

Visegrad Group plus Japan Joint Statement

Partnership based on common values for the 21st century

The Visegrad Group (V4) plus Japan Summit Meeting, the first discussion by the V4 with an Asian country at this level, was successfully held in Warsaw on 16 June 2013. The Meeting commemorated the 10th anniversary of the V4 plus Japan cooperation. The participating countries were represented by: Prime Minister Petr Nečas of the Czech Republic, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán of Hungary, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan, Prime Minister Donald Tusk of the Republic of Poland, Prime Minister Robert Fico of the Slovak Republic.

The V4 and Japan (hereinafter jointly referred to as “both sides”) reviewed the scope of their cooperation and common activities, intending to take further steps to enhance mutual relations in the future.

Both sides decided to mark 2014 as the V4 plus Japan Exchange Year with a view to celebrating the 10th anniversary and further strengthening their close ties.

Recognizing shared universal values and principles, such as democracy, the rule of law, human rights, freedom, and market-based economy, both sides pointed out that cooperation between the V4 countries and Japan represents an integral part of, and a tangible added value to the EU-Japan strategic partnership.

I Equal partners united by bonds of universal values

Both sides confirmed that the V4 and Japan, sharing universal values and working together as equal partners on a range of international issues, have attained a new dimension of cooperation, described as “Partnership Based on Common Values for the 21st Century”.

The V4 and Japan reaffirmed that a partnership of countries sharing universal values has become relevant and necessary for peace and prosperity around the world. Japan highly appreciated the V4, which, having successfully

accomplished the process of democratization in the early 1990s and having joined the EU in 2004, plays a key role in the EU as a leader in advancing democracy, especially in Eastern Europe.

Sharing their commitment to democracy and the rule of law, Japan and the V4 countries expressed readiness to pool their efforts to promote good governance and rule-driven cooperation in international relations and the global economy.

Significance of the Eastern Partnership

Japan underscored its support for the EU Eastern Partnership Policy, which contributes to the democratization and promotion of market economy in Eastern Europe. The V4 and Japan recognized that Japan and the EU had a common interest in further exploring possible areas of cooperation relating to democracy, the rule of law, human rights, fundamental freedoms, and expressed a strong desire to develop Japan-EU relations through V4 plus Japan cooperation.

Japan welcomed the V4's commitment to sharing experience on reform and transition with the Eastern European partners, as well as the V4 initiative "Visegrad 4 Eastern Partnership" (V4EaP) designed by the International Visegrad Fund. The program will facilitate systematic transformation and democratization of the Eastern Partnership countries. The V4 and EaP Program implemented by the International Visegrad Fund (IVF) could be a suitable platform for future joint activities of the V4 and Japan. Both sides recognized that the "Visegrad Group and Japan, together for Eastern Partnership" seminar and the Open Discussion held jointly with the Josai University Educational Corporation in Tokyo in February 2013, contributed to strengthening cooperation between the V4 and Japan on the Eastern Partnership.

Japan intends to send a high-level representative to the Eastern Partnership (EaP) Summit in Vilnius in November 2013 to strengthen future cooperation.

Official Development Assistance (ODA) cooperation

The V4 values Japan's ODA to developing countries in the world, especially in Eastern Partnership countries. Japan welcomes the fact that the V4 countries have become an integral part of the global donor community.

The V4 and Japan reaffirmed their continuous engagement in promoting democracy and market-based economy around the world. Both sides

expressed their intention to share knowledge and experiences in development cooperation and to identify effective ways for exchanging their experience in ODA in EaP countries. In this regard, both sides expressed their willingness to hold an ODA seminar, with a view to building on their existing experience in ODA in EaP countries and the Western Balkans. Furthermore, Japan announced that it would appoint a liaison officer at each Japanese Embassy in all V4 countries to establish an efficient mechanism for communicating information on Japan's ODA in the EaP partner countries. The V4 welcomed the Japan's initiative and reiterated their readiness to coordinate their own ODA programs.

Collaboration with relevant organizations and formats

Japan expressed its great appreciation for the V4's role in the Community of Democracies, the International Center for Democratic Transition, and the European Endowment for Democracy. The V4 underlined the positive role that Japan plays in the Community of Democracies and other international fora.

II Cooperation in the security areas

The V4 and Japan discussed security issues in the global and regional dimensions. Both sides reiterated their commitment to cooperating in the United Nations, the EU and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), as well as with other multilateral institutions, to promote and build global security. Both sides stressed that proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, cyber-terrorism, proliferation of missiles and missile technology, organized crime and illicit transfer of arms continue to represent a serious threat to international security and economy.

The V4 and Japan reaffirmed the importance of maintaining order on seas and oceans based on international law and the freedom and safety of navigation. Both sides stressed that oceans, as a common good of all peoples, should be open, free and secure, and underlined the importance of upholding these principles on the basis of international law, including the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Both sides welcomed the development of relationships between Japan and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as lying in the common security interest. In this spirit, both sides reiterated their commitment to enhanced

political dialogue and greater practical cooperation on common global challenges in areas of mutual interest. The V4 and Japan also confirmed that the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and its Partners for Cooperation play complementary roles in promoting security in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian regions, as well as in Asia and the Mediterranean region. The V4 and Japan also confirmed that crisis management and post-conflict peace-building activities conducted by the EU under the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) are of special importance for countries emerging from conflict.

Both sides expressed the view that stability and development in East Asia is indispensable for peace and prosperity of the international community as a whole. The V4 and Japan recognized that security in East Asia and Europe is closely interlinked, and decided to enhance mutual understanding of their respective security concerns in the regions. Both sides concurred on the importance of adhering to the principles of international law, especially in maritime domains. In this regard, they acknowledged the importance of maintaining effective export controls of arms and dual-use items and technologies in the region.

The V4 and Japan expressed their grave concern over North Korea's nuclear and missile development programs, including its uranium enrichment program, and condemned in the strongest terms North Korea's nuclear test on 12 February 2013 and its missile launches in April and December 2012, as clear violations of the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions. Both sides urged North Korea to take concrete action towards denuclearization as well as to fully implement the relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions, including Resolution 2094 and the 2005 Six Party Talks Joint Statement. Both sides also expressed concern over human rights violations in North Korea, and strongly urged North Korea to address without delay the humanitarian concerns of the international community, including the abductions issue.

Both sides reiterated their commitment to supporting efforts to build a stable, peaceful and self-reliant Afghanistan beyond 2014. Given recent developments, the V4 and Japan share concerns about security and the humanitarian situation in the Sahel region, North Africa and the Middle East. In relation to Iran's nuclear program, the V4 and Japan reaffirmed that Iran needs to fully comply with its international obligations, including the relevant International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and United Nations Security

Council (UNSC) resolutions without further delay in order to restore international confidence in the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program. Both sides underlined their support for the EU 3 plus 3 talks seeking a comprehensive, negotiated and long-term settlement to the Iranian nuclear issue.

For the purpose of deepening cooperation in the security area, the V4 and Japan expressed their intention to hold a V4 plus Japan Security Seminar during the Hungarian V4 Presidency, which begins in July 2013.

Cooperation in the UN

The V4 and Japan reaffirmed the importance of the UN reform in all aspects, with particular emphasis on the Security Council reform. Both sides stressed the necessity to improve its effectiveness, transparency and representativeness in order to reflect the reality of today's international community. In this respect, both sides reiterated their will to work together to achieve reform of the UN Security Council, including enlargement in both the permanent and non-permanent categories of the Council.

III Cooperation in the fields of economy, science, technology and innovation

The V4 and Japan reiterated that both sides have a common goal to develop result-oriented cooperation in the fields of economy, science, technology and innovation. Japan recognized that the V4's dynamically developing markets offer attractive opportunities for Japanese companies, and the V4 recognized that Japanese companies operating in the V4 markets contribute to job creation. The V4 emphasized the important role the IVF plays in advancing cooperation in these fields”

Energy cooperation and Climate cooperation

The V4 and Japan discussed their achievements in such fields as nuclear energy, environment, energy saving and renewable energy. The V4 and Japan expressed their great interest in deepening mutual cooperation in the aforementioned areas. Japan reaffirmed its duty to contribute to strengthening worldwide nuclear safety by sharing knowledge and lessons learned from the accident at TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station. The V4 and Japan welcomed the fact that private sectors of both sides demonstrated keen interest in concrete forms of cooperation in nuclear energy and safety. To explore further opportunities of cooperation in energy efficiency, the V4 states are invited to join the upcoming GSEP (Global Superior Energy

Performance Partnership) seminar to be organized by Poland and Japan in Warsaw in autumn 2013.

The V4 and Japan expressed their commitment to cooperate in a constructive manner in global climate negotiations in order to deliver by 2015 a new, fair and effective international framework applicable to all Parties, especially in the context of forthcoming Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC (COP19, Warsaw, November 2013).

Expanding trade, investment and cooperation with respect to small and medium enterprises

Both sides expressed their confidence that strengthening economic ties, including trade and investment, as well as exchanging views about small and medium enterprises is necessary for maintaining and developing overall relations between the V4 and Japan.

The V4 and Japan reaffirmed that a comprehensive Japan-EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) / Free Trade Agreement (FTA) would improve access to markets for Japanese and V4's companies and thus strengthen economic relations between both sides.

Science, technology and innovation cooperation

Promoting cooperation in the fields of science, technology and innovation in a comprehensive manner mutually benefits the V4 and Japan. The V4 emphasized the important role the International Visegrad Fund (IVF) plays in advancing cooperation in these fields. The V4 and Japan welcomed efforts by the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) and the IVF, together with the Slovak Academy of Science (SAS), to jointly host the "SAS-IVF-JST Workshop" in Slovakia in July 2013.

IV V4 plus Japan Exchange Year 2014 for promoting people-to-people contacts

The V4 and Japan underlined the importance of promoting people-to-people exchanges in various fields, such as culture, trade and tourism, jointly by Governments and private sectors. Both sides support the idea of appointing Goodwill Ambassadors to promote the V4 plus Japan Exchange Year 2014.

V4 solidarity after the Great East Japan Earthquake

Close solidarity between the V4 and Japan has been proven by the moral and material support provided by the V4 after the Great East Japan Earthquake in

March 2011. Japan expressed sincere gratitude for the support received from the governments and the peoples of the V4 countries. The V4 expressed admiration for the courage and resilience of the people and the government of Japan during the two post-disaster years, when a remarkable reconstruction was achieved.

With a view to accelerating reconstruction efforts, both sides consider it important that Japan continue to provide sufficient information on food safety and the current radioactivity levels in the affected area in a timely manner, so that trade between the V4 and Japan could be further strengthened.

Culture and education

The V4 and Japan underlined their great appreciation for the ongoing efforts by both governments and private sectors to deepen mutual understanding through various activities that promote their respective national cultures. The V4 praised the “Cool Japan” policy, which aims to foster understanding of Japanese culture around the world. Both sides especially welcomed efforts by the Central European Noh and Kyogen Culture Association to foster young experts and promote student exchanges.

The V4 and Japan expressed their appreciation for the endeavor by educational institutions to develop language education and promote student exchange programs. Both sides also welcomed the fact that more classes of the V4 countries’ languages are now being offered in educational institutions in Japan. The V4 and Japan encouraged the Japan Foundation Office in Budapest, the Museum of Japanese Art and Technology Manggha in Cracow, Comenius University in Bratislava and Charles University in Prague to continue to play an active role in the enhancement of the quality of Japanese language and culture education in the V4 region.

The V4 and Japan expressed their intention to support the development of tourism in their respective countries, as a way to achieve better mutual understanding.

Further interaction among young people

Exchanges among young people are the cornerstone of strengthening future relations between the V4 and Japan. In this perspective, the V4 and Japan underlined the value of the Working Holiday schemes that would encourage further people-to-people interactions and contacts between young people.

V Future dialogues

The V4 and Japan expressed a strong desire to further develop the Partnership based on common values through various dialogues.

To further deepen mutual understanding and cooperation, the V4 and Japan underlined the importance of keeping high level dialogue on a regular basis through V4 plus Japan Summits and Foreign Ministers' Meetings.

Both sides expressed their intention to establish a periodical dialogue between the V4 Presidency and Ambassadors of Japan accredited to the V4 countries, and a dialogue between the V4 Ambassadors accredited to Japan and Japanese authorities for the purpose of pursuing further cooperation in the V4 countries.

Furthermore, both sides expressed their intention to establish the V4 plus Japan Policy Planning Dialogue to deepen mutual understanding of international issues.

Japan announced that it would invite the Prime Minister of Hungary, the holder of the next V4 Presidency, to follow up on the present V4 plus Japan Summit Meeting during his official visit to Japan.