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## **The EBC calls on the European and Japanese authorities to start negotiations on a business and residence track**

On 1 September 2020, Japan changed its previous restrictions on non-Japanese nationals entering Japan. It is now possible for all residents of Japan to re-/enter Japan independent on nationality. The European Business Council in Japan (EBC), which has long advocated for an easing of the ban, welcomes the Government's decision.

There are, however, some outstanding issues, which the EBC has pointed out in previous statements: the issue of visa-holders that have not yet arrived in Japan and short-term businesspeople – persons without a visa. They are currently, with some limited exceptions, not able to enter Japan. Many in this group are vital for the company they represent, for possible Japanese partner companies and for the Japanese economy as a whole.

Japan has, for this reason, commenced bilateral negotiations with a number of countries to establish a so called “business and resident track”. Currently these negotiations only include Asian or Oceanic countries.

Europe and Japan are two major trading partners and both regions are heavily invested in their respective economies. The EBC therefore calls on the European and Japanese authorities for bilateral or regional negotiations to start without delay. This would open and further support the trade and investment between our two regions. A flow that has been very much amplified by the Switzerland-Japan and the EU-Japan free trade agreements.

In addition, we call upon the Japanese Government in its bilateral negotiations to make certain that Japan's bilateral agreements are not only limited to nationals, but are also extended to residents of the parties. Only limiting the agreements to nationals would exclude non-Japanese residents in Japan and the companies they work for to benefit from the agreements, which would in turn negatively affect the Japanese economy.

Finally, the EBC would like to reiterate that it views the latest developments in a positive light and hope that the Japanese and the European Governments can work together to facilitate further interaction between our two regions, while upholding the appropriate health protocols.