



Joint Minutes of the 7th 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), 30 January 2026

The seventh 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 30 January 2026 by videoconference.

From the Japanese side, participants from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), the Ministry of Finance (MOF), the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT) and the Mission of Japan to the EU were present. The EU side included participants from the Directorate-General for Trade (DG TRADE), Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI), Directorate General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW) and the Delegation of the EU to Japan. The attached agenda was adopted.

Both sides acknowledged their long-standing, broad, balanced and mutually beneficial trade relations, to which the EPA has contributed since its entry into force in 2019. The EU presented preliminary data for 2025, compared to the previous year (January to November), and Japan preferred to make a presentation at the next occasion, when the full data for year 2025 become available.

Furthermore, both Japan and the EU welcomed the upward trend of Preference Utilisation Rates (PUR) in both directions (imports and exports), according to EU figures, proving the increasing benefit of the EPA. In addition, both sides confirmed the format and timeframe for the annual exchange of the trade statistics under Article 2.32 of the EPA (at around late June 2026), in the same way as the previous year.

Both sides exchanged views on the utilisation of Tariff-Rate Quotas (TRQs) in fiscal year (FY) 2024 (latest information available). The EU recognized a substantial increase in the utilisation rate of important quotas, TRQ 2 (Mixes and doughs and cake mixes), TRQ 17 (Starch), and a substantial decrease for two other important quotas, TRQ 22 (Whey) and TRQ 23 (Butter, skimmed milk powder,

milk powder, butter milk powder and condensed milk). The EU welcomed the smooth cooperation with MAFF, aiming at full utilization of EU TRQs, their efforts to increase the utilisation rate for TRQ 23 through TRQ management, as well as Japan's availability to listen to EU concerns on TRQ 2. Japan stressed the relatively high use of some items in FY-2024. Japan referred to increased prices for EU products as the reasons for decreased use of some of the TRQs. Japan informed the EU that TRQ 23 has reached a high(er) level of TRQ allocations until now, in FY2025. Both sides will continue monitoring the situation.

Regarding the activities of the Working Group on Motor Vehicles and Parts, Japan and the EU welcomed the agreement by both Parties on the date of application by Japan of UN Regulation n° 73 (lateral protection devices), which will apply from 1 February 2027, and UN Regulation n° 126 (partitioning systems), applying as from 31 March 2026. The Parties referred to the ongoing work for the subsequent amendment of the Annex on Motor Vehicles and Parts to reflect this agreement (change of UN Regulation n° 126 from Appendix 2-C-2 to Appendix 2-C-1, which includes UN Regulations applied by both parties; inclusion of the date of application of UN Regulation n° 73 in Appendix 2-C-2). In addition, Appendix 2-C-1 will include new UN Regulations applied by both Parties. The amendments will be made through a Joint Committee decision, for which Japan will submit the first draft.

The EU pointed to the long national approval procedures for additives used in EU wine by stating that they make their access to the Japanese market difficult. They kindly asked Japan to consider the possibility of streamlining the approval procedures by aligning to *Codex Alimentarius (CA)* standards, as Japan is a member of this standard-setting body, preferably, with an automatic approval of wine additives included in CA or, by ensuring that national procedures are less cumbersome if an additive is taken up in CA. Japan took note of the EU's concerns.

Japan expressed serious concerns on the recently proposed EU measures on steel, not only on their impact on bilateral trade between the Parties, including their effect on the industry in Japan, but also from the viewpoint of consistency with the Japan-EU EPA. Japan also made it clear that originating products of Japan under the Japan-EU EPA should be treated in a manner consistent with the EPA. The EU took note of Japan's serious concerns, reiterated its willingness to work constructively with Japan to seek to address those concerns on the proposed EU measures, and recalled the upcoming Article XXVIII GATT process to discuss quota allocation.

The EU provided an update on the ongoing work for the ex-post evaluation of the EU-Japan EPA and kindly asked Japan to collaborate in this exercise. Japan kindly accepted to cooperate, as far as possible, on this evaluation.



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**30 January 2026
9:00-11:00 Brussels, 17:00-19:00 Tokyo
(Video Conference)**

Agenda

- 1. Opening session**
- 2. Adoption of the Agenda**
- 3. Trends in bilateral trade in goods**
- 4. Utilisation of the EPA**
 - a. Discussion and assessment of the EPA utilisation rate*
 - b. Organisation of the next annual exchange of trade statistics*
- 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)**
 - *Working Group on Motor Vehicles and Parts (MVWG)*
 - *Working Group on Wine*
- 6. Draft EU measure on steel (Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council addressing the negative trade-related effects of global overcapacity on the Union steel market)**
- 7. Ex-post evaluation of the EU-Japan EPA**
- 8. Closing session**
