

3rd EU-Japan CSR Business Dialogue on SDG-driven innovation & growth

23 November 2018, Brussels

Business are strong proponents of multilateralism and firmly committed to contributing to the entire set of 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The global SDGs guide us in our actions and inspire us to find creative new ways. The ever more important bilateral relationship between the European Union and Japan – together accounting for around a third of world GDP – is particularly well placed to take a leading role in shaping a more sustainable world and achieving a major transformation.

The on-going EU-Japan CSR Business Dialogue established in 2016 could provide a unique platform to incubate such collaborations that will not only drive global competitiveness from Japanese and European companies but also become a significant contributor to the SDGs. This year, on November 23, the 3rd EU-Japan CSR Business Dialogue was co-organised by the Japan Business Council in Europe; Council for Better Corporate Citizenship; Business Policy Forum, Japan; amfori; CSR Europe and the EU-Japan Centre Industrial Cooperation, and brought together more than 50 representatives from the EU and Japan.

The main theme of this year's dialogue was "Responsible Global Sourcing – A Collaborative Approach to Achieve the SDGs: the challenges and the way forward". It aimed to promote responsible corporate actions in Asian and international supply chains. With regard to the high level of maturity of this CSR dialogue, it was agreed to reflect on shared commitments, increase the number of joint supply chain projects, and work towards the continuous sharing of information and practice on respective standards for responsible sourcing.

At the meeting, business representatives from both sides exchanged their opinions:

- Businesses on both sides should promote responsible business conduct and work together to tackle global issues linked to the SDGs. Strong top management leadership and engagement is essential.
- In order to take a leading role in shaping a more sustainable world and achieve a major transformation, we need a stronger action-oriented multi-stakeholder collaborative approach, including with international organisations.
- Businesses insisted that SDG-driven innovation and growth can solve societal and supply chain issues through strategies such as Society 5.0 promoted by Japan.
- Collaborative action and tangible projects on sustainable business practices should be a necessary next step.
- The EU and Japanese Authorities shall provide the platforms, infrastructure and incentives to promote practical collaboration on the ground. Sustainable corporate action is an essential and indispensable element of EU-Japan high-level relations. For example, make it possible for companies to source raw materials more sustainably, and leverage their competitive advantage on material and product innovation.
- The EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement will be a powerful instrument to deliver inclusive economic growth and promote sustainable business behaviour in direct trade relations and towards third countries, notably through its Trade and Sustainable Development chapter.

At the dialogue, participants were convinced that by delivering on the above points, Japan and the European Union must show their capacity and leadership to address current and future world challenges in the field of sustainability and corporate social responsibility and provide the necessary authority and governance to do so in an effective and equitable manner.



amfori

amfori is the association of European and International commerce that promotes the values of free and sustainable trade. It brings together hundreds of retailers, importers, brand companies, and national associations to improve the political and legal framework for trade in a sustainable way.

Business Policy Forum, Japan

Business Policy Forum, Japan was established in July 1984 as a think tank to research various issues surrounding the Japanese economy and business activities with the support of Business Circles (Keidanren; Japan Business Federation etc.) and MITI (Ministry of International, Trade and Industry, METI at present).

- **CSR forum Japan (CSR committee)**

- Consists of opinion leaders of CSR (Business, Investor, NGO, Academia, etc.) with METI

- Since 2004, publish research report every year

summarizing challenges, best practices, benchmarks with European companies and recommendations to business and other parties

Council for Better Corporate Citizenship

CBCC (Council for Better Corporate Citizenship) is an affiliated organization of Keidanren.

As a representative of organizations promoting CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) in Japan, CBCC has worked diligently to promote Japanese companies' CSR and to support their initiatives as a "good corporate citizen" for more than 25 years since its establishment, in accordance with the changes in global recognition of the relations among corporations, society and various stakeholders.

CSR Europe

CSR Europe is the leading European business network for Corporate Social Responsibility. Through our network of 46 corporate members and 41 National CSR organisations, we gather over 10,000 companies, and act as a united platform for those businesses looking to enhance sustainable growth and positively contribute to society. In our mission to bring the sustainability agenda forward, we at CSR Europe go beyond European borders and cooperate with CSR organisations in other regions across the world. CSR Europe is the European hub incubating multi-stakeholder initiatives that tackle the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Japan Business Council in Europe

Created in 1999, the Japan Business Council in Europe (JBCE) is a leading European organisation representing the interests of more than 80 multinational companies of Japanese parentage active in Europe.

Our members operate across a wide range of sectors, including information and communication technology, electronics, chemicals, automotive, machinery, wholesale trade, precision instruments, pharmaceutical, railway, textiles and glass products.

Building a new era of cooperation between the European Union (EU) and Japan is the core of our activities, which we perform under several committees focusing on: Corporate Social Responsibility, Trade Policy, Environment, Standards and Conformity and Digital Innovation.