

EU-JAPAN INDUSTRIALISTS ROUND TABLE

The Roundtable was created in 1995 based on an industrial initiative which was backed by Commissioner Bangemann and MITI Minister Hashimoto. The chief executives of 27 leading EU and Japanese enterprises meet for a "Roundtable" discussion once a year to review the factors affecting trade and industry and to make policy recommendations to the European Commission and the Japanese government. It is an occasion for a cross industrial meeting between European and Japanese leaders of industries to exchange opinions freely, to deepen mutual understanding as well as to strengthen industrial cooperation.

Since its first meeting in February 1995 in Tokyo, the Round Table is basically held once a year, in Tokyo and Brussels alternately. The meetings are co-chaired by Viscount Etienne Davignon, Chairman of Société Générale de Belgique and former Vice President of the European Commission, and Dr. Tadahiro Sekimoto, Chairman of NEC Corporation and Chairman of the Board of Councillors of KEIDANREN. The purpose of this forum is to develop a permanent dialogue on industrial policy issues of common interest between some of the most prominent industry leaders of Japan and the European Union, in order to:

- * discuss jointly on how to address competitiveness challenges faced by industries of both countries;
- * make relevant recommendations to public authorities on (de)regulation measures and industrial policy actions likely to improve the competitiveness of both sides' industries;
- * identify domains where EU-Japan industrial co-operation should be developed.

The characteristics of this Round Table are:

- * its flexibility: This forum is informal enough in order to lead frank, open and free discussions between the members;
- * its continuity: meaningful discussions and results can be achieved thanks to the permanent membership of European and Japanese industrialists; participants develop between them a deep and friendly relationship, which lead to a mutual trust and enable relevant follow-up actions;
- * its high-political visibility: members have to be distinguished and respected business leaders and the Round Table itself is strongly supported by EU-Commissioner Bangemann and Japan's Minister of International Trade and Industry.

In order to ensure an adequate follow-up of the Round Table discussions between meetings, working parties were set-up at a less political level in order to reflect on specific issues and to produce detailed reports and recommendations, with the logistical support of public authorities. The European Commission and the Japanese Ministry of International Trade and Industry provide information and assistance to the Round Table and its working parties, through the EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation, which acts as Secretariat to the Round Table.

The 5th meeting of the Round Table will be held in Tokyo on 8 - 10 October 1998.

Themes to be addressed at the October are:

- * Electronic Commerce
- * Competitiveness and deregulation, Mutual Recognition Agreements
- * International Standards in the field of Telecommunications
- * The Asian Crisis

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Dr. Sekimoto, Co-chairman of the EU-Japan Industrialists Round Table:

“Now, EU-Japan industries are at the midst of structural reform and facing issues such as low economic growth, unemployment and coping with the information age. In this environment, the Round Table, as well as the EU-Japan Centre are expected to be the core organisation in playing an increasingly important role in promoting co-operation and co-existence of EU-Japan industries with the spirits of “Mutual Benefit through Mutual Trust.””