

PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Europe's digital companies support the EU-Japan free trade negotiations

Brussels, 25 March 2013: Europe's digital companies welcome the EU and Japanese leaders' decision to start negotiations on a Free Trade Agreement (FTA). Trade relations between the EU and Japan took a major step forward today when European and Japanese leaders announced the start of negotiations for an ambitious FTA. The EU digital technology industry has long called upon the EU and Japan to launch these negotiations. DIGITALEUROPE is convinced that the FTA has the potential to deliver significant economic benefits for both the EU and Japan.

DIGITALEUROPE Director General John Higgins about the announcement

John Higgins CBE, Director General of DIGITALEUROPE stated: "Today's announcement represents a milestone in the relations between the EU and Japan. The European digital industry remains committed to support the negotiations and will work towards their timely and meaningful conclusion".

The benefits for the EU and Japan

The FTA is likely to improve both European and Japanese economies, especially during this time of recession. The European Commission estimates that the EU-Japan FTA could boost Europe's economy by 0.6% to 0.8% of its GDP and EU exports to Japan could increase by 32.7% while Japanese exports to the EU could increase by 23.5%. It would also translate into as much as 420,000 jobs created in the EU. ¹

Benefits for the digital industry

In addition to the overall benefits for Europe and Japan, this FTA would be particularly beneficial to the digital technology industry. Harmonising Japanese and European systems and standards, facilitating the distribution of digital technology products, fostering collaboration in research programmes as well as developing international rules would enable the EU and Japanese business to grow. The increased collaboration would lead to combat protectionist policies adopted by some newly-emerging economies in the form of systems and standards that give preferential treatment to their own industries.

Strong commitment by industry and decision-makers

We welcome the EU and Japanese leaders' commitment to abolish the barriers which have been hindering trade between the two markets. DIGITALEUROPE remains committed to realising this long anticipated agreement. We will continue to work with both European and Japanese leaders and businesses to successfully finalise the FTA.

Media and interview enquiries

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¹ http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/136370.pdf