

Statement | 13 July 2023 | Brussels

Statement by President von der Leyen at the joint press conference with President Michel and Prime Minister Kishida following the EU-Japan Summit

Thank you, Charles,

Thank you, Prime Minister, dear Fumio,

Yesterday, we were together in Vilnius, as partners at the NATO Summit. We discussed our cooperation in Europe and the Indo-Pacific. And today, we are here together in Brussels at the EU-Japan Summit – this is a very clear message of partnership and friendship.

We share with Japan the analysis that from Ukraine to the Indo-Pacific the world is one security theatre. And also in Vilnius, the G7 – under Japan's Presidency – and the European Union made very clear that security commitments to Ukraine are vital. We stand by Ukraine, as we have done since the beginning of the Russian aggression. At the same time, with our Indo-Pacific Strategy, we are also increasing our engagement in the region. Because we know that Indo-Pacific security and European security are indivisible. And I am pleased that we are launching a strategic dialogue to

coordinate on these unprecedented challenges to peace and security.

This includes of course also the vital topic of economic security. This is my first point. We have seen supply chain disruptions caused by the pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine. We have seen cyberattacks and economic coercion. All that has been a wake-up call for us. Economic security is of vital importance and a common concern. We agreed to coordinate on these issues at the G7 level. And now we are launching a bilateral dialogue on economic security as well. As you all know, Japan is a front-runner in this area. We, the European Union, have just developed our own Economic Security Strategy. So I believe that we have a lot to gain from working together on this topic. We share similar dependencies. We both see the need to de-risk our supply chains.

So one of our objectives is to reduce overreliance on a handful of suppliers – many of them based in China – for products that are vital for our economies. For instance, critical raw materials. I am very pleased that we are concluding a cooperation arrangement on raw materials between the European Commission and Japan. The same goes for semiconductors. And I am glad that we have also concluded a Memorandum of Cooperation on the issue of semiconductors. It will cover, for example, monitoring the supply chains, it will cover the very important aspects of research, and of course the important aspect of advanced skills for these industries – skilled personnel is badly needed.

The second point that I want to emphasise is that we have taken stock of our Economic Partnership Agreement. It has now been in force for four years, and it is delivering. Trade flows have increased by 20% – and this despite the COVID-19 pandemic. But we also know that we can do much more. Therefore, on the European Union side, we agreed to lift the remaining restrictive import measures that were linked to the Fukushima accident. We have taken this decision based on science, based on evidence and based on the assessment of the International Atomic Energy Agency. And we also agreed to solve several other trade issues in the course of this year,

in particular the access for our agricultural products to the Japanese market.

The third topic I want to mention is: Stepping up our cooperation on digital. We have launched our Digital Partnership a year ago. Since then, we have made good progress on connectivity. For example, there is an exciting project which is that we will deploy an Arctic submarine cable that delivers high capacity and secure connections between Europe and Japan. And now we go one step further. We will work on 6G, we will work on high-performance and quantum computing, and cybersecurity. So the whole agenda of the Digital Partnership is growing and is getting more dense and concrete. Most importantly, we will cooperate on artificial intelligence. This has two legs: Of course, on the one hand, we want to reap its benefits, but on the other hand we also see the risks and we want to manage the risks.

My fourth point is on clean tech and the energy transition. For that, we have our Green Alliance. It is the first Green Alliance that the European Union ever concluded, here with Japan. And now we are teaming up to deploy renewable energy, in particular offshore wind and clean hydrogen, in Europe and in Japan. In parallel, we are investing together in sustainable infrastructure around the world. On the European Union side, this is our investment programme you are well aware of: Global Gateway. And there is a similar investment programme on the Japanese side. Together, we are showing results, for example from a hydro-power storage project in Vietnam, to railway infrastructure in Indonesia or to transport corridors in Africa, just to name a few examples. Finally, I shared our experience with carbon pricing, which is a very good way to reduce emissions while generating revenues for the clean energy transition. It was interesting to hear the plans on the Japanese side.

In conclusion, it was an excellent Summit, with tangible outcomes. We need each other more than ever for our security and our economic resilience. And we are closer than ever.

Thank you very much.

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