



**EU Domestic Advisory Group  
under the EU-Japan Economic  
Partnership Agreement**

**Statement by the EU Domestic Advisory Group  
delivered at the EU-Japan Joint Dialogue with Civil Society  
on 4 March 2026 in Tokyo  
by EU DAG Chair Stuart Newman**

Ladies and gentlemen, participants here in the room and online,

1. The EU Domestic Advisory Group (EU DAG), established under the EU–Japan Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), is delighted to be taking part in this 7th Joint Dialogue with civil society here in Tokyo. I am serving as Chair of the EU DAG for the 2025–2028 term, representing the Business Group. The office of Chair rotates every two and a half years between business, trade unions and NGOs to ensure balanced representation.
2. We value greatly enhanced collaboration between governments, social partners and wider organised civil society stakeholders in order to fulfil our advisory role as the EU DAG on the full implementation of the Trade and Sustainable Development (TSD) Chapter of the EPA.
3. In these times of heightened geopolitical tension, it is more important than ever to foster cooperation and collaboration at every level, including among organised civil society organisations. Working together effectively can help us navigate this challenging environment and ensure that our collective efforts contribute to more stable, prosperous and sustainable economies and societies. We therefore welcome today’s Joint Dialogue and thank our hosts for organising this meeting.
4. On climate cooperation, the EU and Japan share a strategic responsibility to accelerate progress towards climate neutrality. Enhanced bilateral cooperation on industrial decarbonisation, clean technologies and resilient supply chains can reinforce both Parties’ contributions to global climate goals while supporting a competitive and socially-balanced economic transition. This is already reflected in the cooperation developed under the EU-Japan Green Alliance. As this approaches its fifth anniversary, we encourage the Parties to include decarbonisation of the maritime industry and to place Just Transition at the centre of its operational work plan. This will have significant implications for workers at sea, in ports, in shipyards and throughout the maritime supply chain and will require training, funding and a worker-centred process based on social dialogue. We therefore ask the Parties also to increase their collaboration on a Just Transition within the Net Zero Framework of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO).



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5. As part of its broader climate framework, we underline the importance of continued dialogue between the EU and Japan on the functioning of the EU Carbon Border Adjustment mechanism in order to ensure transparent and predictable implementation and to promote cooperation on decarbonisation pathways and preserve fair competition.
6. On preventing greenwashing, we stress that the effectiveness of climate and sustainability policies depends on public trust and regulatory credibility. While the EU is strengthening its framework, notably through the Green Transition Directive, which will apply from September 2026, Japan's approach remains limited to non-binding guidance with enforcement mechanisms that are lacking. We call on Japan to introduce clear, enforceable regulations requiring evidence-based substantiation of green claims. We also encourage both Parties to pursue convergence of green claims standards, for instance under the EU-Japan Green Alliance, to reduce trade friction and support fair competition.
7. On sustainable forest management, we highlight the European Commission's key principle of cascading use of biomass, which is a consequence of a circular economy commitment to encourage the efficient use of bio-based resources. It promotes the use of wood first for high-value products with a long lifetime, then reusing, recycling or finally using it for energy. In this connection we call for forest management to be ecologically sound, economically viable and socially just and to respect fundamental property rights and the rule of law.
8. On upholding high labour standards, we stress the importance of sound, steady implementation of ratified conventions, full respect for ILO monitoring body reports and recommendations and the full implementation of core labour rights as a cornerstone of the EPA's credibility. In this context, we underline that ongoing dialogue and international supervision remain essential tools and we call on Japan to ratify Convention 111. Ratification of this convention would represent a significant step forward for the protection of every worker from discrimination. We also urge Japan to undertake genuine, sustained efforts to ensure full compliance with Convention 87, particularly by resolving the longstanding issue of granting fundamental labour rights – including the right to organise – to public sector workers such as firefighters and prison officers. Equally, we emphasise that every worker has the right to a safe and healthy working environment as enshrined by Conventions 155 and 187. We therefore call on Japan to advance its ratification efforts on C155 and urge our own EU Member States that have not yet done so to ratify both these fundamental ILO conventions.
9. As part of the core labour rights defined by the ILO, we stress the importance of addressing and preventing forced labour. Therefore, we would like to see a strengthening of the protection against forced labour through the enforcement of ILO



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Convention No. 105 and the ratification of the Protocol P29. We also underline the importance of promoting responsible supply chains among multinational Japanese companies in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), alongside continued efforts to enhance protection and working conditions for migrant workers. We also draw attention to the fact that the EU's Forced Labour Regulation will come into force in December 2027. This will result in EU businesses closely scrutinising their supply chains and will require cooperation with sourcing companies.

10. On responsible business conduct, we welcome Japan's revised National Action Plan. In particular for placing human rights due diligence at the centre of supply chain practices; requesting ministries to operate systems that ensure vulnerable groups such as women, foreign workers, young people and persons with disabilities are not excluded; looking at human rights in a climate adaptation context; including capacity building for businesses to promote the implementation of the Guiding Principles; and promoting the disclosure of corporate information and access to remedies (with whistleblower protection and grievance mechanisms). This is a significant step toward resilient global supply chains sustainable and ethical trade practices.
11. Close cooperation between the EU and Japan is essential, particularly when new legislation with potential trade impact is being developed. Regular dialogue helps to ensure mutual understanding and effective implementation while also reducing administrative requirements for economic operators.
12. We trust that today's dialogue will be constructive and forward-looking and that it will make a useful contribution to the upcoming meeting of the Committee on Trade and Sustainable Development. We would also welcome joint debriefing and follow-up dialogue after the Parties' meeting, as happened in October 2025.

Thank you very much.

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