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**UNICE AND NIPPON KEIDANREN STRIVE TO STRENGTHEN
EU-JAPAN BUSINESS LINKS**

UNICE and Nippon Keidanren met today in Brussels under the co-chairmanship of Baron Georges Jacobs, President of UNICE, and Mr Hiroshi Okuda, Chairman of Nippon Keidanren. This meeting is a step ahead in a long tradition of dialogue and co-operation between the two business organisations. Mr Jacobs and Mr Okuda called for a further intensification of mutual relations, particularly against the background of global uncertainties, and underlined their commitment to continue working for economic and social development around the world.

The meeting allowed UNICE and Nippon Keidanren to assess the state-of-play of EU-Japan relations and also recent political, and economic developments in the European Union and Japan and their implications for business.

European and Japanese business agreed to contribute to a further strengthening of EU-Japan relations, along the lines foreseen in the Action Plan approved at the 10th EU-Japan Summit in 2001, designed to give new impetus to bilateral relations and to the development of civil links. They stressed the need to monitor its implementation carefully to ensure concrete results.

UNICE and Nippon Keidanren are committed to creating the necessary conditions to deepen the full potential of EU-Japan economic relations, which are far from being fully exploited. They called for a strengthening of the two-way regulatory reform dialogue underway, to remove obstacles to trade and investment by developing an adequate framework for the conduct of business.

As the voice of business of two of the largest economies in the world, UNICE and Nippon Keidanren agreed to continue their efforts to create global conditions for business development. They stressed the need to promote entrepreneurship, the key to economic growth and job creation, and an adequate environment to increase rewards for risk-taking and innovation.

Both organisations are strong supporters of the multilateral trading system of the WTO. With a view to the next WTO Ministerial Conference (Cancun, 10-14 September) UNICE and Nippon Keidanren have agreed to join forces once more to press for a successful conclusion of the Doha Development Agenda by the agreed deadlines. UNICE and Nippon Keidanren priorities in the DDA are improved market access commitments, the liberalisation of services markets, clarification and strengthening disciplines of the anti-dumping agreement and WTO agreements on trade and investment and trade facilitation.

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