

Japan-EU Joint Statement

The Second Japan-EU Policy Dialogue on Education, Culture and Sport

Tokyo, 10 May, 2021

H.E. **HAGIUDA Koichi**, Minister of Education Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), and H.E. **Mariya GABRIEL**, European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, held the second Japan-EU Policy Dialogue on Education, Culture and Sport, in the form of a video conference today.

Through this Policy Dialogue, both parties confirmed the importance of further promoting initiatives and international cooperation in the fields of education, culture and sports. Collaboration, cooperation and exchanges of practices in these fields are important in their own right, but they have taken on new significance during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has hit all these sectors hard. The two leaders agreed to advance this cooperation now and in the post-COVID era.

In the field of **education**, facing the ongoing pandemic, both leaders highlighted the effectiveness of online learning using digital technology at all levels of education and, therefore in particular, shared the importance of the enhancement of teacher's digital skills, while also taking note of the importance of face-to-face interaction between teachers and students. They also confirmed the importance of cooperation and international exchanges in higher education, welcoming the progress of the Japan-EU joint master degree's programmes, which were launched as an outcome of the First Japan-EU Policy Dialogue, and recognising the positive impact of integrated programmes. They took account of the impact of COVID-19 on higher education practices in Japan and Europe, and agreed on the significance of in-person exchange and the need for new strategies and roles for higher education.

In the field of **culture**, Japan and the EU recognised the importance of the revitalization of cultural and artistic activities to overcome COVID-19, the contributions to the agenda of the G20 Culture Ministerial, and the development of closer cultural exchanges between Japan and the EU through enhanced exchanges between the Cultural Cities of East Asia and the European Capitals of Culture.

In the field of **sports**, both leaders confirmed their appetite for peer learning and collaboration on ways of supporting the sports sector, particularly on the organisation of large-scale events. In this context the meeting learned from the Japanese experience in its efforts for the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games. Sports diplomacy and the opportunities that it provides for international cooperation were also highlighted, demonstrating Japan's and the EU's common interest in the field of sport.

Minister HAGIUDA and Commissioner GABRIEL also agreed to pursue **a new boost** for mutual opportunities for Japanese and EU researchers to carry out research in the EU and Japan respectively under possible collaboration between Japanese programme and the EU's flagship programme for researcher exchange, the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA).

Both sides also confirmed their commitment to continuing the **short-term staff-exchange programme** for MEXT and EU officials to promote peer-learning and boost cooperation.

These Japan-EU initiatives in the fields of education, culture and sport are consistent with the aim of emphasizing the importance of people-to-people exchanges within Japan-EU relations, especially at the Japan-EU Summits and within the framework of the Japan-EU Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA).

Both leaders reconfirmed the importance of ministerial-level direct discussions through this Policy Dialogue. It was decided to continue to have the Policy Dialogue and that the EU will host the next meeting.