



### An introduction to the EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement

#### Sustainable development

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##### **A commitment to sustainable development**

The EU is committed to ensuring its trade policy and trade agreements support sustainable development. The EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement is no exception: it will uphold existing EU social, consumer protection and environmental standards in the same way as other recent EU trade agreements, including the deals with Canada (CETA) and Vietnam.

The agreement clearly states that it cannot stop the EU from taking measures to protect human, animal or plant life or health, or the environment. This point is repeated throughout the agreement, for example in the chapters on:

- good regulatory practices
- regulatory cooperation
- animal and plant health and food safety
- technical barriers to trade
- trade and sustainable development.

The agreement recognises that the EU and Japan are entitled to follow a precautionary approach when preparing and implementing measures to protect the environment or labour conditions.

##### **No race to the bottom**

In the agreement both the EU and Japan commit themselves to effectively enforce their domestic laws on the environment and workers' rights. They also undertake not to relax such laws to encourage trade or investment or for protectionist purposes.

##### **A chapter on sustainable development**

The EU-Japan agreement contains a full chapter on trade and sustainable development.

This chapter protects the EU's right to regulate and to set its own laws, regulations and levels of protection on labour and the environment.

##### **International obligations**

The chapter sets out the EU's and Japan's commitments to effectively implement their obligations in the fields of labour and the environment.

With regard to labour these concern in particular the International Labour Organization's fundamental conventions. Japan has still to ratify two of the conventions so the chapter sets out an obligation for it to make progress towards ratification.



The EU and Japan also commit themselves to effectively implement their obligations under multilateral environmental agreements, like:

- the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement on climate change
- the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna (CITES)
- the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

The EU and Japan also commit themselves to:

- conserving and sustainably managing natural resources
- addressing biodiversity, including combatting illegal trade in wildlife
- sustainable forestry, including fighting illegal logging
- sustainable fisheries, including combatting illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing

### Logging

The trade and sustainable development chapter of the EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement includes a specific article on forests and trade in timber, including illegal logging.

The provisions on logging in the EU-Japan agreement are directly comparable to and just as strict as those in the EU's trade agreement with Canada (CETA). They also cover the EU's and Japan's trade with third countries.

The EU Timber Regulation will continue to apply to wood products from Japan. It requires EU importers to undertake due diligence with Japanese suppliers to ensure there is no illegal timber in the supply chain.

### Whaling

The EU is committed to conserving whales, dolphins and other cetaceans. Whaling and trade in whale meat are banned in the EU so the issue does not fall under EU trade policy.

EU trade agreements can't refer to activities that are prohibited in the EU and the EU does not negotiate trade concessions for these products.

The EU addresses whaling by third countries – including Japan – both internationally and bilaterally. The EU works closely with like-minded partners in the International Whaling Commission, the most effective body for addressing whaling, which has imposed a moratorium on whaling.

### Transparency and accountability

The EU monitors its trade agreements to make sure they are implemented properly. It actively involves civil society in this work.

For each trade agreement, the EU sets up a Domestic Advisory Group with representatives from civil society organisations.

# EU-JAPAN



## ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

These include:

- trade unions
- business federations
- consumer groups
- environmental organisations.

Together, these groups have an oversight role. They discuss sustainable development issues with government representatives and make sure the agreement is being applied correctly. This is important for ensuring transparency and accountability.

The EU will set up a Domestic Advisory Group for the EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement so that civil society can play an active part in implementing the agreement.



### Effective enforcement

The EU and Japan also commit themselves to a robust, inclusive and transparent mechanism for enforcing the trade and sustainable development chapter.

It includes a government-to-government dispute settlement procedure consisting of various stages:

- consultations
- creating a panel of independent experts
- publication of a panel report
- implementation of the report.

The mechanism is based on the principle of transparency and provides for the involvement of civil society at all stages, as well as for inputs from independent bodies such as the International Labour Organization.

### Review clause

The Trade and Sustainable Development Chapter of the EPA contains a dedicated review clause which foresees a procedure to review the commitments taken in this chapter, in particular with a view to improving the effectiveness of its enforcement,.