

(Provisional Translation)

To the Head of Press Office,

March 29, 2004
Press Secretary,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs issues 'Foreign Press Registration Card' to each member of the foreign press in order to assist their journalistic activities in Japan. The Registration Card certifies that the bearer is registered with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a member of the foreign press (The application for the Registration Card is received by the Foreign Press Center, Japan (FPC) (1). Please refer to the attachments for the Criteria of issuance of the Registration Card, a sample, and a request concerning an ethical code of journalism).

Concerning this Registration Card, in an EU Priority Proposal titled 'Journalism: freedom and equality of access to information' in the Japan-EU Regulatory Reform Dialogue, it was proposed that Japan 'accept the Ministry of Foreign Affairs press card issued to correspondents of foreign media organizations as accreditation for all media events held by Japan's official bodies, to enable access on an equal footing with all domestic journalists'.

In order to assure that accurate information on Japan is disseminated in today's environment where information is transmitted globally in an instant, it is important to enable the foreign press to have access to on-the-record press conferences held at official bodies.

Furthermore, the Nihon Shinbun Kyokai (Japan Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association) has requested its member organizations and kisha clubs the following in a letter dated March 29 2004. (Please see the enclosed copy for the full text of this letter.)

... [A]s specific measures to assist the foreign media, we request the following of each kisha club:

1. Confirm the acceptance of the principle that journalists of the foreign media who possess a Foreign Press Registration Card are able to attend on-the-record press conferences held at official bodies (whether they are hosted by the official body or the kisha club concerned). This principle should be conveyed and observed through the kisha club and appropriate measures are to be taken to enable their

attendance. Needless to say, rules and moral standards set up by the host must be honored as a condition to participate in the press conference.

2. Where the space of the press conference room is limited and cannot accommodate all those who wish to attend, attendance of the foreign press shall be assisted through arrangement of a pool or other means.

We kindly request that necessary arrangements for the bearers of the Registration Card be taken so that participation of the foreign press who are not members of the kisha club to the on-the-record press conferences held at your institution would be facilitated, such as responding to their enquiries and other measures when they do attend the press conferences (2). This does not exclude the need to require prior registration or other means of permitting entry into the building for reasons of security by each institution.

Furthermore, we also take this opportunity to inform you that where there are constraints such as the number of people that can be accommodated in the venue of the press conference, a pool for the foreign press may be arranged through the Foreign Press in Japan (FPIJ) (1).

We also request that this request be conveyed to affiliated bodies and regional branches of your institution (and, in the case of Prefectural governments, to local government bodies within each Prefecture), that may be approached by the foreign press (The letter is being directly addressed to the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department, Police Department at each Prefecture and the thirteen cities designated by ordinance (as of March 2004)).

(1) Enclosed: Information on the Foreign Press Center/Japan (FPC) and the Foreign Press in Japan (FPIJ).

(2) The press conferences at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are open to the bearers of the Foreign Press Registration Card. This includes the press conferences by the Press Secretary (in English, twice a week), Foreign Minister (in Japanese, twice a week), Senior Vice Minister, Vice Minister and Press Secretary (in Japanese, once a week). The Ministry also informs the time of each press conference by fax and e-mail.