

JAPAN AND THE EU AGREE TO FURTHER DEEPEN THEIR CLOSE COOPERATION

JULY 13, 2023

Full Text: https://japan.kantei.go.jp/101_kishida/statement/202307/13kaiken.html

Prime Minister KISHIDA Fumio met with H.E. Mr. Charles Michel, President of the European Council, and H.E. Dr. Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission for the Japan-EU Summit, in Brussels, Belgium, on July 13, 2023 (local time). The following is the prime minister's opening statement at a joint press conference on the Summit.

I am very pleased that today, visiting Brussels, I held the Japan-EU Summit, meeting in person with European Council President Charles Michel and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

First of all, the EU taking the decision to lift its restrictions on Japanese food imports will provide a major boost to the reconstruction of the disaster-affected areas, and the Government of Japan highly commends and welcomes this move.

During today's meeting we also reaffirmed that

unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force anywhere in the world are unacceptable, and that we will continue to work in close cooperation to maintain and strengthen the free and open international order based on the rule of law.

In light of the current severe security environment, I welcome in particular the EU bolstering its engagement with the Indo-Pacific. We will launch a Japan-EU strategic dialogue at the Foreign Ministers' level and further reinforce our cooperation across a wide spectrum of fields,

including security.

With regard to economic security as well, we agreed to deepen both dialogue and cooperation between Japan and the EU. The Economic Security Strategy that the EU released on June 20 aligns with Japan's fundamental approach to economic security and I commend it highly. Moreover, I welcome the recent preparation of the Japan-EU cooperation agreement on critical minerals. I consider it important for us to build up concrete areas of cooperation like these.

I also welcome the fact that under the digital partnership we agreed to launch when we met at last year's Japan-EU Summit, a meeting of the ministers concerned was held on July 3, and on July 4 arrangements were formulated between Japan and the EU in the field of semiconductors.

In addition, the rapid development and diffusion of artificial intelligence (AI), especially generative AI, is a critical issue for us in our relations with the EU and also for the international community as a whole. I will hold a G7 leaders' video conference this autumn, taking generative AI as a core issue. Through the Hiroshima AI Process agreed at the G7 Hiroshima Summit, Japan, as the presidency of the G7, will lead international discussions on generative AI.

Furthermore, based on the Japan-EU Partnership on Sustainable Connectivity and Quality Infrastructure, we will continue to act in cooperation with the EU from the perspective of strengthening our engagement with the Global South.

In addition, we confirmed that we will further reinforce our cooperation in climate change, including our Green Alliance, in energy, and also in such fields as global health.

In the field of hydrogen in particular, a large number of cooperative projects are underway, including cooperative research and development in the automotive field and collaborative work in green hydrogen production. In order to bolster these measures, we will launch a Japan-EU cooperative framework with involvement up to the leaders' level, taking industry, finance, and technology as its major pillars.

Japan and the EU are the foremost leaders in the hydrogen field. By advancing the formulation of rules for hydrogen distribution, the global development of technologies and products, and the building of large-scale supply chains, we will bring about a hydrogen-based society, aimed at achieving carbon neutrality.

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The EU announced that the Commission would be lifting the import restrictions for Japanese food products from 10 prefectures, following the 2011 Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station accident and the new policy entered into force on August 3. The decision was based on the latest scientific evidence and an assessment by the International Atomic Energy Agency. With the lifting of the restrictions, for example, Fukushima-produced persimmons (left) and Pacific saury (right) now no longer need pre-export testing for radioactivity. RIGHT: KYODO NEWS VIA GETTY IMAGES

We also had a candid exchange of views regarding regional and international affairs.

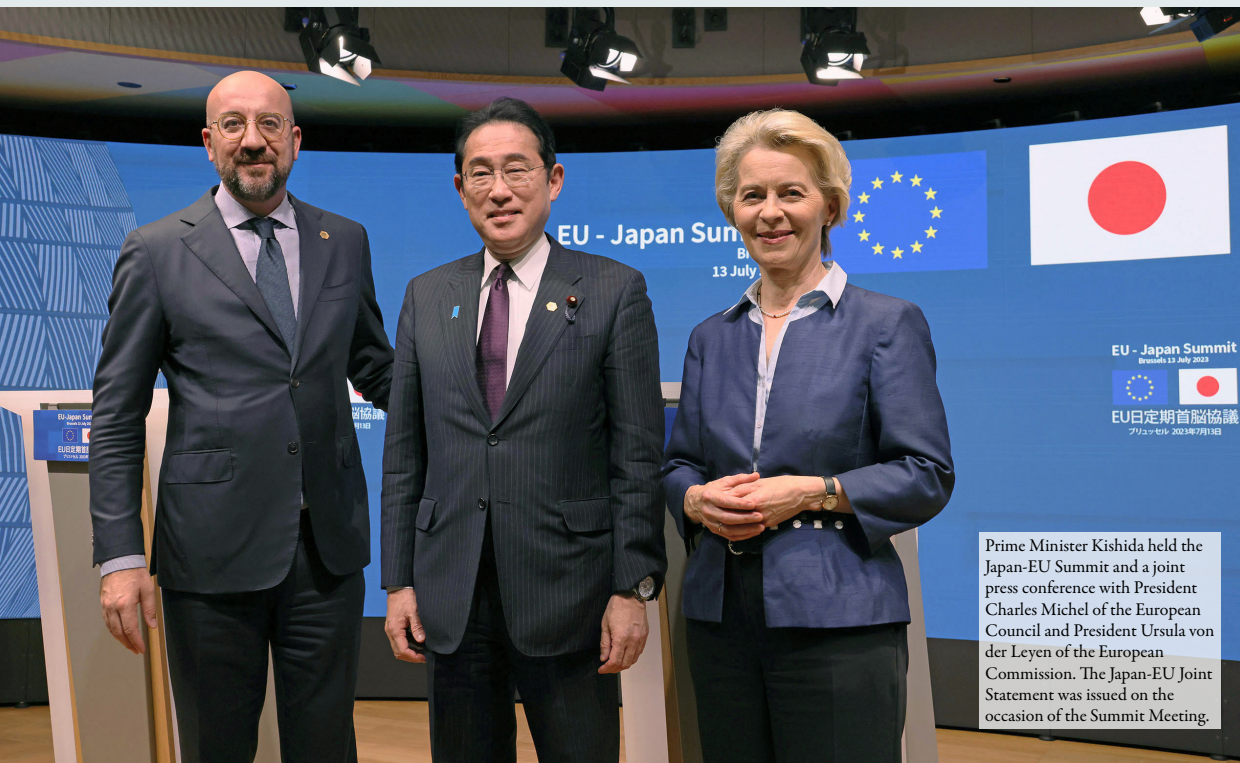
With regard to our responses to Russian aggression against Ukraine, we reaffirmed that we will continue to impose stringent sanctions against Russia while providing strong support for Ukraine in order to bring an end to the aggression at the earliest possible time. We also reconfirmed that we will boost our engagement with other nations, including those in the Global South, to help foster an aligned response by the international community.

As for China, we confirmed the importance of engaging in a cooperative relationship with China regarding global issues, including climate change, and areas of common interest, and of using dialogue to build constructive and stable relations, while directly conveying our common concerns and calling on China to act as a responsible member of the international community.

Regarding North Korea, we confirmed that we share grave concerns regarding the country's increasingly ambitious nuclear and missile activities, including notably the launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) yesterday, July 12. We also confirmed that Japan and the EU will continue to cooperate closely in our responses to North Korea, including regarding the abductions issue.

I firmly believe that our issuing of a Joint Statement as the outcome of today's summit meeting will be an extremely significant message to the region and the international community.

I will continue to work in close cooperation with European Council President Michel and European Commission President von der Leyen. Thank you. ●



Prime Minister Kishida held the Japan-EU Summit and a joint press conference with President Charles Michel of the European Council and President Ursula von der Leyen of the European Commission. The Japan-EU Joint Statement was issued on the occasion of the Summit Meeting.