

The first Joint Committee of the EU-Japan Agreement for an Economic Partnership

Joint Minutes

23 May 2019

On 10 April, the Joint Committee established by the Agreement between the European Union (EU) and Japan for an Economic Partnership (hereinafter referred to as “the Agreement”) held its first meeting in Tokyo, Japan, co-chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, Taro Kono, and the European Commissioner for Trade, Cecilia Malmström.

At the opening statements, both Minister Kono and Commissioner Malmström welcomed the entry into force of the Agreement on 1 February and reaffirmed that the Agreement served as a strong signal to the world that Japan and the EU continued to lead the world in promoting free, open, rules-based and fair trade and investment and fighting against protectionism.

Minister Kono and Commissioner Malmström took stock of the status of the implementation of the Agreement and discussed the way forward to ensure a steady and effective operation of the Agreement. They confirmed the EU’s and Japan’s joint commitment to fully and efficiently implement the EPA and to facilitate the use of the tariff and other preferences to the full extent, for the benefit of citizens, consumers and businesses.

The Rules of Procedure of the Joint Committee, the Mediation Procedure, the Rules of procedure of a Panel and the Code of Conduct for Arbitrators were adopted. Both sides underlined the importance of establishing a List of Arbitrators as soon as possible and confirmed their intention to have it approved upon completion of EU’s domestic procedures.

Commissioner Malmström explained that the EU remains committed to ensuring an orderly withdrawal of the UK on the basis of the Withdrawal Agreement as negotiated with the UK government. She confirmed that, if the Withdrawal Agreement between the EU and the UK did not enter into force, the Agreement would not be applied to the UK

from the date of its withdrawal from the EU. Commissioner Malmstrom stated that the EU would notify Japan of changes of the scope of the territorial application of the Agreement in due course.

Minister Kono and Commissioner Malmström acknowledged the actions taken by the experts to facilitate a smooth implementation of the Agreement since its entry into force. Both sides raised some issues related to customs procedures on both sides, particularly with regard to practices regarding proof of origin. They shared the view that bilateral contacts between relevant government bodies should be pursued to seek swift solutions in light of the upcoming first meeting of the specialised committee on customs and rules of origin, under the oversight of the Joint Committee.

Minister Kono and Commissioner Malmström welcomed the successful holding of the first meeting of the Working Group on Wine. They confirmed the provisional calendar of upcoming meetings of the specialised committees, working groups and other bodies, subject to adjustment at working level.

Considering that there exist many frameworks for policy dialogues between Japan and the EU, the Joint Committee decided, based on subparagraph 4 (b) of Article 22.1 of the Agreement, to recommend specialised committees, working groups and other bodies under the Agreement to hold, to the extent possible, meetings back-to-back with policy dialogues whose scope is related to subject-matters addressed by the specialised committees, working groups and other bodies. The Joint Committee further recommended specialised committees, working groups and other bodies under the Agreement to seek other synergies, including taking up issues identified through the policy dialogues to the extent deemed appropriate, with due consideration to the policy dialogues' activities.

Minister Kono and Commissioner Malmström reached a consensus to hold the second meeting of the Joint Committee in Brussels, on a date to be later decided, to ensure that the Agreement continues to promote trade between Japan and the EU and yield benefits on both sides.

Meeting of Japan-EU EPA Joint Committee - Tokyo, 10 April, 2019

AGENDA

1 Opening statements

- 1.1 Japan
- 1.2 EU

2 Adoption of decisions. Procedural Items

- 2.1 Adoption of the Joint Committee Plenary Agenda
- 2.2 Adoption of the Joint Committee Rules of Procedure
- 2.3 Adoption of the Mediation Procedure
- 2.4 Establishment of the List of Arbitrators
- 2.5 Adoption of the Rules of Procedure of a Panel
- 2.6 Adoption of the Code of Conduct for Arbitrators

3 Overview of EPA implementation. Activities of the Specialized Committees and Working Groups

- 3.1 Clarification on possible changes in scope of the territorial application of the EPA
- 3.2 General assessment of EPA implementation – including Customs practices regarding proof of origin
- 3.3 Working Group on Wine
- 3.4 Calendar/overview of upcoming meetings of specialized committees and working groups
- 3.5 Relationship with other Japan-EU policy dialogues

4 Conclusion of Plenary Meeting

- 4.1 Next meeting of the Japan-EU EPA Joint Committee
- 4.2 Brief Closing Statements
 - 4.2.1 EU
 - 4.2.2 Japan