

JBCE statement at the conclusion of the G20 Osaka Summit

3 July 2019

On 28 and 29 June 2019, Japan hosted the G20 Summit in Osaka. World leaders and international organisations held important discussions on the global economy, trade and investment, innovation, environment and energy, employment, women’s empowerment, development and health. The Japan Business Council in Europe (JBCE) welcomes the tone of the discussions and the commitment to spur global economic growth by promoting free trade and innovation. We furthermore applaud the consensus reached among participants to focus on a “human-centred future society” that establishes freedom openness, inclusivity and sustainability as core principles.

JBCE invites its home geographies, the EU and Japan, to lead global-level discussions as like-minded partners to promote sustainable and inclusive development, to solve global societal challenges collaboratively, and to foster innovation that enhances citizens’ quality of life. JBCE hopes the EU and Japan will take advantage of the coalescence of this year’s Japanese leadership of the G20 and French leadership of the G7 to further advance EU-Japan cooperation across a variety of topics, as follows:

<TRADE AND INVESTMENT>

The EU and Japan should build support for and defend the multilateral, rules-based system of world trade, with a particular focus on World Trade Organisation (WTO) reform. Additionally, both should continue to provide leadership at global level, including through the WTO trilateral. In that regard, JBCE welcomes the launch of the “Osaka Track” at the G20 summit. The tool illustrates G20 countries’ commitment to sustained international policy discussions, and provides an opportunity for the EU and Japan to act as drivers of this dialogue.

<INNOVATION>

International data flows should be promoted as a vital enabler of deeper economic ties and innovation across all sectors. As such, rules on data flows should align with the Japanese government’s concept of “data free flow with trust” (DFFT). JBCE believes that the EU and Japan should be active in international discussions and initiatives on how to best realise a digitally enabled society and economy and actively contribute to multilateral fora. Both should cooperate closely following the approach of the last EU-Japan Summit (25th April in Brussels) and try and lead international and multilateral efforts to fully exploit the potential of economic and social transformation of digital technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and blockchain. To ensure digital “works” for all, JBCE encourages the promotion of international standards and an alignment of regulatory approaches to tackle cybersecurity challenges, as well as initiatives to ensure the transformation and transition is inclusive and does not alienate or abandon people or sectors.

JBCE welcomes the call, by G20 leaders, to promote policies and regulations that are flexible and adapted to the digital era, including regulatory sandboxes. Additionally, responsible AI development is paramount to support the Sustainable Development Goals and establish a fair and sustainable society.

<ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY>

JBCE welcomes “Osaka Blue Ocean Vision” that aim to reduce additional pollution by marine plastic litter to zero by 2050. With regard to plastics, the EU and Japan should take into consideration the practicalities of waste management, such as separation and collection, to reduce marine litter. A holistic approach should include material recycling and chemical recycling, but also tackle the upstream production of single use plastics.

<INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT>

JBCE is in support of the joint statement on strengthening bilateral cooperation in all fora related to sustainability, and appreciates the reaffirmed commitment to implementing the provisions of the trade and sustainable development (TSD) chapter of the EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA). JBCE believes that multi-stakeholder dialogues, combined with the right incentives, can drive smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in both regions. In particular, we encourage the EU and Japan to facilitate broad bilateral engagement based on a multi-level and cross-sectoral approach, through which the global solutions needed to achieve ambitious objectives – for example, under the Paris Agreement – can be developed. Involvement of all players will be essential to encourage those who pioneer sustainability solutions and to assist all stakeholders in capacity-building.

JBCE believes strong government leadership is crucial if the vision put forth on these pages is to become a reality. JBCE pledges its support to the EU and Japan as they take this work forward together.

About JBCE

Founded 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 electronics, information and communication technology, chemicals, automotive, machinery, precision instruments, wholesale trade, pharmaceutical, transportation, and finance. Building a new era of cooperation between the European Union (EU) and Japan is the core of our activities, which we pursue in the framework of several committees focused on: Trade Policy, Environment and Energy, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Standards and Conformity, Corporate Policy and Digital Innovation.