



Joint Minutes of the 3rd Meeting of the Committee on Trade in Goods under the Agreement between the European Union and Japan for an Economic Partnership

Brussels and Tokyo (by videoconference), 11 November 2021

The third meeting of the Committee on Trade in Goods under the Agreement between the European Union (“EU”) and Japan for an Economic Partnership (“EPA”) took place on 11 November 2021. In view of the travel and other restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the meeting was held by video teleconference.

The meeting allowed a fruitful exchange of views on matters related to Chapter 2 of the EPA (Trade in Goods) between EU and Japanese participants. On the EU side, the Directorates-General TRADE and AGRI, as well as the EU Delegation to Japan, were represented; on the Japanese side, there were participants from MOFA, MAFF, MOF, METI and the Mission of Japan to the EU.

The enclosed meeting agenda was adopted (cf. attachment).

The committee exchanged information and views on the evolution of bilateral trade in goods in 2020 and over the year 2021, as well as world trends. Both sides noted once again the severe impact of Covid-19 on international trade flows, including EU-Japan trade flows, but also noted that based on partial 2021 data it seems that EU-Japan trade flows are returning to pre-Covid-19 levels. Both sides acknowledged the large exports of Covid-19 vaccines from the EU to Japan. Both sides also ascertained with satisfaction the increased preference utilisation rate of the agreement and confirmed their common objective to continue joint efforts to facilitate a return to an increasing trend for trade flows, leveraging the EPA to that effect.

The committee confirmed the timeframe for the annual exchange of the trade data under Article 2.32 of the EPA. The third exchange of data aggregated at EU level will take place in April 2022 and the exchange of data at EU Member State level will take place in June 2022. The timeframe, content and format of the exchange will correspond to the practice of previous exchanges. With regard to the template, Japan requested the EU to indicate the data of MFN and preferential tariff rates.

The EU expressed its intention to consider the way to include the information in the template.

The committee reviewed the statistics concerning the EPA utilisation of tariff preferences by economic operators in 2020, which are increasing – 63% for exports from the EU to Japan and 59% for exports from Japan to the EU compared to 2019 – 54% and 39% respectively. The committee affirmed both sides' willingness to facilitate, to the extent possible, a steady increase in the utilisation figures, including through awareness raising activities. Both sides confirmed their intention to further cooperate to assess the evolution and facilitate the use of preferences. Both sides shared the view on the importance of stepping up efforts to support the utilisation of the preferential rates by SMEs.

With regard to tariff rate quotas (“TRQs”), both sides exchanged views as regards the utilisation of TRQs, in particular the TRQs for cheese and malt in 2021. Both sides noted improvements in filling rates, but also concurred to continue monitoring the situation. Japan informed that the guidelines for fiscal year 2022 will be published in the end of November 2021. Both sides decided to exchange further information on TRQs as a follow up to this meeting.

The committee referred to the upcoming meeting of the Working Group on Wine to be held on 30 November, which will focus on the progress made in the implementation of phase 3 for the mutual authorisation of oenological practices.

The committee took note of the envisaged date for the 3rd meeting of the Working Group on Motor Vehicles and Parts, and invited the WG to discuss the implementation of UNECE regulations listed in appendix 2-C-2.



**3rd Meeting of the Committee on Trade in Goods under the Agreement between the
European Union and Japan for an Economic Partnership**

**11 November 2021, DVC
Tokyo - Brussels**

Agenda

- 1. Opening Session**
- 2. Adoption of the Agenda (Article 22.3.3(e))**
- 3. Trends in bilateral trade in goods**
- 4. Exchange of trade statistics (Article 2.32)**
 - a. Organisation of the next annual exchange**
 - b. Assessment of the EPA utilisation rate**
- 5. Implementation of Chapter 2 and Annex 2-A**
 - a. Use of tariff-rate quotas**
 - b. Activities of the Working Groups under the auspices of the Trade Committee (Article 22.4)**
- 6. A.O.B.**
- 7. Closing session (date and venue of the next meeting)**
- 8. (Joint minutes drafting session)**