

Statement on the EU-Japan EPA/FTA negotiations

15 December 2016

The negotiations of the EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement/Free Trade Agreement (EPA/FTA) started in 2013. JBCE, as the European industry organisation representing the companies of Japanese parentage, has been a strong supporter of these negotiations since the beginning.

JBCE holds the firm conviction that an ambitious and comprehensive EPA/FTA between the EU and Japan has great potential to promote innovation and competition, to generate economic growth, and to benefit consumers in both economies.

Given the growing global trend toward protectionism and anti-free trade sentiment, JBCE believes that the role and value of the EU-Japan EPA/FTA has become even more crucial. The EU and Japan now have the unprecedented opportunity to demonstrate their leadership in promoting the free trade agenda at the global level.

Since the negotiations are close to finalisation, JBCE would like to reiterate the call to both governments for the conclusion of an ambitious and comprehensive Agreement by the end of 2016.

The Agreement should also include free flow of data provisions between the two parties to ensure the functioning of Smart Industries and the Internet of Things (IoT). This is to ensure that both the EU and Japan will reap the benefit of the digital economy and digital innovation, without lowering data protection or security standards.

In addition to the successful conclusion of the EU-Japan EPA/FTA, JBCE wishes to reiterate the importance of having an effective regulatory cooperation mechanism so as to ensure a fair and favorable business environment where the emergence of unnecessary and unexpected obstacles is prevented. Successful regulatory cooperation will allow companies to compete on a level playing field and to contribute to economic growth in both the EU and Japan.

Taking advantage of its unique position as a bridge between the various stakeholders in the EU and Japan, JBCE wishes to call once more for the successful conclusion of the EU-Japan EPA/FTA by the end of the year and remains committed to working with all interested parties on this matter.