



## **EU-Japan Business Round Table**

### **Press Release**

Rome, Friday 29 April 2011

### **“EU-Japan Business Cooperation: Growth for the Future”**

The EU-Japan Business Round Table (BRT), a forum of around 50 European and Japanese business leaders, co-chaired by Messrs. Jean-Yves Le Gall (Chairman & CEO of Arianespace) and Hiromasa Yonekura (Chairman of Sumitomo Chemical Co., Ltd.), met in Rome on 28 and 29 April 2010. It had the honour of welcoming Mr. Antonio Tajani, Vice-President of the European Commission, Mr. Chiaki Takahashi, State Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and Mr. Hideichi Okada, the METI Vice-Minister for International Affairs. During its meeting, the BRT agreed a set of specific recommendations covering a wide range of topics, to be handed over to President Herman Van Rompuy, President José Manuel Barroso and Prime Minister Naoto Kan at the next annual EU-Japan Summit.

The meeting took place at an exceptional time, only a short period after the earthquake that struck Japan on 11 March 2011 and the tragedy that followed. BRT members expressed their deepest condolences to the victims of this tragedy, and reaffirmed their confidence that under the leadership of the Japanese Government, and with the full support and solidarity of the international community, Japan will soon recover from this hardship.

#### **Strengthen EU-Japan Cooperation in priority areas, while tackling global challenges**

The BRT meeting focused on business cooperation between European and Japanese companies, in particular in the fields of energy, transportation and aerospace, health-care, financial services, ICT and green- and next generation-technologies. BRT Members call on the Authorities to pave the way for such cooperation, and to strengthen significantly EU-Japan industrial dialogue and cooperation. They believe that significant opportunities lie ahead, notably in priority areas identified on both sides to drive future

growth, while addressing global challenges related to environment and energy, rising commodity prices and food shortages, and increasing worldwide social tensions.

**Step up efforts and keep the momentum to allow for mutual and fair market opening**

The BRT also reaffirms the importance of opening further markets, enhancing investment and encouraging, through a renewed and adequate framework, the development of mutual trade, based on fair and transparent competition, between the EU and Japan. It renews its call from last year on the Authorities to start negotiations on a balanced and mutually beneficial bilateral agreement, as soon as the EU and Japanese Authorities agree that the right conditions are met, in order to promote an ambitious development of trade and investment between the EU and Japan.

In this regard, BRT Members consider the important and cooperative efforts made over the past year between the EU and Japanese Authorities, including the work of the High Level Group, as elements of progress and as steps in the right direction. They call for stronger top-level commitment and leadership on both sides to make the best use of the current momentum at the next annual EU-Japan Summit.

**Mr. Le Gall added:** “This year more than ever, business leaders urge both sides’ Authorities to set a new fair and transparent framework able to reduce significantly the regulatory barriers that hinder the development of trade and investment between the EU and Japan. Both sides’ Authorities should step up efforts to ensure that the conditions are met to move forward, and I hope that significant progress will be achieved in this direction at the next annual EU-Japan Summit ”.

**Mr. Yonekura added:** “The EU-Japan economic relationship has a vital strategic importance to the future of the two economies and of the global economy. We would like to continue our open and candid dialogues to develop a shared vision for the future of EU-Japan economic relationship. We would also like to continue our joint efforts to bring the EU-Japan economic relationship to higher levels and achieve stronger and sustainable growth through our business cooperation.”

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## **Background**

The EU-Japan Business Round Table (BRT) was created in 1995 to foster communications between Japanese and European industries. Its members are senior executives from around 50 leading European and Japanese companies. Its main objective is to submit recommendations to Japanese and European authorities in order to develop trade and investment between the EU and Japan, and to encourage industrial cooperation on issues of common interest, such as innovation, climate change, or industrial standards.

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