



EU-JAPAN CENTRE FOR INDUSTRIAL COOPERATION

日欧産業協力センター

Report on the Speaking Event of EU Commissioner Karmenu Vella on the Future of Ocean Governance Tokyo, 12 May 2016

The EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation co-organised with the Delegation of the European Union to Japan a speaking event of EU Commissioner Karmenu Vella on 12 May, 2016 in Tokyo (programme annexed).

Commissioner Vella spoke on the Future of Ocean Governance. Despite the promotion of the Event beginning during Japan's holiday season (the Golden week), the event attracted about 80 eager participants from various sectors related to the maritime affairs.

According to Commissioner Vella, "Ocean governance" is the process of managing oceans in order to keep them healthy, clean and safe. And in the EU there is a growing realisation that if oceans are not healthy and safe, their economy will suffer. Therefore, he has made it a priority of his mandate to ensure that the ocean, which makes up 70% of the planet's surface, is protected.

He said that oceans were "under pressure". And, in order to alleviate pressure, international cooperation involving all stakeholders is indispensable because no single country or region can solve ocean-related problems alone, no matter how big a global player they might be.

Commissioner Vella indicated that the ocean plays a central role as a home for rich biodiversity, a source of renewable energy, birthplace of healthy food and medicine, and a major asset for tourism and transport. In addition, he emphasised the important role that oceans play in mitigating climate change as absorbers of CO₂, providers of oxygen. He said that if we want to better manage climate change, we have to make sure that our oceans' health continues to improve and we have to act fast and together since the challenge of climate change is happening at an alarming pace.

As for the cooperation with Japan, Commissioner Vella first of all pointed that as an island state Japan's economy and society are closely tied to safe and healthy oceans, which has led Japan to become a frontrunner in ocean governance. And in the past decade Japan has developed a sophisticated ocean policy to effectively promote and coordinate ocean measures not only within Japan, but also with Japan's international partners including the EU.

In response to the questions raised from the floor, Commissioner Vella gave an explanation on the EU's measures against illegal fishing. The EU gives a "Yellow card" including sanctions if the offender does not comply after a bilateral consultation.

Commissioner Vella emphasised the importance of ocean research and revealed that a closer cooperation among various EU institutions were being pursued.

Prepared by Toshiro Fukura, Manager, Policy Analysis and Seminars

Speaking Event: Commissioner Karmenu Vella on the Future of Ocean Governance

Programme

MC: Ms Mervi KAHLOS, Counsellor, Trade and Economic Section, the Delegation of the European Union to Japan

- 18:00-18:05 Opening remarks by Ambassador Viorel ISTICIOAIA BUDURA,
Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Japan
- 18:05-18:25 Speech on "Future of Ocean Governance" by Mr. Karmenu VELLA,
European Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
- 18:25-18:50 Questions and Answers
- 18:50-18:55 Closing remarks by Mr. Yasuyuki SAKAI,
Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Cabinet Office
- 19:00-20:00 Networking Reception