



EUROPEAN UNION
Delegation to Japan

Tokyo, 7 February 2017
DELJPN (2017)

EU COMMERCIAL COUNSELLORS' MEETING

TUESDAY, 7 FEBRUARY 2017, 10.00-12.00, EUROPA HOUSE

Out of
scope



2. FTA updates

Technical level meetings took place in Brussels in January without major progress, in particular on agricultural market access. Next formal round has not been fixed. Chief negotiators will discuss next steps on 8 February, while technical discussions such as a VC on Rules of Origin and e-commerce are foreseen.

Trade Commissioner Malmström sent a letter to Foreign Minister Kishida, inviting him to Brussels before PM Abe's visit to Europe. This was followed by President Juncker's letter to PM Abe, in which a call has been made for rapid conclusion of a comprehensive and ambitious FTA. In view of the Japanese dairy reform bill, which might clear the Diet by May, agricultural lobby in Japan is expected to become more vocal. EU Ambassador hosted a dinner with the key members of the recently launched LDP caucus against the EU FTA, a group with strong ties with agricultural constituencies. In essence the group has been founded in order to avoid negative backlash by these constituencies.

While the US has officially withdrawn from TPP, it may propose a bilateral trade agreement with Japan during PM Abe's visit to the US on 10-11 February. In this case the negotiations could begin sometime in autumn, after the general election in Japan. There is a risk that such negotiation could have an impact on the EU-Japan negotiations, which need to be finalised before.

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