



**EUROPEAN COUNCIL
THE PRESIDENT**



Brussels, 7 May 2014
EUCO 101/14

PRESSE 273
PR PCE 91

**Opening remarks by
President of the European Council
Herman Van Rompuy
at the 22nd EU-Japan Summit**

I would like to extend a warm welcome to you, Prime Minister, and members of the Japanese delegation. Let me greet you with a Haiku:

*Once comes May, spring
ushers in life everywhere;
Laughing blossoms*

This is the second time we meet in a springtime Europe. First, in The Hague some weeks ago, and now in Brussels. You are about to conclude an impressive European tour, having visited six EU countries in nine days, and crowning it all with the EU-Japan Summit! This testifies to the importance you are attaching to relations with the European Union.

Much has happened since our Summit in Tokyo last November. Foremost on my mind these days are the very worrying developments in Ukraine. Unfortunately, the situation has deteriorated further since we discussed it in The Hague. We will revisit this topic later today and it will also be at the top of the agenda for G7 leaders when we meet in Brussels in the beginning of June.

Our Strategic Partnership is solid and strong - after all, this is already the 22nd EU-Japan Summit - and there is great potential for further cooperation on bilateral, regional and global matters.

P R E S S

Dirk De Backer - Spokesperson of the President - ☎ +32 (0)2 281 9768 - +32 (0)497 59 99 19
Preben Aamann - Deputy Spokesperson of the President - ☎ +32 (0)2 281 2060 - +32 (0)476 85 05 43
press.president@consilium.europa.eu <http://www.european-council.europa.eu/the-president>

EUCO 101/14

1
EN

Our common values are at the heart of the Strategic Partnership and enable us to promote our interests as like-minded global partners. We are both keen to strengthen a rules-based international system, where all countries may benefit from peace and stability, democracy and human rights, open global markets, and sustainable development.

Let me briefly highlight two issues: first, if we succeed in our negotiations on a comprehensive Strategic Partnership Agreement and an ambitious Free Trade Agreement, we will have taken a decisive step forward in our strategic partnership. Bearing in mind that the one-year review of the FTA negotiations is still ongoing, I sincerely hope we will be able to advance on both fronts in 2014. Continued trade liberalisation is crucial for keeping our economic recovery on track.

Second, we are moving towards a significantly strengthened security partnership, through concrete crisis management cooperation in support of several African countries. This is a welcome manifestation of the EU's rapidly evolving Common Security and Defence Policy, and Japan's new policy of "proactive contribution to peace".

President Barroso and I will be able to hand over to our successors a relationship that is much stronger and broader than it was when we took up our respective functions. The EU and Japan matter enormously to each other. I believe today's Summit will highlight this even further.
