



22 April 2009

## **HIGH-LEVEL MEETING BETWEEN BUSINESSEUROPE AND NIPPON KEIDANREN**

Introductory remarks by Ernest-Antoine Seillière, BUSINESSEUROPE President

Dear Chairman Mitarai,  
dear Vice-Chairmen of Nippon Keidanren and distinguished guests from Japan,  
dear European colleagues,

I am very pleased and feel very honoured to welcome you today in BUSINESSEUROPE. Your visit is a further proof of your high interest in Europe and we thank you very much for this! I can assure you that European companies in return also have a very strong interest in Japan! This is confirmed by my European colleagues in this room who come from a broad range of different sectors.

Both our two organisations have longstanding good relations and we are meeting very regularly to discuss issues of common concern. Let me just recall the important meetings during the last six months where we jointly participated: the G20 Business Summit in London, the Copenhagen climate change conference and the BUSINESSEUROPE 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary last December in Paris. Tomorrow, we will have another important meeting with the G8 Business Summit in Sardinia. This impressive agenda shows that both our business communities have a strong interest in working together, and personally, I am of the firm conviction that close European-Japanese cooperation is one of the right and necessary medicines to tackle the current economic and financial crisis.

### ***1. The financial crisis and the fight against protectionism***

We have seen over the last months that protectionist rhetoric and some very real protectionist measures in several countries around the world have had a disturbing effect on the trade and investment strategies of companies. In this current global economic downturn, Japan and the European Union should work together towards more trade and investment, and prevention of protectionism.

It is therefore in our common interest to urge our leaders to follow-up on their commitments at the London G20 meeting. This means: to both prevent the closing of world-wide markets, and the introduction of new restrictions on investments, market access and mobility for workers.



Moreover, the European and Japanese governments should push strongly for the re-launch of the WTO Doha round negotiations, based on the current negotiating texts. An ambitious agreement of the Doha round must lead to substantial new business opportunities for European and Japanese companies. In addition, it will be the best insurance against any recourse to protectionist measures in the future.

## ***2. How to organise future EU-Japan cooperation***

On 4 May, the next EU-Japan Summit will take place in Prague. We attach great importance to that meeting and expect the Japanese and European leaders to push forward the strategic partnership between the European Union and Japan. A lot has been done between our authorities in the past and we value all the efforts that have been made in the different regulatory cooperation frameworks.

But what we expect from our leaders is to think a bit into the future. Given the fact that for instance the Ten-Year Action Plan for EU-Japan Cooperation is coming to an end in 2011, there must be a clear assessment of what has been achieved. We are all aware that in particular non-tariff barriers and regulatory obstacles are increasingly hampering companies to tap the full potential of doing business! Therefore both authorities need to undertake an in-depth reflection on how and with which objectives EU-Japan regulatory cooperation should be organized in the future. Some inspirations could be gained from the Transatlantic Economic Council between the EU and the US.

We should be ambitious in our calls to the authorities to better tackle these barriers. But, besides being ambitious, we should also be pragmatic and realistic on what can be achieved. A common new EU-Japan framework must be balanced and serve the interests of both side. It will be on the basis of common success stories that the EU and Japan will be able to develop and foster their cooperation even further in the future.

A new EU-Japan cooperation structure should therefore set achievable targets on specific regulatory issues, based on a straightforward timeframe with annually measurable progress. The Joint Taskforces Report, prepared on the occasion of the last EU-Japan Business Round Table meeting in July 2008, provides some clear areas in which EU-Japan cooperation could move forward.

Both our organisations have a lot of expertise of the European and Japanese regulatory frameworks and can be very helpful in addressing these regulatory issues. We should consider all potential formats for future cooperation, in particular also the EU-Japan Business Round Table. By jointly assessing our involvement in this format we should see how both our organisations could make better use of it in order to address and find solutions to our common challenges.



### **3. Climate change – on the road to Copenhagen**

Further to the financial crisis and our bilateral relations, I would also like to make a few remarks about our third discussion item today: the future climate change negotiations. We have some clear requests from a future international climate agreement:

All developed countries must commit to equally strong emission reduction targets, comparable with those that the EU legally adopted in December 2008.

Advanced developing countries must commit to starting discussions on setting their own binding emission targets, based on common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.

National as well as global action at a sectoral level must start. The number one goal should be that industrial sectors, manufacturing similar products, have comparable emission targets everywhere.

Dear Chairman Mitarai, Ladies and Gentlemen, we will further discuss today the issues I have just highlighted in these opening remarks. We will have more detailed presentations by Nippon Keidanren and representatives of the European business community in a few minutes, followed then by an open discussion which I am sure will be very interesting.

I thank you for your attention and would like to reiterate our biggest thanks to Chairman Mitarai that he and his high-level delegation have made such a long way to honour us with their visit. Dear Chairman Mitarai, you have the floor for your opening remarks.

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