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**EU-JAPAN EPA/FTA: FOURTH SECTOR-TO-SECTOR MEETING HELD  
IN BRUSSELS**

With the tenth round of negotiations on the EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA)/Free Trade Agreement (FTA) going on and the Summit taking place on 29 May, BUSINESSEUROPE and KEIDANREN hosted the fourth sector-to-sector meeting at BUSINESSEUROPE's premises in Brussels yesterday.

At the meeting both sides expressed their expectations that the tenth round of negotiations will make good progress, and that the forthcoming EU-Japan summit will provide a strong momentum so that both the EU and Japan can work towards the earliest possible conclusion of an ambitious EPA/FTA. At the same time, the sector associations renewed their commitment to continuing efforts to reduce and eliminate the non-tariff measures (NTMs) which constitute barriers in both markets.

Building on what has been achieved regarding NTMs, many of the sectors represented at the meeting addressed the necessity of shifting their cooperation into a higher gear to harmonize and mutually recognize standards and regulations for a seamless business environment.

Looking beyond the EPA/FTA, regulatory cooperation between the EU and Japan should definitely be reinforced within the framework of the agreement to prevent unnecessary regulatory divergence. Apart from addressing NTMs, the EU-Japan EPA/FTA should provide for a mechanism to facilitate regulatory cooperation comprising of representatives of government agencies, including regulatory authorities, and businesses concerned.

The conclusion of an ambitious EU-Japan EPA/FTA along with the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) could serve as an important conduit to global rules. The agreement could also lay the foundation for expanding trade and investment opportunities in third countries, including Asian growth markets.

Background:

Held for the fourth time after 2012, 2013 and 2014, the BUSINESSSEUROPE-KEIDANREN Sector-to-Sector meeting gathered important European and Japanese sector associations for an exchange of views on the ongoing bilateral EU-Japan EPA/FTA negotiations. At the meeting, each sector reported on what their sector's dialogue between the EU and Japan has achieved so far and the challenges ahead they have to tackle.

The meeting was attended by:

on the EU side, ACEA (European Automobile Manufacturers Association), Cefic (the European Chemical Industry Council), COCIR (European Coordination Committee of the Radiological, Electromedical and Healthcare IT Industry), DIGITALEUROPE, EFPIA (European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations), EGA (European Generic Association) and UNIFE (the Association of the European Rail Industry),

and on the Japanese side, JAMA (Japan Automobile Manufacturers Association, Inc.), JCIA (Japan Chemical Industry Association), JEITA (Japan Electronics & Information Technology Industries Association), JIRA (Japan Medical Imaging and Radiological Systems Industries Association), JPMA (Japan Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association), and East Japan Railway Company.

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*KEIDANREN (Japan Business Federation) is a comprehensive economic organization with a membership comprised of 1,321 representative companies of Japan, 109 nationwide industrial associations and 47 regional economic organizations (as of 14 April, 2015).*