

## ANNEX 23

### JOINT DECLARATION

The European Union recalls the obligations of third countries that have established a customs union with the European Union to align their trade regimes to that of the European Union and, for some of them, to conclude preferential agreements with countries that have entered into preferential agreements with the European Union.

In this context, the Parties note that Japan has already started negotiations with one of those countries which have established a customs union with the European Union and whose products do not benefit from the tariff concessions under this Agreement, with a view to concluding a bilateral agreement establishing a free trade area in accordance with Article XXIV of GATT 1994.

The European Union invites Japan to conclude negotiations as soon as possible with a view to having the above mentioned preferential agreements enter into force as soon as possible after the entry into force of this Agreement.

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