



EU and Japan should step-up, conclude a free-trade agreement this year

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BusinessEurope welcomes Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe coming to Brussels as an occasion for European and Japanese leaders to discuss bilateral and global issues, including our free trade negotiations.

In times when some politicians start refusing to support open markets and global trade, the European Union and Japan have a unique opportunity to show that trade can deliver for all and remain an engine of economic growth.

Markus J. Beyrer, Director General of BusinessEurope said:

“We believe that concluding a trade agreement between the EU and Japan in 2017 is a very realistic possibility. Both sides have come far since the negotiations first began. But in order to achieve the objectives agreed by both sides, we must be ambitious on market access, public procurement, the removal of non-tariff barriers, the protection of geographical indications, and improved access for services and investment.”

The withdrawal of the United States from the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) shows that free trade faces stronger headwinds than before, and that those who acknowledge the benefits of free trade need to speak up more strongly. The EU and Japan are two of the largest and most advanced economies in the world and two of the primary beneficiaries of open trade. An ambitious and comprehensive agreement is therefore the only agreement that makes sense for partners of our size.

“This agreement holds a lot of opportunities for both sides, and goes far beyond tariffs swaps. In order to relish the benefits of the proposed agreement, substance must prevail over timing. We hope that Prime Minister Abe will give the political impetus these negotiations need in order to reach a conclusion this year.”

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