE believes that further improvement in market access from a Free Trade Agreement would not only contribute to an expansion of trade in goods and services but also to an increase in employment and job opportunities in both regions. With an expansion of the EU's current FTA network including FTAs with Korea and ASEAN countries, an EU-Japan FTA is now needed, more than ever, to encourage business and investment from Japanese companies operating in the EU.

Supporting economic growth and employment is one of the priorities for the G20 Summit set to take place in Cannes on 3 and 4 November 2011. The JBCE is confident that the EU and Japan will use this opportunity to seek global solutions for global challenges. For the realisation of free and fair trade on a global level, the JBCE shares the concern with the authorities of EU and Japan about the current deadlock ahead of the coming Doha negotiations. In this context, the JBCE strongly supports the efforts of the European Commission to move forward with the negotiations. The JBCE is confident, Mister President, that continuous effort at both multilateral and bilateral level will soon result in a successful outcome, and the JBCE remains prepared to continue to contribute to the policy debate.

Yours Sincerely,



Satoru Hayashi

President

Japanese Business Council in Europe

Japan Business Council in Europe was established in 1999 as the representative organisation of Japanese companies operating in the European Union. Our membership consists of more than 60 leading multinational corporations that are active across a wide range of sectors, including electronics, automotive, and chemical manufacturing.

The key goal of JBCE is to contribute to EU public policy in a positive and constructive way. In doing this, we can draw upon the expertise and experience of our member companies.