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EU-JAPAN BUSINESS ROUND TABLE 6-7 JULY 2009, BRUSSELS

**Panel on “Mutually beneficial initiatives for stronger trade and investment:
new potentials for large corporations and SMEs”**

REMARKS BY PHILIPPE DE BUCK, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF BUSINESSEUROPE

Dear Co-Chairmen Sasaki and Jacobs,
Dear Colleagues from the EU and Japan,

I was asked to intervene in this panel which deals with the interesting question of how and where we can identify common European and Japanese initiatives to strengthen our bilateral relationship. I think that is a very important issue as I am of the firm conviction that close European-Japanese cooperation is one of the ways to tackle not only the current economic and financial crisis but also other common challenges. The European and Japanese business communities have strong ties and very good relations. There is regular cooperation in different and numerous frameworks, for instance through the EU-Japan Business Round Table. Speaking for BUSINESSEUROPE – the Confederation of European Business – we are also in close cooperation with our Japanese counterpart Nippon Keidanren and meeting them very regularly on numerous occasions to discuss issues of common concern.

On 4 May, the EU-Japan Summit took place in Prague. We attached great importance to that meeting. We welcomed the joint interest by 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 the full potential of trade and investment between the EU and Japan can still be much more exploited.

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 sides. 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.

As examples, some mutually beneficial initiatives could be:

- Definition of common standards for CO₂ emissions in the automotive sector;
- Implementation of the mutual recognition of the Authorised Economic Operator status;
- Joint opposition to the very harmful US 100% container scanning initiative;
- Development and promotion of ICT solutions towards a low-carbon society;
- Promotion of bio-technology, hereby particularly putting a focus on a better public understanding of this future issue;
- Ensuring a common approach in the protection of IPR worldwide.

A new EU-Japan cooperation structure should set achievable targets on specific regulatory issues, based on a straightforward timeframe with annually measurable progress. The EU-Japan Business Round Table with all its members represented here around the table has a lot of expertise of the European and Japanese regulatory frameworks and has been over all the years a very important pusher for closer EU-Japan ties. I have looked at the excellent working party reports that have been drafted again for this year. They point directly to issues where both our business communities have common interests to move forward. Let me also remind you of the Joint Taskforces Report, prepared on the occasion of the last EU-Japan Business Round Table meeting in July 2008, which provides a large number of issues of interest to both sides.

So let me come to a conclusion – what should be the way forward?

- 1) Firstly, with the 10 year Action Plan coming to an end in 2011, we need a clear assessment of what has been achieved, where have been the biggest areas of progress.
- 2) Secondly, based on this assessment and based on our priorities put forward through the EU-Japan Business Round Table, we should jointly define initiatives of common interest where closer cooperation on concrete issues could create win-win-situation for both sides.
- 3) Thirdly, for our future cooperation we have to agree on a format that serves the interests of both sides and has the real potential to deliver concrete outcomes in a short

I thank you for your attention and I am looking forward to hearing your questions and remarks.
