

KAREL DE GUCHT  
MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 2/12/12  
MH/kb Ares(2012)S 1777963

Dear Mr De Buck,

*Philippe,*

*Thank you for your letter dated 12 November 2012 in which you expressed the Business Europe's concerns and priorities in relation to the future Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations with Japan. President Barroso, to whom your letter was also addressed, has asked me to provide a response on his behalf as well.*

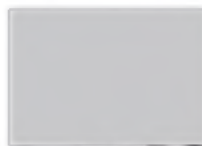
*As you are aware, the Council decided on 29 November 2012 to give the Commission the green light to launch the negotiations with Japan and approved the respective negotiating directives. This is a very positive development that will allow us to enter into the negotiation of an ambitious and comprehensive FTA with Japan very soon. The future FTA should not only create a level playing field for EU companies in Japan and eliminate long standing barriers for access to the Japanese market, but also provide genuine economic benefits to both, the EU and Japan. I am committed to delivering on this promise.*

*I fully agree with you that in the future negotiations with Japan particular focus should be given not only to the removal of tariffs, but also of non-tariff barriers. In the context of the approval of the negotiating directives by the Council, I have personally advocated for the inclusion of the review clause, which provides for the possibility to put the negotiations on hold after the first year from their launch, if Japan does not deliver on the commitments, especially in the area of non-tariff barriers, agreed in the context of the scoping exercise.*

*In the run up to the formal launch of the negotiations with Japan, my services will require detailed input from the industry representatives, including the members of BusinessEurope to be able to address the core of the problems that EU businesses are facing in the Japanese market. Your input into the preparation of our negotiations with Japan is highly appreciated and the specific concerns expressed in the annex to your letter will be also examined. I can reassure you that many of them have already been taken up in the discussions with the Japanese side in the context of the scoping exercise.*

*I count on your organisation's continued support in this endeavour.*

Yours sincerely,



Karel De Gucht

*Mr Philippe de Buck, The Director General  
BUSINESSEUROPE  
Av De Cortenbergh 168  
B-1000 Brussels*