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# A New Era of Japan-Europe Cooperation in a Changing World

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## A View from Japan

*Never have global systems been challenged as they are now. Governments must recognise that trustworthy and transparent cooperation becomes crucial in order to overcome pandemics and economic crises. This is a timely moment to look into Japan's relationship to the EU and to see if and how the partnership agreement can and will be of help to deepen ties. Dr. Ueta Takako analyses not only the current state of implementation of the Strategic Partnership agreement and defense collaboration but also she looks into how Japan and the EU will share lessons and insights gained from disease response measures.*

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## Introduction

In the midst of changing the constellation of world politics, the Japan-EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) entered into force on February 1, 2019. It covers about 30% of the world GDP and 40% of the world trade. The Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) was applied provisionally on the same day. These agreements are an impressive success, not only for Japan and the EU, but also for free trade and the liberal international order which has been threatened. The rise of China and the United States' attitudes toward multilateral cooperation has been a factor of this risk.

Looking back on history, on August 14, 1945, the Imperial Government of Japan accepted the Potsdam Declaration, it was the Proclamation Defining Terms for Japanese Surrender. The unconditional surrender of Japan was agreed by the heads of states of the United States, the United Kingdom and the USSR at the Schloss Cecilienhof in Potsdam. Almost all the cities in Japan had been burnt out by airstrikes and the atomic bombs; the Japanese people had to work hard in order to reconstruct their ruined country. Experience of the war results in the deeply rooted pacifism that is seen in Japan, and since the Second World War Japan has never used forces and even hesitates to send Self-Defense Forces for the peaceful operations. It was in 1991, after the Gulf War, for the first time, the Maritime Self-Defense Forces were sent to the Persian Gulf for minesweeping operations.

In 1936, the IOC decided to hold the 1940 Summer Olympics (Games of the XII Olympiad) in Tokyo. Yet in July 1937, Japan decided not to host the Games for various reasons, including the armed conflicts in China. Twenty-four years later, in October 1964, for the first time Japan welcomed the Olympic Games. Japan built not only stadiums, but also all the related infrastructure, including high-speed train and expressways as well as hotels. It triggered the booming economy and celebrated Japan's progress. Even before the opening of the games, Japan had become a member of the OECD in April 1964, demonstrating that Japan had become an advanced country once again. After the Olympic Games, in 1968, Japan exceeded West Germany in terms of GDP, and became the second-largest economy in the world.

During the Cold War and until 1989, except for the G7 set-up, no significant political cooperation was organized with European Institutions and European countries. This article traces the development of Japan-Europe relations, in particular security cooperation, since the end of the Cold War in Europe. This article refers to mainly the EC/EU, but also includes NATO and the CSCE/OSCE.[1]

## The Japan EC Hague Declaration (1991) as a Watershed

Japan appointed the Ambassador to Belgium as the Representative to the ECSC, EEC and EURATOM in 1959. In 1974, the EC opened its representation in Tokyo. The Mission of Japan to the EC was established in 1975 and in 1979, an Ambassador to the EC was inaugurated. It was in 1968 when internal customs of the EEC were abolished, and common tariffs set with third countries. From 1970, the Commission became the representative for trade negotiations. Trade relations between Japan and the EC became more active in the 1970s and 1980s. However, there were trade disputes between Japan and the EC which took place in the 1970s and continued until the early 1990s.

After the collapse of the Communist regimes in Central and East European countries in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Japan contributed greatly to these countries in their reform. In the case of

Yugoslavia, Japan helped enormously in the reconstruction of the Western Balkan countries though this region had little direct political implication in terms of the security and economy of Japan.

“The Joint Declaration on Relations between the European Community and its Member States and Japan,” in short, “The Hague Declaration” was issued on July 18, 1991 in the Hague. This declaration changed the nature of Japan-EC relations, from economic dispute to comprehensive cooperation. Mr. Hisashi Owada, then Senior Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs initiated this idea. Later, he became a Judge at the Hague International Court of Justice.

The Transatlantic Declaration in 1990 was the model of the Japan-EC Hague Declaration. In the Hague Declaration, Mr. Owada attached importance to policy coordination towards Russia and China. He explained the motivation: “The idea was to transform the shape of the relationship built almost exclusively on the trade in goods to the one built on a much broader basis, comprising not only a broader economic agenda like investment and industrial cooperation, but also political and social agendas like cooperation in the fields of environment, social welfare and security. This Japanese initiative was motivated by the desire on the part of Japan to strengthen the trilateral partnership between three regions of the world - East Asia, Europe and North America – and especially between Japan and Europe.”[2]

The most important achievement of the Hague Declaration was the institutionalized annual summit meeting with the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission and the Prime Minister of Japan. It also set the ministerial meetings and consultations between Japan and the European Commission. At the Foreign Minister level, and after its inauguration, with the High Representative/Vice-President. The outline of this Declaration is as follows: “...conscious of their common attachment to freedom, democracy, the rule of law and human rights affirming their common attachment to market principles, the promotion of free trade and the development of a prosperous and sound world economy.”

They agreed on cooperation in a wide range of sectors including:

- promoting negotiated solutions to international or regional tensions and the strengthening of the United Nations and other international organizations;
- supporting social system based on freedom, democracy, the rule of law, human rights and market economy;
- enhancing policy consultation and policy co-ordination on world peace and stability, including international security matters including non-proliferation of weapons and technology;
- pursuing co-operation aimed at achieving a sound development of the world economy and trade;
- strengthening their dialogue and co-operation on various aspects of multifaceted relations in such areas as trade, investment, industrial co-operation, advanced technology, energy, employment, social affairs and competition rules;
- supporting the efforts of developing countries, to achieve sustained development and political and economic progress, along with fostering respect for human rights;
- joining their efforts in meeting transnational challenges including environment, energy, terrorism, international crime and drugs;
- strengthening co-operation and, where appropriate, promoting joint projects in the field of science and technology;
- developing academic, cultural and youth exchange programmes;
- supporting, in co-operation with other States or organisations, Central and Eastern European countries; and
- co-operating, in relation with the countries of the Asia-Pacific region, for the promotion of peace, stability and prosperity of the region.

This Declaration has promoted dialogue and cooperation. Around ten years later, in January 2000, the then Foreign Minister of Japan, Mr. Yohei Kono presented "A Decade of Japan-Europe Cooperation," and based in this initiative, a detailed and concrete "Action Plan for EU-Japan Cooperation" was launched at the end of 2001. There were four major aims: (1) Promoting Peace and Security; (2) Strengthening the Economic and Trade Partnership utilizing the Dynamism of Globalization for the Benefit of All; (3) Coping with Global and Societal Challenges; and (4) Bringing together People and Cultures. Subsequently each year, these implementations were reviewed, and priorities set for the following year.

### **The Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) and the Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA)**

Ten years after the initiative of "A Decade of Japan-Europe Cooperation," Japan and the EU needed to set up a new framework for cooperation. At that time, coincidentally, Japan was concerned about the FTA between the EU and South Korea because of its less expensive automobiles and consumer electronics. The negotiations between the EC and South Korea began in May 2007, the FTA was signed in October 2009, and applied provisionally in July 2011.

The Japanese business circle asked the Government to start negotiations on a trade agreement with the EU. In April 2010, Japan and the EU decided to establish a joint high-level group to review and identify options for future Japan EU relations. At that time, some countries in the EU were not in favor of opening FTA negotiations with Japan. In the case of automobiles, no tariff was imposed on automobiles from the EU countries while EU imposed more than 10 per cent tariff on automobiles and consumer electronics from Japan.

The natural disasters that struck Japan in March 2011, a magnitude-9.0 earthquake and resulting tsunami, attracted sympathy from EU countries. Later, in May 2011 at the Japan-EU summit, it was decided to start the process for parallel negotiations for (1) a deep and comprehensive FTA/EPA and (2) a binding agreement, covering political, global and other sectorial cooperation. Japan and the EU started discussions for the purpose of defining the scope of the two negotiations and concluded it in May 2012.

In November 2012, the European Commission received the negotiating mandate and the Council approved the opening of parallel negotiations on "a broader bilateral framework agreement." On March 25, 2013, Prime Minister Abe, President Van Rompuy and President Barroso decided to launch negotiations for "an agreement covering political, global and sectoral cooperation and Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA)/Free Trade Agreement (FTA)", which were based on the scoping exercises.

The first round of the EPA negotiations took place from April 15 to 19, 2013, and the first SPA negotiations were on April 19 and 22, 2013. At the beginning stage, the EU called the SPA as a "Framework Agreement," while Japan used the term, "Political Agreement." Since the second

round negotiations, it was called “Strategic Partnership Agreement.” As for the SPA, Japan had never concluded an agreement of a political nature which was legally binding. At the beginning stage, Japan expected to have a political declaration which revised the Hague Declaration.

The 13th and last round of the SPA negotiations took place on June 8, 2017. The last round of the EPA, the 18th negotiations, took place from April 3 to 5, 2017. The summit leaders celebrated the agreement in principle on Japan-EU SPA and EPA at the 24th Japan-EU Summit in July 2017. On the occasion of the 25th Japan-EU Summit on July 17, 2018, a signing ceremony of the EPA and the SPA was held in Tokyo. This had originally been scheduled to take place in Brussels in early July, but Prime Minister Abe could not leave Japan because of his duties dealing with natural disasters at home. As the EU was keen to see early implementation of these agreements, President Tusk and President Juncker flew to Tokyo. The Summit Joint Statement explained the importance of the two agreements as follows:

- As for the EPA: Japan and the EU are sending a powerful message to promote free, fair and rules-based trade, and against protectionism ... the Agreement will be the model of high standard, free, open and fair trade and investment rules in the 21st century.
- As for the SPA: It will enrich the political dimension of our relationship and allow for deeper cooperation in a broad range of sectors, notably with regard to peace and security, migration, the fight against terrorism, energy, climate change, education, research and innovation, and development.

As can be seen from the statements, the SPA set a wide range for cooperation between Japan and the EU.

The Japan-EU EPA has “high level rule of the 21st century,” including rules of electronic commerce, state-owned enterprises, intellectual property, and regulatory cooperation. Chapter 16 covers “Trade and sustainable development.” In terms of EU imports from Japan, according to the EU statements, 99% of customs duties were abolished, increasing to 100% for industrial goods. In eight years, customs duties for automobiles will be abolished. With customs duties on beef, tea, fish and agricultural products, almost all duties were abolished immediately. In the case of EU exports to Japan, according to Japan, about 94% were abolished including 100% of the customs duties of industrial goods. Rice is excluded from the agreement, and soft cheese has a limited access.

The EPA did not include investment protection and its dispute settlement chapters since the attitudes of Japan and EU were different. Without these chapters, the EU does not need ratifications by individual member countries. Japan and the EU wished to conclude the EPA as quickly as possible. Brexit was another reason to swiftly conclude the EPA before the UK departure in order to avoid re-drafting of the whole agreement. Separate investment negotiations began with the first formal negotiation taking place in July 2018.

As for safe data transfers between Japan and the EU, on January 23, 2019, Mr. Kumazawa, Commissioner of the Personal Information Protection Commission (PPC) of Japan and Věra Jourová, Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, welcomed the decisions recognizing each other's personal data protection systems as equivalent by the PPC and the European Commission. It would facilitate the implementation of the EPA.

For Japan, the EPA is a major pillar of its economic growth policy. The TPP 11 (except for the United States) was signed in March 2018 and came into force among the six countries (Mexico, Japan, Singapore, New Zealand, Canada, Australia) in December 2018. A separate Japan-US Trade Agreement came into force in January 2020.

The SPA covers over 40 areas of cooperation. These are not new since Japan-EU bilateral dialogues at various levels from ministerial to working level in these areas have been continued. The areas are:

ARTICLE 2 Democracy, the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms; ARTICLE 3 Promotion of peace and security; ARTICLE 4 Crisis management; ARTICLE 5 Weapons of mass destruction; ARTICLE 6 Conventional arms, including small arms and light weapons; ARTICLE 7 Serious crimes of international concern and the International Criminal Court; ARTICLE 8 Counter-terrorism; ARTICLE 9 Chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear risk mitigation; ARTICLE 10 International and regional cooperation and reform of the United Nations; ARTICLE 11 Development policy; ARTICLE 12 Disaster management and humanitarian action; ARTICLE 13 Economic and financial policy; ARTICLE 14 Science, technology and innovation; ARTICLE 15 Transport; ARTICLE 16 Outer space; ARTICLE 17 Industrial cooperation; ARTICLE 18 Customs; ARTICLE 19 Taxation; ARTICLE 20 Tourism; ARTICLE 21 Information society; ARTICLE 22 Consumer policy; ARTICLE 23 Environment; ARTICLE 24 Climate change; ARTICLE 25 Urban policy; ARTICLE 26 Energy; ARTICLE 27 Agriculture; ARTICLE 28 Fisheries; ARTICLE 29 Maritime affairs; ARTICLE 30 Employment and social affairs; ARTICLE 31 Health; ARTICLE 32 Judicial cooperation; ARTICLE 33 Combating corruption and organised crime; ARTICLE 34 Combating money laundering and financing of terrorism; ARTICLE 35 Combating illicit drugs; ARTICLE 36 Cooperation on cyber issues; ARTICLE 37 Passenger name records; ARTICLE 38 Migration; ARTICLE 39 Personal data protection; ARTICLE 40 Education, youth and sport; ARTICLE 41 Culture.

The existing dialogues continue between Japan and the EU. Regularly, the Japan-EU Joint Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation is organised under the Japan-EU Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement, which entered into force on March 29, 2011. Recently, the home page of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan recorded the Space Policy Dialogues, Cyber Dialogues, Development Policy Dialogues, Human Rights Dialogues, Dialogues on North Pole, and senior officials' meeting on the environment. In October 2018, at the ministerial level, the High Level Industrial Trade and Economic Dialogue was held in Tokyo.

## Security cooperation between Japan and Europe

Since the end of the Cold War in Europe, Japan has developed cooperation with the CSCE (Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe) and NATO.

Japan is located next to the CSCE/OSCE area and the security situation there could impact Japan. In view of the drastic change in Europe, Japan proposed to the CSCE for special participating status. In July 1992, the Government of Finland invited Japan to attend the summit meeting. In Helsinki, Japan got special status, as a non-member which enabled Japan to attend the Permanent Council as well as the Forum for Security Co-operation. By so doing, Japan had broader access to various meetings. [3]

Japan has contributed to the CSCE/OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe) financially, but also by dispatching election monitors and experts. Recent contributions are as follows: personnel contribution to the Kosovo Mission since May 2016; election observers in 2019: Ukraine Presidential election in March (3 people) and April (5); Moldova Parliamentary election in February (1); Kazakhstan Presidential election in June (2); Belarus Lower House election in November (2). From a viewpoint of the domestic legislation procedure of Japan, personnel contribution to the OSCE is easier than to EU missions and operations since the OSCE is more flexible.

Japan offered voluntary financial contribution to the project on terrorist funding and organised crime in cyber space, and the Border Management Staff College in FY2018. Japan also decided to contribute to the Virtual Centre for the protection of critical energy infrastructure.

In the case of NATO, an important seminar took place in June 1990 between NATO and Japan in Belgium. Then high-level exchanges began with the visit of NATO Secretary-General Manfred Wörner to Tokyo in September 1991. In May 2006, Foreign Minister of Japan, Mr. Taro Aso gave a speech at the North Atlantic Council (NAC) for the first time as a Japanese Minister. Also, for the first time as a Prime Minister of Japan, Mr. Shinzo Abe made a speech at the NAC in January 2007.

NATO highly appreciated the huge contribution of Japan to Afghanistan, including the Afghan National Army Trust Fund and the Law and Order Trust Fund. Japan appointed a liaison officer to the Lithuanian Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) and the Swedish PRT since support programs were financed by Japan. Japan contributed to NATO Partnership for Peace Trust Funds projects in Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, Moldova and Georgia. NATO appreciated the contribution of Japan to the Balkans.

In June 2010, the Agreement between Japan and NATO on the Security of Information and Material was concluded. On the occasion of the visit of NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen in April 2013, Japan and NATO launched a "Joint Political Declaration" which identified agendas for cooperation, including cyber defense, disaster relief, counter terrorism, disarmament and non-proliferation and maritime security. In this declaration, Japan designated the bilateral Ambassador to the Kingdom of Belgium as the Representative of Japan to NATO. On July 1, 2018, the Mission of Japan to NATO was established.

In May 2015, Prime Minister Abe met Secretary-General Rasmussen at NATO and signed the Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme (IPCP) between Japan and NATO. Based on the agreement, Japan has participated in various NATO exercises.

In July 2018, the IPCP was revised. The priority areas for cooperation is cyber defense; maritime security; humanitarian assistance and disaster relief; disarmament, in particular related to small arms and light weapons, arms control, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery; defense science and technology; women, peace and security; public diplomacy activities; and other defense and security cooperation in the areas of mutual interest between Japan and NATO.

Recent financial contribution includes the project on unexploded bombs. Japan contributed one female officer of the Self-Defense Force to NATO Headquarters. Japan sent one liaison officer to the SHAPE (Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe) and MARCOM (Allied Maritime Command), as well as one expert from the Ministry of Defense to CCDCOE (Cooperate Cyber Defense Centre of Excellence). These officials continue to work there.

In the case of the EU, based on the Hague Declaration and other agreements, disarmament has been an important agenda for cooperation. The successful cooperation in the UN is the register system of conventional arms transfer. Japan supported the EU-led Arms Trade Treaty in 2013. Japan and the EU has had close cooperation in the case of the NPT Review Conferences. Besides Iran, another important issue, North Korea, is also an agenda for cooperation. Regarding the EU arms embargo on China in 1989, some time ago, France tried to lift it, which was of concern for Japan. However, the EU attitude towards China has evolved since around the year 2016. Concerns were expressed in 2019 EU policy document, "Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the European Council and the Council – EU-China – A strategic outlook."

Another area of important Japan-EU security cooperation is the EU CSDP missions and operations. In the case of counter-piracy operations off the coast of Somalia and the Gulf of Aden, a destroyer and patrol aircraft, P-3Cs from Japan have worked in cooperation with the EU operation Atalanta, among others. Since 2014, joint exercises in counter-piracy have been held in the Gulf of Aden. Japan supported EU missions and operations in Mali, Congo and Niger by offering capacity building measures, or improving security, anti-terrorism laws, and enhancing judicial cooperation.

Japan has a vision of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific." In August 2016, Prime Minister Abe announced this vision in his keynote address at TICAD (Tokyo International Conference on African Development VI) held in Kenya. This vision combines the two Continents, Asia and Africa, and two Oceans, a "Free and open Pacific and the Indian Ocean" for stability and prosperity of the international community. It is seeking peace and stability by promoting the rule of law, freedom of navigation and free trade.

The basic idea is not different from EU "Connectivity," hence Prime Minister Abe being invited by President Juncker to the Europa Connectivity Forum on September 27, 2019 where he delivered a keynote speech. He concluded his speech by saying: "It is by connecting with each other that humans can be humans. When we are connected, our societies and our countries become stronger. It is the truth that connectivity is a major bridge linking people, societies, and countries to the future. Moreover, Japan and Europe, now linked by an EPA and a SPA, are able to cooperate with each other to build a number of bridges to the future." [4] Prime Minister Abe and President Juncker signed "The Partnership on Sustainable Connectivity and Quality Infrastructure between Japan and the European Union." Both Japan and the EU have been the activities of China, "the Belt and Road Initiative" in mind; at the same time, Japan and the EU continue to cooperate with China. On this occasion, the Japanese and EU's development authorities confirmed Japan-EU cooperation in the field of development.

Among the European countries, Japan has had regular Foreign and Defense Ministers' Meetings (2+2) as well as ACSA (Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement) with the UK and France. The UK and France have conducted "Freedom of Navigation" operations in the South China Sea. Japan agreed to conduct various joint exercises with the both countries.

In May 2017, U.S. Marine Corps and the forces of Japan, France and the United Kingdom participated in "Jeanne D'Arc" multinational exercise on Guam and Tinian, and in the surrounding waters. It was a French-led exercise for the purpose of strengthening strategic partnerships and exercising freedom of navigation operations across the Indo-Asia-Pacific region. In May 2019, in the north of Sumatra, in the Bengal Bay, the first joint exercise of US, Japan, France and Australia's "La Perouse" was conducted. Japan has also joined exercises which India has participated in.

## Brexit and Japan

For Japan, the United Kingdom has been one of its most respected countries. The Anglo-Japanese Alliance in 1902 brought the Splendid Isolation to an end. Based on this alliance, in August 1914, Japan declared war against Germany. After the Second World War, in which Japan was the ally of Germany and Italy, Japan and the UK restored friendly relations. When the Emperor of Japan was the Crown Prince, he studied at Merton College, Oxford University from 1983 to 1985.

Most of the Japanese firms and major newspapers established their European general offices in London. Not surprisingly, the British referendum in June 2016 caused anxiety in Japan. Immediately



after this referendum, the Government of Japan established a Taskforce, and the first meeting was held on July 27. The Government listened to the economic and financial community carefully. The Taskforce was presided over by the Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary. It was composed of senior officials at the General Director level from various Ministries, including the Foreign Ministry, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, and the Financial Services Agency. Between July 27 in 2016 to January 31 in 2020, they had 15 meetings.

The third meeting on the second of September adopted the message to the UK and the EU. The Prime Minister and Ministers were to convey this message to their counterparts, and the overseas embassy and representative of Japan were instructed to appeal to the UK and the EU. The experts and officials of the UK and the EU were surprised by this quick action and deep analysis. It showed the serious concerns of Japan brought about by Brexit. In the message, the concrete measures are as follows:

- Requests directed at the UK and the EU
  - maintenance of the current tariff rates and customs clearance procedures;
  - introduction of provisions for cumulative rules of origin;
  - maintenance of the access to workers who are nationals of the UK or the EU;
  - maintenance of the freedom of establishment and the provision of financial services, including the “single passport” system;
  - maintenance of the freedom of cross-border investment and the provision of services as well as the free movement of capital, including that between associated companies;
  - maintenance of the current level of information protection and the free transfer of data;
  - unified protection of intellectual property rights;
  - maintenance of harmonization of the regulations and standards between the UK and the EU (including the maintenance of established frameworks of mutual recognition and equivalence);
  - securing the UK’s function as a clearing centre for the euro and the location within the UK of EU agencies such as the European Medicines Agency (EMA); and
  - maintenance of the UK’s access to the EU budget for research and development and participation in the Japan-EU joint research project.
    - Additional requests directed at the UK
      - liberalization of trade in goods without the burdens of customs duties and procedures;
      - maintenance of access to workers with the necessary skills;
      - maintenance of basic policies regarding the entry of foreign capital;
      - implementation of measures to promote investment;
      - maintenance of the current levels of information protection and the free transfer of data in case the UK establishes its own legislation distinct from the EU’s;
      - ensuring the consistency of regulations and standards between the UK and the EU; and
      - ensuring that the EU’s research and development budget applies to research institutions in the UK.
    - Additional request directed at the EU
      - provision of transitional arrangements for the single passporting system [5]

On December 21, Prime Minister Abe of Japan, spoke on the phone with the UK Prime Minister, Mr. Boris Johnson after his election victory, and expressed his desire to “work hand in hand with Boris to further strengthen the good relations between Japan and the UK, dating from the days of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance.” Prime Minister Johnson expressed “his desire to sustain momentum for further deepening friendly relations between Japan and the UK through both security and defense cooperation and trade.” On Brexit, Prime Minister Abe “expressed his strong hope that the country would deliver an exit in a manner that would minimize any impacts on the economic activities of Japanese businesses and on the world economy, followed by swift negotiations on the future

relationship between the UK and the EU." Prime Minister Abe also expressed "his intent to quickly establish an ambitious future economic partnership between Japan and the UK after the UK's withdrawal from the EU as he had shared the view with Prime Minister Johnson of ensuring that the businesses of both countries would be able to maintain their economic activities in a smooth and stable manner, while stating that Japan would continue to support the UK for its potential accession to the TPP11." Prime Minister Johnson replied that he would like to "enter into discussions regarding an ambitious future economic partnership between Japan and the UK based on the Japan-EU EPA as soon as possible after the UK leaves the EU by the end of January 2020." [6]

The Japanese business circle has watched the development carefully. JETRO (Japan External Trade Organization) conducted a survey on the Brexit from September 10 to October 8, 2019, and 842 Japanese firms in Europe responded to the inquiry. Many firms in the financial and insurance sector decided to move their European headquarters from the UK to Germany, the Netherlands and Luxemburg. Including in the planning stage, in the case of sales function, to Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, Czech Republic, Poland, France, and Belgium, on the production side, to Germany, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Romania, and other Central and East European Countries, and on the procurement side, to Italy, Spain, the Czech Republic, Poland, the Netherlands, Germany, Portugal and Asia. Many countries in the EU are lobbying for Japanese firms to move to their country. [7] Sony and Panasonic moved their European headquarters from the UK to Amsterdam. As for the financial sector, SMBC, Mizuho, Nomura, and Daiwa decided to move their head offices in Europe to Frankfurt. In the case of MUFJ, it was Amsterdam. Carmaker Honda will close its UK factory by 2021.

At the end of January 2020, Japanese media reported the UK withdrawal widely. On February 1, Foreign Minister Mr. Motegi issued a statement saying that Japan valued the progress made under Prime Minister Johnson, and "the Government of Japan will work promptly with the Government of the UK after the country's withdrawal from the EU in order to establish a new economic partnership between the two countries based on the Japan-EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA). Japan remains committed to strengthening Japan-UK relations not only in economic relations, but also in wide-ranging areas including security and defense, and culture. Japan will further enhance its relations with the EU based on the Japan-EU EPA and Japan-EU Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA)." [8]

After Brexit, the UK needs to strengthen bilateral relations with Japan, and to agree new FTAs. Immediately after the Brexit Day, UK Foreign Secretary Mr. Raab visited Japan on February 8, after Australia, and the UK and Japan held the eighth Japan-UK Foreign Minister's Strategic Dialogue. Mr. Raab explained that after Brexit, the UK would like to strengthen relations in all areas, including politics, economy, security and defense, since the UK and Japan are the most important partners sharing the same values. The UK and Japan agreed to conclude a bilateral Economic Partnership Agreement swiftly. Mr. Raab expressed UK interest in joining the TPP, in which Foreign Minister Motegi expressed his support. Security and defense cooperation, including North Korea and freedom of navigation is also an important agenda. [9]

In their joint press statement, they "expressed concern about the situation in the South China Sea and the East China Sea and strongly opposed any unilateral action that seeks to change the status quo and increase tensions." [10] This concern was expressed without naming China. North Korea has been another source of concern. According to the joint press statement, the Royal Navy has deployed to Northeast Asia six times since 2018. Defense cooperation of the two countries will be enhanced since Indo-Pacific is a priority area for the UK's vision of "Global Britain."

## Future Agendas for Cooperation

One year after the implementation of the EPA, Japan and the EU has a successful record so far. According to the EU statistics, EU exports to Japan went up by 6.6% from February to November 2019 in comparison to the same period the year before. European wine recorded a 17.3% increase. The Japanese export of automobiles recorded a 19% increase and beef, 28% from February to November 2019, based on Japanese statistics. Thanks to the EPA, the trade between Japan and EU seems to be rosy, while world trade in general is decelerating.

The second SPA Joint Committee was held in Brussels on January 31, 2020. Japan and the EU focused on cooperation based on “the Partnership on Sustainable Connectivity and Quality Infrastructure between Japan and the EU” signed in September 2019, and both continue to enhance cooperation in the fields as “sustainable connectivity, quality infrastructure and global issues including environment as well as security policy in accordance with SPA.” [11]

In the case of security cooperation, in addition to Asia, the Middle East is a common interest. A Japanese destroyer left for the Middle East on February 2 to join the Maritime Self-Defense Force’s first long-term information-gathering mission. Two patrol planes, P-3Cs were dispatched on January 11. These planes are to join anti-piracy operations as well. This mission aims at ensuring the safety of Japanese-related commercial shipping in the Gulf of Oman, northern part of Arabian Sea, and the eastern part of the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait of the Gulf of Aden. Japan did not join the US-led Operation Sentinel but would exchange information with the operation. Japan would also cooperate with the French-led European Operation, EMASOH (France, the Netherlands, Denmark, Greece, Belgium, Germany, Italy and Portugal).

Japan is developing renewable energy, although for the time being, around 88% of crude oil is coming from the Middle East; in 2018, Saudi Arabia 38.6%, UAE 25.4%, Qatar 7.9%, Kuwait 7.7%, Russia 4.8%, Iran 4.3%, and Iraq 1.8%.

Japan has supported the Iran nuclear deal, JCPOA, while still maintaining good relations with Iran. In 2013, on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, and annually until 2019, Prime Minister Abe has held summit meetings with President Rouhani. In June 2019, Prime Minister Abe visited Iran, and had a meeting with the President on June 12 and with the Supreme Leader Khamenei the day after. Prime Minister Abe continued to stress a constructive role for Iran in the stability in the Middle East and attached importance to the JCPOA. [12] From December 20 to 21, 2019, President Rouhani of Iran paid an official visit to Japan and met Prime Minister Abe. The Prime Minister said that he should continue diplomatic efforts for decreasing tensions and stabilisation for the Middle East and expressed concern on the Iranian attitude toward the JCPOA. The visiting President appreciated the effort of Japan in the Middle East and said that he would cooperate with Japan closely. He explained the Iranian attitude towards the JCPOA. In addition, Prime Minister Abe explained the dispatch of Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Forces to the Middle East and the President understood the Japanese intention for securing navigation.[13] On Iran and the Middle East, Japan has had close exchange of views with the United States despite the two countries not sharing the same position.

Indeed, Japan has paid a good deal of attention to the situation in the Middle East since peace and stability there is a key to the growth of world economy. From January 11-15, 2020, Prime Minister Abe visited Saudi Arabia, UAE and Oman. In the three countries, Prime Minister Abe exchanged views on the situation in the Middle East and enhanced bilateral cooperation. He also explained the objectives of the dispatch of the Self-Defense Forces. [14]

On Japan-EU cooperation, another possibility will be development and security cooperation in Africa and in Asia. Since 2008 Japan has provided support to 13 peacekeeping training centers in Africa (Egypt, Mali, Ghana, Nigeria, Benin, Togo, Cameroon, Ethiopia (two locations), Rwanda, Kenya, Tanzania and South Africa). In addition to financial contributions, experts from Japan were sent as instructors or consultants. In September 2014, at the UN 1st Leader's Summit of Peacekeeping, Prime Minister Abe expressed contribution to the rapid deployment of equipment and personnel with engineering capabilities in the framework of the training under the UN Triangular Partnership Project. It was in combination with offering equipment with the Japanese contribution. The Japanese instructors from the Ground Self-Defense Force were sent to Uganda in 2019, to the Kenya International Peace Support Training Centre in 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018, and to Vietnam in 2018, 2019 and 2020.

Other agendas for cooperation will be humanitarian assistance and disaster relief cooperation, bilateral or in third countries, which was agreed on the occasion of the Japan-EU summit in 2011. The activities of EU ECHO are not well-known in Japan.

The EU may contribute to enhancing security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific area. The EU is a member of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), which ranges from India to North America. In this region, no security dialogues have been institutionalized with permanent delegations of member countries. The ARF has had annual foreign ministers' meetings, but it has not had weekly meetings among permanent delegations. The degree of security cooperation is different from the OSCE area. In order to have a rule-based order in this region, the EU will be able to contribute help countries of this region understand the necessity of institutionalized security cooperation and the CSBMs.

As for the novel coronavirus disease, before the G7 Foreign Ministers' video conference on March 25, 2020, Mr. Motegi, Foreign Minister of Japan, held a telephone talk with Mr. Josep Borrell Fontelles, High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Vice-President of the European Commission on March 19, 2020. Foreign Minister Motegi explained the situation in Japan, and the measures taken by Japan. He stated that partnership among G7 members was extremely important to contain the novel coronavirus as it was shown on the occasion of the G7 Summit Video Teleconference Meeting on March 16, 2020. High Representative Borrell explained the EU's measures and the various economic impacts. They shared the view as follows: (1) As the disease spreads in the respective countries, Japan and the EU will share lessons and insights gained from disease response measures, and in particular, since the development of treatments and vaccines is extremely important, Japan and the EU will strengthen public and private initiatives together; (2) Temporary and appropriate border measures are conceivable for preventing the spread of the disease and it is important to share information with the relevant countries when taking such measures; (3) Japan and the EU will cooperate to ensure the safety of both Japanese and European nationals residing respectively, and in particular, the EU will support measures taken by its member states in Europe.[15]

The closer cooperation between Japan and EU will influence the future course of the ASEM (Asia-Europe Meeting), a dialogue process at the heads of the states' level as well as various ministers' level, including 30 European countries and the EU, and 21 Asian countries and the ASEAN Secretariat. The ASEM has attached importance to "connectivity" since the 10th summit in 2014.

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