



# Japan-What's Next?

9-10 June, 2011  
Stockholm, Sweden



## A Report from the Conference “Japan –What’s Next”

The conference “Japan – What’s Next?”, organized by the European Institute of Japanese Studies (EIJS) in cooperation with the European Japan Advanced Research Network (EJARN), was very timely. It came only two weeks after the 20<sup>th</sup> EU-Japan Summit in Brussels where the Japanese Prime Minister Naoto Kan met with both Mr. Herman Van Rompuy, President of the European Council and Mr. Jose Manuel Barosso, President of the European Commission. At that meeting, new steps for strengthening the EU-Japan Relations were announced.

The summit leaders agreed to start parallel negotiations for:

- A Free Trade Agreement/Economic Partnership Agreement addressing both tariff and non-tariff issues
- A binding agreement, covering political, global and other sectoral cooperation in a comprehensive manner, and underpinned by their shared commitment to fundamental values and principles

These two groundbreaking agreements, as you might expect, became the main topics for discussion at our conference. The first day was dedicated to bringing together business leaders, officials and scholars. Welcome remarks were given by the Director of EIJS Marie Söderberg, the President of the Stockholm School of Economics Lars Bergman, and H.E. Mr. Yoshiki Watanabe Japan’s Ambassador to Sweden. After the triple catastrophes (earthquake, tsunami and nuclear radiation leakage) in Japan we felt we had better to start of with a discussion on Japan’s economy after the crises. Both EU and Japanese perspectives were taken into consideration as the speakers list consisted of the Chairman of the Swedish Trade Council Mr. Bo Dankis (with his own experiences from the Kobe earthquake and many years of living in Japan) and Mr. Naohiko Nishio, Director of Mitsubishi Corporations Stockholm Office. Dr. Patricia A. Nelson, Senior Research Fellow EIJS, chaired the session.



Pictured from left: Professor Lars Bergman, H.E. Mr. Yoshiki Watanabe and Professor Marie Söderberg

This was followed by a session analyzing the current state of affairs and the prospects for a binding political agreement between Japan and the EU. In addition to two EU-Japan specialists, Professor Axel Berkofsky of the University of Pavia and Professor Yuichi Hosoya of Keio University, we also heard from two officials who have been working concretely with this agreement, Ms. Florence Liou, Deputy Head of Division, European External Action Service and Mr. Jiro Takamoto, chief of the EU Unit, Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Ample time was also given to discussion among them as well with the very qualified audience that we had invited.



Pictured from left: Mr. Jiro Takamoto, Ms. Florence Liou, and Professors Yuichi Hosoya, Axel Berkofsky and John Swenson-Wright, who was chairing the session

Directly after the lunch break, we followed the same presentation-discussion pattern concerning trade related economic issues. Chairing the first afternoon session was the Swedish Director-General for Trade, Mr. Anders Ahnlid, who started with some comments of his own. The academic speakers were Dr. Patricia A. Nelson of EIJS and Mr. Hosuk Lee-Makiyama of the European Centre for International Political Economy. On the government side, there were presentations by the Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry Special Advisor based at JETRO London Mr. Yasu Matsuyama and by Deputy Head of Unit, DG Trade, European Commission Mr. Antonio Parenti. Also in the session, a considerable amount of time was allotted for discussion. This first part of the day was governed by "Chatham House Rules," a format according to which what is said and disclosed in the room is not to be quoted or attributed. These 'rules' enabled us to engage in frank and open discussions. Mr. Ryotaro Suzuki, Minister and Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Japan in Sweden, generously provided the photos.



Pictured from left: Mr. Hosuk Lee-Makiyama, Mr. Yasu Matsuyama, Dr. Patricia A. Nelson, Mr. Antonio Parenti and Mr. Anders Ahnliid, who chaired the session

During the last part of the day we opened up our discussions to a wider audience, including journalists, and held a round table on EU-Japan trade relations. The participants were the Chairman of the European Business Council in Tokyo, Mr. Tommy Kullberg, the Chair of EU Trade Policy Group and Senior Vice President of SEB (one of the main Swedish Banks), Mr. Erik Belfrage, the Deputy Executive Director of the Japan Machinery Centre in Brussels, Mr. Hajime Wakuda as well as Professor Hiromasa Kubo of Kobe University. Also here there was a vivid debate and discussion among the participants as well as with the audience. The first day was concluded with a dinner cruise for the speakers and active participants of the conference to Drottningholm Castle, the official residence of the Swedish Royal Family, which is on the UNESCO World Heritage List. We were blessed with extremely nice weather and in this very relaxed and informal setting, the participants continued with contact building via pleasant, lively discussion.



Pictured from left: Mr. Hajime Wakuda, Mr. Hiromasa Kubo, Mr. Erik Belfrage, Mr. Tommy Kullberg and Professor Marie Söderberg who moderated the round table

The second day of the conference was more of a traditional academic workshop with paper presentations and in-depth discussion. Again we started with the EU-Japan Agenda. Professor Axel Berkofsky, University of Pavia talked under the title “EU-Japan in the years ahead” and Professor Yuichi Hosoya, Keio University presented a paper on the normative partnership. Both at this conference as well as on the top-level summit in Brussels normative partnerships seemed to occupy an important position in the talks. The second session was on EU-Japan trade. Professor Hiromasa Kubo from Kobe University talked on “Prospects for a Free Trade Agreement” and Associate Professor Norbert Palanovics from University of Pécs delivered a paper on perceptual differences in the trade between EU and Japan.

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In the afternoon, we left the EU-Japan theme and turned to Japanese politics and security. Professor Kimie Hara from University of Waterloo presented a paper on frontier problems in the shifting regional order in East Asia and Linus Hagström, Senior Research Fellow, Swedish Institute of International Affairs presented issues of territorial disputes between China and Japan. These two papers generated a considerable amount of debate. Finally Bert Edström, Senior Research Fellow, Institute for Security and Development, presented Fukushima as a stress test for the Japanese political system. The second afternoon session concentrated our minds on responses to the earthquake and mediating risk. The two speakers here were Associate Professor Annette Skovsted Hansen of Aarhus University and Professor Glenn Hook of Sheffield University.

Finally we rounded off the day with a brief discussion among the EJARN scholars about our two-day meeting. This was also the annual meeting of the EJARN network. Everyone was extremely pleased with the discussion that took place especially during the first day, and there seemed to be agreement that these were essential points of discussion that need to be followed up over time. There was a strong recommendation to hold a second conference on the same theme next year. There was also a suggestion that on that occasion, we should make a special effort to invite more journalists, including Japanese ones, so that the EU-Japan cooperation agenda and what is happening in this field will reach a wider audience. Our plan is indeed to do this next year.

Toshiba International Foundation contributed to the financing of this conference and we would like to express our gratitude for that.