

**EU-Japan Business Dialogue Round Table
Brussels Meeting, 7-8 July 2005**

Press Release

***“A Continued Innovative Approach
to Address New Common Challenges”***

Each year, senior industrialists from leading EU and Japanese companies meet in the framework of the EU-Japan Business Dialogue Round Table (BDRT) to review the factors affecting all aspects of business cooperation between the EU and Japan, and to make policy recommendations to the European Commission and Japanese Government.

They held their annual meeting in Brussels on 7 & 8 July 2005, under the co-chairmanship of Viscount Etienne Davignon and Mr. Yotaro Kobayashi, in the presence of Commissioners Verheugen (Enterprise & Industry) and Reding (Information Society & Media), and Mr. Lamoureux (Director-General of Energy & Transport DG); and from the Japanese Government: Mr. Onodera, Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs (MOFA), Mr. Yamamoto, Parliamentary Secretary for Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) and Mr. Matsui, Vice-Minister for Policy Coordination, International Affairs (MIC).

The BDRT Members welcomed the Authorities' clear political will and commitment, as expressed in the press statement issued by the bilateral EU-Japan Summit in May 2005, to improve EU-Japan relations taking account of the BDRT's specific Recommendations.

During a fruitful exchange of views with the Authorities, the BDRT Members commented on the implementation by the Authorities of last year's Recommendations and identified new bilateral or multilateral problems which are of great concern.

The BDRT reviewed the work of the working parties and adopted new detailed Recommendations to help focus the future plans, discussions and work of one/both of the Authorities on Trade & Investment, Accounting & Taxation, Information & Communications Technologies, Life Sciences & Biotechnology, and Sustainable Development.

The BDRT welcomed the deepening relationship between Japan and the enlarged EU and the positive business environment created to foster growth in two-way direct investment. Having noted positive responses to last year's Recommendations, the BDRT called on the Authorities to make further efforts to implement its previous and 2005 Recommendations.

The BDRT's general discussions focused on the following areas:

- Competitiveness: Possibilities of close cooperation between the EU and Japanese Authorities to tackle areas of common concern to EU and Japanese industry.
- WTO: A successful completion of the Doha Development Agenda Round is needed with strong EU-Japan common positions at the Hong Kong ministerial conference in December 2005.

- Investment: The investment environment is improving, but industry must maintain strong pressure on the Authorities to remove the remaining trade and investment barriers.
- Harmonised single market: The BDRT Members requested that the EU Authorities pay prioritised attention to finding solutions for the shortcomings arising from different rules in EU Member States in various fields.
- Energy issues: Recognising the close relationship between energy and economic growth as well as the present volatility of the international energy markets, the BDRT underlined the need to forcefully address current energy challenges, including those related to security of supply sustainability, competitiveness, efficiency, clean technology and the new role which should be played by the IEA.
- ICT: key issues including ICT infrastructure and service, digital divide and favourable regulatory environment for investment in new ICT technology.
- Biotechnology: the Working Party requests that more attention should be paid to the implementation of the Biotech Life Science and Action Plans in Europe and Japan.
- China: cooperation with China and impact of China on the world economy were discussed. The importance of China's commitment to WTO rules was underlined.
- FTA/RTA: the recent development of FTA/RTA in East Asia and the future of the East Asia Community were discussed.

The BDRT also adopted a Mission Statement.

At the end of the meeting, Viscount Davignon stepped down as EU-side Chairman and was succeeded by Baron Georges Jacobs of UCB. The next BDRT annual meeting will take place in Japan in early Summer 2006.

Media contact:

EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation

In Japan:

Mr. H. Kuramochi, General Manager Tel: +81 3 3221 6161 E-mail: eu-japan@eu-japan.gr.jp

In Europe:

Mrs. D. Van Bockstal, Director Tel: +32 2 282 0040 E-mail: office@eu-japan.com

BDRT homepage: <http://www.eu-japan.com/europe/roundtable.html>