



Delegation for relations with Japan

D-JP_PV(2012)0314

MINUTES

of the meeting of 14 March 2012, from 16.00 to 17.00
Strasbourg

The meeting opened at 16.05 on Wednesday, 14 March 2012, with Johannes Cornelis van Baalen (Chair) in the chair.

1. Adoption of the draft agenda

Mr van Baalen welcomed the Ambassador of Japan, H.E. Mr Kojiro Shiojiri to the meeting.

The agenda was adopted.

2. Approval of the minutes of the meeting of 14 December 2011

The minutes of the last meeting were adopted.

Mr Gollnisch asked about a letter to Baroness Ashton regarding the issue of participation of delegation members in the EU-Japan summit. Mr van Baalen agreed to follow this matter up.

3. Communications by the Chair

Mr van Baalen referred to the anniversary of the earthquake and tsunami on 11 March 2011 and noted that he had recently sent a letter of condolence to the Ambassador and that President Schulz had also made a statement on the issue.

He also informed members that Ms Nadejde had been replaced by Mr Boden as the staff member responsible for the delegation.

4. Exchange of views with H.E. Ambassador Kojiro SHIOJIRI on economic recovery, context of the financial crisis and on Economic Partnership Agreements

Mr van Baalen gave the floor to the Ambassador.

Mr Shiojiri thanked Mr van Baalen for his letter. He noted that the death total following the earthquake/tsunami was 16,000 and that there were still 3,000 persons missing. 400,000 houses had been destroyed. The government continued to deal with the results of the catastrophe, including building temporary housing. 600 people were still in shelters. The cost of the damage was EUR200 billion. However industry was making a recovery and the government had provided the necessary funding for reconstruction:

The Fukushima power plant was still a serious problem as the decommissioning would take 30 to 40 years and this was an unprecedented challenge. Radiation contamination was another serious problem and it would take many years to tackle. The evacuation area extended to 20 kilometres around the power plant and 80,000 people had been relocated.

There were extremely strict measures to safeguard food safety and "fruitful" discussion continued with the EU authorities on the issue. It was hoped that restrictions could be lifted as soon as possible.

The Ambassador noted that Japan had 54 nuclear plants - the second highest in the world after France. Only two plants were currently operating. Plants were checked every 13 months and this was followed by a stress test. The approval of local communities was necessary and at present these communities were very reluctant to give their approval to the functioning of power plants. The Prime Minister had declared that Japan would reduce its dependence on nuclear power to the maximum possible and the government was planning to revise the original plan to double the dependence on nuclear power. There would be a revised plan which reduced dependency on nuclear power and Commissioner Oettinger would come to Japan in the near future to cooperate on this issue. Economic growth had now resumed and annual GDP was likely to increase by 2%. Trade with the EU was relatively limited and the disaster had therefore not had a major impact on the EU.

He noted that the scoping exercise on the Free Trade Agreement/Economic Partnership Agreement (FTA/EPA) was reaching its final stages and was progressing well. There was currently no date fixed for the formal start of negotiations but Japan wanted them to be launched in the course of 2012 following the summit and to achieve a "high level EPA/FTA". Similar agreements were being prepared with other countries - including Trans Pacific agreements and tripartite agreements with South Korea and China. The EPA/FTA was a very important pillar of this multifaceted approach. The Ambassador concluded by noting that the momentum to conclude the agreement was very high and both sides needed "to ride on this bus".

Mr Shiojiri then presented gifts from the people in the area affected by the disaster to the members of the delegation. Mr van Baalen thanked him very much for this kindness and expressed the hope that the EU would apply the correct criteria on food imports.

Mr Harbour referred to the discussions during the previous delegation visit to Japan on the reconstruction plans. There had been talk of completely new urban and sustainable communities and also inviting foreign architects to share their ideas and to promote innovation. He believed that the EU-Japan Science and Technology Agreement would provide a framework for cooperation on this issue.

The Ambassador stressed that Japan needed the strong involvement of other countries and their expertise in the reconstruction work, for example in nuclear safety. There was a clear

need for increased communication to achieve this. The basic plan for reconstruction was in place.

Mr van Baalen was keen to examine the issue of the reconstruction plans in more detail. He noted that the reconstruction programme would be a very useful subject for a future meeting.

Mr Vaughan agreed that the EU should do all it could to help Japan recover from the disaster, including research funding for areas such as emergency planning. He also noted that the European Commission had identified financial services as being currently a barrier to an agreement.

The Ambassador replied that the issue of EU assistance could be discussed on another occasion. He referred to discussion at the end of March on the issue of financial services and procurement and hoped for a good result.

Mr van Baalen stated that the issue of EU funding could be addressed to the EEAS/Commission.

Mrs Kalniete confirmed the delegation's support for concluding the FTA with Japan and was glad that the scoping exercise was making progress. She noted that the monitoring group on Japan headed by Mr Kazak, the INTA rapporteur on the FTA provided a valuable opportunity to discuss the developments in this area. There had also been a lunch discussion on issues relating to the EU and Japanese positions on medical and pharmaceutical products. She stressed that this type of dialogue was a valuable instrument to deepen understanding of the scoping exercise.

Mr van Baalen noted that Commissioner de Gucht had referred at a recent meeting to the ongoing problems over non-tariff barriers. The Ambassador referred to them as "non-tariff measures" and agreed that they were harmful to trade and that the issue should be tackled through the scoping exercise. It was important to ensure harmonisation on this issue.

Mr Gollnisch asked if the Japanese government was going to provide compensation to the survivors of the disaster to enable them to move elsewhere or whether the aim was to reconstruct the devastated areas.

The Ambassador stated that the government's main aim was to deal with the challenges in ensuring energy generation. Local governments were also providing both "physical and mental" support. The approach was very comprehensive. He stressed that the approach was to be "bottom-up" and the local populations were being encouraged to come forward with their wishes and indeed 80% of local communities had presented their own plans. These included the wish for there to be international involvement in the reconstruction effort.

Mrs Brepoels noted that a stricter system for the testing of food products was starting on 1 April. She wanted to know whether the monitoring before that time had been less strict. She also asked whether there were still import restrictions on Japanese food products to the EU market.

The Ambassador emphasised that Japan's food safety standards were already extremely strict. However people had demanded even stricter standards and these were being implemented from April onwards. He noted that the USA relied on the Japanese food safety tests, while the EU was taking extremely preventive measures in response to the issue.

Mr van Baalen asked how Japan's Trans Pacific Partnership with the USA related to its relationship to the USA and whether there would be different outcomes. The Ambassador stressed that it was not a matter of either/or and Japan wanted to engage with all sides. In his personal view it needed to conclude first with the EU and make a platform for agreements with other countries.

Mr van Baalen thanked the Ambassador for his very valuable contribution.

5. Delegation programme of activity in 2012

Mr van Baalen announced that the 33rd EU-Japan IPM was scheduled to take place in Brussels on Wednesday 30 May from 1500 to 1830hrs and on Thursday 31 May from 0900 to 1230hrs. Members were invited to propose issues for debate either in the meeting or subsequently by email. A detailed programme would be sent out. He also asked the Ambassador for proposals.

Mr Gollnisch asked if there were any plans for the Japanese delegation to go outside Brussels during their time in Europe. Mr van Baalen noted that a visit to Prague had been planned on the previous visit but that this had not taken place in the end. He stressed that this additional visit would be dependent on an individual member taking responsibility for hosting the visit. They - or their governments/parliaments - would have to finance any costs involved in the visit.

The Ambassador stressed that it would be very valuable for the Japanese delegation to have the opportunity to go outside Brussels and that they could be "flexible" on any expenses.

Mr van Baalen asked any members who might be able to assist on this issue to come forward as soon as possible.

6. 21st EU-Japan summit - 2012

Mr van Baalen noted that there was currently no fixed date for the EU-Japan summit although it was likely to take place in June as was customary. He stressed that it would be useful if the Japanese parliamentarians also pressed to be involved in the summit.

7. Any other business

Mr van Baalen noted that at a previous meeting the delegation had supported the holding of an exhibition in the European Parliament. He would raise this matter with Mr Schulz.

Mrs Kalniete recalled that at a previous delegation meeting members had supported the holding of an exhibition that would be organised jointly with the embassy of Japan. The necessary space had been booked from 23 to 27 April. The event would commemorate the Fukushima disaster and would showcase the reconstruction work and EU-Japanese cooperation. She referred to procedural difficulties as the EP rules did not permit a delegation to organise exhibitions. She was nevertheless confident that this issue could be resolved satisfactorily as there was great support for the initiative from every member with whom she had spoken.

Mrs Jimenez gave her full support to this initiative.

8. Date and place of next meeting

Mr van Baalen closed the meeting. Members would be advised as soon as possible of the time and date of the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 17.00.

**ПРИСЪСТВЕН ЛИСТ/LISTA DE ASISTENCIA/PREZENČNÍ LISTINA/DELTAGERLISTE/
ANWESENHEITSLISTE/KOHALOLIJATE NIMEKIRI/KATAΣΤΑΣΗ ΠΑΡΟΝΤΩΝ/RECORD OF ATTENDANCE/
LISTE DE PRÉSENCE/ELENCO DI PRESENZA/APMEKLĒJUMU REĢISTRSDALYVIŲ SAŪAŠAS/JELENLÉTI ÍV/
REĢISTRU TA' ATTENDENZA/PRESENTIELIJST/LISTA OBECNOŠCI/LISTA DE PRESENÇAS/LISTÁ DE PREZENŤÁ/
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Johannes Cornelis van Baalen, Sandra Kalniete, Artur Zasada
Членове/Diputados/Poslanci/Medlemmer/Mitglieder/Parlamendiliikmed/Μέλη/Members/Députés/Deputati/Deputāti/Nariai/Képviselők/ Membri/Leden/Posłowie/Deputados/Deputați/Jäsenet/Ledamöter
Frieda Brepoels, Dolores García-Hierro Caraballo, Jens Geier, Bruno Gollnisch, Ādám Kósa, Eva Ortiz Vilella, Ioan Mircea Pașcu
Заместници/Suplentes/Náhradníci/Stedfortrædere/Stellvertreter/Asendusliikmed/Αναπληρωτές/Substitutes/Suppléants/Supplenti/ Aizstājēji/Pavaduojantys nariai/Póttagok/Sostituti/Plaatsvervangers/Zastępcy/Membros suplentes/Supleantī/Náhradníci/Namestniki/ Varajäsenet/Suppleanter
Malcolm Harbour, Csaba Sógor, Derek Vaughan

187 (2)
Teresa Jiménez-Becerril Barrio, Mike Nattrass
193 (3)
49 (6) (Точка от дневния ред/Punto del orden del día/Bod pořadu jednání (OJ)/Punkt på dagsordenen/Tagesordnungspunkt/Päevakorra punkt/Ημερήσια Διάταξη Σημείο/Agenda item/Point OJ/Punto all'ordine del giorno/Darba kārtības punkts/Darbotvarkés punktas/ Napirendi pont/Punt fuq l-aġenda/Agendapunt/Punkt porządku dziennego/Ponto OD/Punct de pe ordinea de zi/Bod programu schôdze/ Točka UL/Esityslistan kohta/Föredragningslista punkt)

Наблюдатели/Observadores/Pozorovatelé/Observatører/Beobachter/Vaatlejad/Παρατηρητές/Observers/Observateurs/Osservatori/ Novērotāji/Stebētōjai/Megfigyelők/Osservatori/Waarnemers/Obszatorzy/Observadores/Observatori/Pozorovatelia/Opazovalci/ Tarkkailijat/Observatörer

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Съвет/Consejo/Rada/Rådet/Rat/Nõukogu/Συμβούλιο/Council/Conseil/Consiglio/Padome/Taryba/Tanács/Kunsill/Raad/Conselho/Consiliu/Svet/Neuvosto/Rådet (*)
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Kojiro Shiojiri, Ambassador

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PPE	Anne Vahl, Krisztina László
S&D	Evangelos Lepouras
ALDE	Conan D'Arcy
ECR	
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Генерална дирекция/Dirección General/Generální ředitelství/Generaldirektorat/Generaldirektion/Peadirektoraat/Γενική Διεύθυνση/ Directorate-General/Direction générale/Direzione generale/Ģenerāldirektorāts/Generalinis direktoratas/Főigazgatóság/Direktorat Ġenerali/Direktoraten-generaal/Dyrekcja Generalna/Direcção-Geral/Direcții Generale/Generálne riaditeľstvo/Generalni direktorat/ Pääosasto/Generaldirektorat	
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Tim Boden	
Сътрудник/Asistente/Asistent/Assistent/Assistenz/Βοηθός/Assistant/Assistente/Palīgs/Padējējas/Asszisztens/Asyistent/Pomočnik/ Avustaja/Assistenten	
Nekane Azpiri	

- * (P) = Председател/Presidente/Předseda/Fornand/Vorsitzender/Esimees/Πρόεδρος/Chair(wo)man/Président/Priekšsēdētājs/Pirmininkas/
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