Joint Statement

of the fourth meeting of the European Union - Japan Digital Partnership Council

5 May 2026, Brussels

The fourth meeting of the European Union (EU) - Japan Digital Partnership Council took place in Brussels on 5 May 2026. The meeting was co-chaired by the Executive Vice-President of the European Commission for Tech Sovereignty, Security and Democracy Henna VIRKKUNEN, the Japanese Minister for Digital Transformation MATSUMOTO Hisashi, the Japanese Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications HAYASHI Yoshimasa, and the Japanese Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry OCHI Toshiyuki.

The EU and Japan (hereinafter referred to as "both sides") reaffirmed their strategic partnership as like-minded partners sharing fundamental democratic values, the rule of law, and a human-centric approach to digital transformation. Building on three years of fruitful cooperation, both sides recognised that their partnership has matured into a critical platform for navigating the complexities of the digital age.

Amidst a rapidly evolving geopolitical landscape and intensifying global competition for technological leadership, both sides underscored a shared strategic vision: **digital cooperation is an essential driver for sustainable economic growth, industrial competitiveness, and innovation, while serving as a key pillar of economic security and resilience.**

Digital transformation is best achieved not in isolation, but through collective efforts with partners. Reaffirming their strong bond as **trusted partners**, both sides committed to leveraging their complementary strengths to build resilient supply chains based on shared values.

To this end, both sides committed to continue advancing their partnership from policy alignment to concrete actions that deliver tangible benefits to citizens and businesses in both economies, fostering a robust and open digital market.

I. Data Governance and DFFT: Unlocking Potential for Economic Growth

Both sides are committed to evolving Data Free Flow with Trust (DFFT) from a conceptual framework into a practical engine for economic expansion and security. By enhancing multi-dimensional interoperability across legal, technical, and operational domains, both sides aim to create a seamless data ecosystem that fosters innovation and strengthens global supply chains.

- **Data Strategy Working Group:** Recognising that seamless and secure data flows are foundational to the modern economy and essential for the development of Artificial Intelligence (AI), both sides decided to launch an **"EU-Japan Data Strategy Working Group."** This working group will inter alia aim to enhance interoperability between the data policy frameworks of both economies, including those with distinct governance structures and technical architectures. By exchanging best practices and exploring avenues to bridge regulatory, technical, and operational architectures, both sides aim to create a transparent and predictable business environment that facilitates data utilisation, thereby **realising sustainable economic growth, competitiveness and innovation.**
- **Joint development and interoperability of Data Spaces:** Both sides deepened discussions on specific use cases for the joint development and interoperability of

European data spaces and the Japanese data spaces, involving the private sector, to improve data sharing. They particularly concurred on further enhancing the ongoing cooperation regarding the interoperability of the Ouranos Ecosystem battery traceability platform and Catena-X for sharing product carbon footprint data for batteries in the automotive sector, aiming to meet regulatory requirements. Both sides discussed the possibility of deepening EU–Japan cooperation to advance interoperability.

- **DFFT and International Cooperation:** Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to operationalising DFFT to counter digital protectionism and ensure open and trusted data flows. Both sides welcomed the significant progress of the Institutional Arrangement for Partnership at the OECD and committed to further deepening cooperation in multilateral fora, including the G7 and G20, to promote a global data governance architecture based on shared values. Furthermore, both sides expressed their intention to extend this fruitful cooperation to third countries, including ASEAN, to foster a secure and open digital environment in the Indo-Pacific region.
- **Digital Identity and Trust Services:** Both sides continued the implementation of the Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) on Digital Identities and Trust Services and piloted the interoperability of digital identity credentials to confirm that they could be appropriately issued, stored, presented, and verified across different countries and regions, specifically the exchange of verifiable credentials for student academic records via digital identity wallets. Through this pilot project, that has used prototypes of digital identity wallets, both sides confirmed that cross-border interoperability and mutual recognition of credentials can be implemented by utilising existing architectures. Both sides welcomed its successful outcome, which clearly demonstrates that the interoperability of digital credentials can be ensured even between countries or regions under different governance frameworks and different technical architectures. Furthermore, both sides reaffirm their commitment to the MoC, aiming at the implementation of digital identities using verifiable credentials and digital identity wallets in various fields across a wide range of sectors.
- **Electronic Signatures:** Both sides have initiated contact to deepen discussions on verification of electronic signature service providers accredited under our respective governance for possible mutual recognition of electronic signatures by using trusted lists in the future.
- **Protection of Personal Data:** Both sides welcomed the successful conclusion of talks on expanding the scope of the EU adequacy decision on Japan to academia and research, which would be a crucial step for further facilitating joint research and innovation. They also confirmed their intention to intensify the talks regarding the extension of the adequacy decision to the public sector to further enhance administrative cooperation and data exchange.

II. Innovation and Cutting-edge Technologies: AI and Quantum

As global leaders in frontier technology, both sides prioritise the development of safe, secure, and trustworthy AI and quantum technologies. Our collaboration focuses on aligning governance frameworks and fostering joint research to ensure that emerging technologies serve the public good while maintaining a competitive edge. Additionally, both sides welcomed the agreement in principle reached on Japan's association to **Horizon Europe** to accelerate joint research in digital areas and will continue to discuss and develop joint research initiatives across various advanced fields, including AI and quantum technologies.

- **Artificial Intelligence (AI):**
  - **Responsible AI Innovation:** Both sides reaffirmed their shared commitment to promoting safe, secure and trustworthy AI as well as signing a **Cooperation Arrangement** for further mutually beneficial collaboration on AI research and innovation and AI safety.
  - **Global Governance:** Both sides reaffirmed the need to continue exchanging information in the context of international AI governance initiatives and seeking to align positions in international forums, e.g. in the United Nations. They also reaffirmed their leadership in global AI governance, committing to further advance innovation-friendly, safe, secure, and trustworthy AI in global initiatives. In this context, both sides will encourage more governments and private sector partners, including from the Global South, to support the principles of the **Hiroshima AI Process** and to join its Friends Group.
  - **Regulatory Cooperation:** Noting the phased implementation of the **EU AI Act** and the enforcement of **Japan's AI Act**, both sides acknowledged the importance of strengthening cooperation to enhance mutual understanding of governance frameworks.
  - **Governmental AI**: Recognising the transformative potential of AI to improve public administration, both sides decided to exchange best practices on AI adoption in the public sector to leverage AI technologies for enhancing administrative efficiency and improving public services.
  - **AI Summits:** Both sides welcomed cooperation between the EU and Japan regarding AI Summits, including toward the potential hosting of an AI Summit in Japan.
- **Quantum Technology:** Both sides welcomed the deepening of cooperation based on the Letter of Intent (LoI) on Strengthening Cooperation in the Area of Quantum Science and Technology. Both sides welcomed the launch of the joint research project **"Q-Neko"** (Quantum-HPC hybrid), the first concrete project stemming from this cooperation, bringing together European and Japanese partners to advance quantum and hybrid HPC-quantum computing environments. The project explores quantum-enabled solutions and use cases, including in areas such as materials science, CO_2 reduction, communication networks, fluid dynamics and satellite image analysis, among others. They committed to further strengthening collaboration in quantum research, exploring industrial applications in areas such as materials science, industrial optimisation, and fostering a quantum ecosystem that enhances their technological competitiveness. In addition, both sides confirmed their intention to explore quantum industry cooperation. Both sides welcomed the exchange of views on quantum communications technologies.

III. Secure Digital Infrastructure and Economic Security

A secure and resilient digital backbone is essential for economic security. Our partnership focuses on protecting critical infrastructure - from submarine cables to semiconductors - against emerging threats and non-market practices, ensuring the reliability of the global digital economy.

- **Submarine Cables:** Both sides reinforced the implementation of the MoC on submarine cables for secure, resilient and sustainable global connectivity. Both sides welcomed the meetings of the Japan-EU Joint Working Group on Policy Issues for Global Connectivity where the crucial topics of security and resilience of submarine cables, connectivity projects in the Indo-Pacific and Arctic connectivity projects were discussed. Both sides concurred on continuing the work of the Working Group. In addition, they reaffirmed the strategic importance of diversifying connectivity routes to ensure resilience and redundancy in the global network. Both sides have continued the discussions on the Arctic connectivity projects that are in the process of working towards establishing secure connectivity between the EU and Japan. They reaffirmed their commitment to supporting the Arctic route to reduce data latency and facilitate DFFT, emphasising the importance of a commercially viable route, while acknowledging the potential need for initial public support. In addition, both sides reconfirmed their intention to explore synergies in supporting secure and resilient connectivity in third countries, specifically in the Indo-Pacific.
- **5G/6G**: Both sides welcomed the progress of the joint research project, called "6G-MIRAI-HARMONY", which progressed towards alignment on 6G standardisation, the application of latest advancements in AI to the latest advancements in radio networks and contributes to reinforced European and Japanese leadership in 6G network technologies. Both sides recognised the importance of the joint research project and confirmed that further collaborative research on future communication networks including 6G is to be considered in the future, taking into account the progress of the above-mentioned project. They reaffirmed their cooperation on promoting open, secure, diverse, and resilient network architectures, including Open RAN. Both sides will enhance their collaboration on the international standardisation of future communication networks including 6G technology.
- **Semiconductors:** Both sides confirmed the implementation of the MoC on Semiconductors. They committed to continuing the information exchange on supply chain resilience, including the effective use of the "Early Warning Mechanism" to anticipate and mitigate disruptions caused by geopolitical or natural factors. In this context, with the considering of the possible broad effect on various sectors, both sides decided to operationalise the Early Warning Mechanism more practically to enable timely information sharing and coordinated responses to supply chain disruptions by extending the scope of the Administrative Arrangement signed in 2023. Furthermore, they confirmed the intention to address challenges posed by non-market policies and practices as well as supply chain dependencies in critical sectors and encouraged further exploration of collaborative research opportunities in next-generation semiconductor technologies including through the EU Jasmine support project to maintain their technological edge.
- **Cybersecurity:** Both sides welcomed the progress of the 7th EU-Japan Cyber Dialogue, held in January 2026. To facilitate trade and enhance the security of connected devices,

they committed to advancing cooperation on potential mutual recognition of cybersecurity schemes for IoT products, specifically working towards aligning Japan's **JC-STAR** scheme and the EU's requirements under the **Cyber Resilience Act**. Both sides also welcomed the publication of international Software Bill of Materials (SBOM) guidance in September 2025. Both sides will continue to cooperate on cyber capacity building in third countries, specifically in the Indo-Pacific through the Industrial Control Systems Cybersecurity Week and through the ASEAN-Japan Cybersecurity Capacity Building Centre.

- **Digital Standards**: Both sides welcomed the closer links between the Japanese Industrial Standards Committee (JISC) and the European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardisation (CENELEC) to make JISC a Companion Standardisation Body of CENELEC. Both sides also support the trusted and well-established cooperation between the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI) and the Telecommunication Technology Committee (TTC), and underlined that coordinated actions between European and Japanese Standards Development Organisations in appropriate fields are essential for the EU and Japan to shape secure, interoperable, and globally relevant standards in digital technologies.

IV. Platform Regulation

To ensure a safe and fair digital environment, both sides are deepening cooperation on the oversight of online platforms. By sharing best practices and aligning regulatory approaches, both sides aim to protect and empower users and promote competition in the digital marketplace.

- **Platform Cooperation:** Both sides reemphasised the commitment to ensuring a safe online environment where the fundamental rights of users are protected. They recognised the importance of protecting minors online affirming their commitment to promote appropriate policy measures and enforce applicable regulation, including the Digital Services Act (DSA) on the EU-side to safeguard the physical and psychological well-being and the rights of minors online. To that end, regulatory exchanges took place on effective online platform governance and both sides confirmed to further deepen this cooperation. Both sides welcomed the **Cooperation Arrangement** between the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) and the Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology (DG CONNECT) in their respective capacities as enforcers to deepen cooperation on issues of common interest relating to the implementation of the DSA and Japan's Information Distribution Platform Act. The **Cooperation Arrangement** establishes a framework for mutually beneficial cooperation, in particular in areas related to the transparency of content moderation systems and the effectiveness and transparency of reporting systems for illegal content and rights-infringing information. Both sides continued their cooperation to promote fair and contestable digital markets by holding regular technical exchanges on Japan's Mobile Software Competition Act and the EU's Digital Markets Act. Both sides welcomed the Cooperation Arrangement between the Japan Fair Trade Commission (JFTC) and Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology and the Directorate-General for Competition regarding Japan's Mobile Software Competition Act and the EU's Digital Markets Act. The EU also participated in the Global Forum on Digital Competition hosted by JFTC in January 2026 in Tokyo.

V. Way Forward

The success of the EU-Japan Digital Partnership relies on continuous engagement with the private sector and a commitment to multilateral leadership. We will translate our high-level policy goals into tangible outcomes through industrial collaboration and active participation in international fora.

- **New topics of discussion**: both sides will pursue working level information exchange on video game and audiovisual strategies as well as industries.
- **Industry Engagement:** Both sides confirmed that, building on the fruitful cooperation to date, the Digital Partnership will increasingly progress towards the creation of concrete and substantial deliverables, necessitating the engagement of industry. To materialise these outcomes, both sides affirmed the need for more technical activities, including jointly supporting pilot projects. Recognising that the private sector is the primary driver of digital transformation and economic growth, both sides confirmed the importance of the involvement of a diverse range of stakeholders, including industry associations, and think tanks. In particular, both sides commended public-private collaborative initiatives, such as the EU-Japan Digital Partnership Seminar and the EU-Japan Digital Week, as well as the robust participation of stakeholders. In this context, both sides started exploring the complementarities of the respective tech business offers to work towards joint activities in third countries, for example in the area of secure and trusted digital infrastructure.
- **Multilateral cooperation:** Both sides concurred to cooperate together, and with other partners, in the pursuit of shared interests in the context of multilateral bodies emphasising shared interests such as robust multilateralism and openness to trade.

Both sides decided to convene the 5th meeting of the EU-Japan Digital Partnership Council in Tokyo in 2027 to review progress and further deepen their strategic cooperation.