



Latvian Presidency
of the Council of the
European Union



Concept Paper for
**High Level Symposium on
EU-Japan Cooperation: Common Challenges and Perspectives**
Riga, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia
6 February 2015

The Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Latvia and Japan are privileged to co-organize the High Level Symposium on EU-Japan Cooperation: Common Challenges and Perspectives during the Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first semester of 2015 and the future. The Symposium is supported by the European External Action Service (EEAS) and attendance of high officials and representatives of academia is expected.

The objective of the Symposium is to discuss the **relations between the European Union and Japan** as well as their challenges, including those Latvia will face during Latvia's Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The Symposium will bring together high officials from Latvia, Japan and the European Union, researchers and representatives of academia with the aim of reaching a better understanding of the current situation of EU-Japan cooperation and its potential, as well as regional issues and policies such as Eastern Partnership and East Asia, and common understanding of issues of current relevance for both the EU and Japan.

As a country with an experience of a solid reform process and a geographical location in close proximity to Ukraine, **Latvia** has decided to focus on the **Eastern Partnership and Central Asia** countries with its Presidency's foreign policy priorities. Latvia wishes to have countries in its neighborhood that are stable, secure, economically developed and are basing their laws and behavior on European values. Since Central Asia is a region of geostrategic importance, Latvia is seeking and supporting more active EU engagement with this region. There is a need to increase the EU's visibility and develop a comprehensive approach by enhancing cross-border ties and cooperation in border management, educational exchanges and promotion of trade. Japan has also been promoting regional dialogues with countries in the region to contribute to regional peace and prosperity through helping their efforts for the development of democracy, transition to market economy and promotion of regional cooperation. Latvia will lead the session of the Symposium on the Eastern Partnership and cooperation with the Central Asian countries.

Recently, the security environments in Asia and Europe have become more severe, and each side needs to pay more attention to the other side. At the Symposium, Japan will focus on the **security situation in East Asia**, familiarizing the audience with recent developments and Japan's security policy including the policy of "Proactive Contribution to Peace" based on the principle of international cooperation and its Cabinet decision on the basic policies on the development of seamless security legislation. It is also expected that EU views on the situation will be presented in the discussions.

The Symposium will be organized in three sessions:

1. **EU-Japan Relations** (led by a representative from the EEAS)
2. **Eastern Partnership and Central Asia – Priorities of Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union** (led by a representative of Latvia's MFA)
3. **Security Situation in East Asia** (led by a representative of Japan's academia).

Working language – English. The organizers will invite high ranking officials, representatives of the diplomatic corps, representatives of think tanks, researchers and media.