

Building together a new future

March 11 disaster can be cornerstone for strengthening long-term Japan-EU partnership

Masami Ito
STAFF WRITER

"We have come to truly understand that a friend in need is a friend indeed" — that was the message that Prime Minister Naoto Kan sent out to the world after receiving tons of goods and millions of donations to help the disaster victims of the March 11 earthquake and tsunami that hit northeastern Japan.

As Japan faces this unprecedented challenge, countries, regions and international organizations from all over the world have shown their support and solidarity, including the European Union.

done in the past facing the forces of nature."

From the beginning, members of the EU have been right by Japan's side, bringing in search-and-rescue teams, tens of thousands of blankets, bottled water, tons of food and a donation of more than ¥2 billion.

Various leaders and ministers from the EU rushed to Japan to directly express their support, including French President Nicolas Sarkozy, German Vice Chancellor and Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle, and Jean

stronger than ever, and establish a more vibrant and better Japan for future generations."

Japan and the EU have a long-standing relationship in a wide range of areas, including political, economic and international cooperation. Various high-level meetings are held throughout the year, such as the bilateral summit meetings that have been held almost continuously every year since 1991.

"It has been said that Japan is the EU's most trusted partner in the Asian region, sharing basic

gross domestic product amounted to more than 28 percent in 2009 with \$16.4 trillion, exceeding that of China's 9 percent and the 24 percent in the United States the same year.

"By cooperating with the EU in areas including the environment and trade, Japan can contain China and also use it (as a negotiating tool) with the U.S.," Shoji said. "Deepening Japan-EU ties is very important for Japan."

One of the biggest ongoing discussions between Japan and

luctance on the EU side, citing the existence of non-tariff barriers that are blocking foreign companies from entering the Japanese market. Such non-tariff barriers include the slow process of approval on medical products and the extremely limited access for foreign companies to the Japanese government procurement market.

Meanwhile, Japan is calling for the removal of high tariff rates such as the 10 percent on automobiles and 14 percent on flat-screen television sets.

"For the EU, strengthening global competitiveness by removing non-tariff barriers has become one of the pillars of its trade policy," Shoji said. "I think that Japan also needs to stop protecting companies with the wall of non-tariff barriers and jump into competition — or Japan may not be able to survive in the long run."

But the March 11 earthquake and tsunami may have had some positive effect on Japan-EU FTA negotiations.

In March, the European Council met in Brussels and agreed to help Japan deal with the economic and financial challenges — including the possibility of starting FTA talks — as Japan fights to reconstruct and restore the disaster areas.

Experts and government officials also agreed that nuclear energy was likely to be another key topic in the upcoming summit meeting.

As a means of cutting carbon dioxide emissions, nuclear energy has been promoted in various parts of the EU. However, as the serious situation at the damaged Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant continues, some EU member states, including Germany and Italy, have begun to reconsider their energy policies.

Nuclear energy advocates such as Sarkozy are urging people not to turn away from atomic power but instead to set higher safety standards.

Shoji pointed out that Japan would have a lot to offer, since it is dealing with an unprecedented tragedy over nuclear power. As Japan's strength is put to the test, Shoji said it should turn this situation into an opportunity to deepen ties with the EU.

"I think that Japan can use this experience to take the initiative in establishing cooperation with the EU and other countries in setting nuclear safety standards," Shoji said. "Japan is still in the middle of dealing with the nuclear crisis, but I think it can lay a foundation for the future."

'Japan will overcome this crisis, emerge stronger than ever, and establish a more vibrant and better Japan for future generations.'

NAOTO KAN, PRIME MINISTER OF JAPAN

Asselborn, the deputy prime minister of Luxembourg.

"On behalf of the Japanese people, I would like to express my sincerest gratitude for the outpouring of support and solidarity we have received ... from all parts of the world," Kan

wrote in an April 15 statement to express thanks for the support from the international community. "I have not a single doubt that Japan will overcome this crisis, recover from the aftermath of the disaster, emerge

values," said Katsuhiko Shoji, a professor at Keio University and an expert on Japan-EU relations. "Japan is a country known to keep its promises, and the EU relies on Japan."

With 27 member states, the EU is an economically and politically powerful entity. According to data compiled by the Foreign Ministry, the population of the EU makes up about 7 percent of the global total, which is more than three times that of Japan. The EU's global share of

the EU is establishing a bilateral free trade agreement. Japan is eager not to fall too far behind South Korea, which signed a deal with the EU last October.

The annual Japan-EU summit is expected to take place sometime in May or June and Kan and the Japanese government are hoping to officially begin negotiations. A Foreign Ministry official said that is what the Japanese government wants the most from this meeting.

But there had been some re-



Flag of unity: With 27 member states, the EU is an economically and politically powerful entity. EUROPEAN UNION

EU stands by Japan in its hour of need

Herman Van Rompuy
PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL

I would like to take this opportunity to express the collective sympathy and solidarity of the 27 member states of the European Union to the people of Japan who have been affected by the earthquake and tsunami of March 11, and offer our deepest condolences to the Japanese nation.

I would also like to express our admiration for the way the Japanese people are working together to help one another in the wake of this horrific disaster, and underscore the fact that the EU remains ready to assist in the reconstruction of the stricken regions in whatever way we can in the weeks and



Herman Van Rompuy
EUROPEAN UNION

months to come.

At its meeting in March, the European Council reiterated the strategic importance of the EU-Japan relationship and

noted that the forthcoming bilateral summit expected to be held later this month in Brussels must be used to strengthen it.

I am looking forward to this summit meeting, with great confidence that it will help plot the path that we will jointly take in the coming years.

I wish to add that the events of March 11 moved me to compose a haiku, which I would like to share with the readers of The Japan Times, together with its English translation:

*Hulpeloos en stil
zien we hoe hels de zee is
en levens verzwelgt*

Helpless and quiet
Do we see how hellish is the sea
And how it obliterates lives



Helping hands: French search-and-rescue team members unload the first shipment of goods dispatched under the EU Civil Protection Mechanism at Yasato High School in Ishioka, Ibaraki Prefecture, on March 25. EUROPEAN COMMISSION



その操縦席からは、SUVの未来が見渡せる。

トゥアレグ ハイブリッド誕生。

大自然の道なき道を力強く駆け抜け、高層タワー群の谷間を疾風と共に走り抜ける。どんなステージでも優れた走行性能を發揮するそのクルマは、いま新たな進化を遂げました。誕生、[New]トゥアレグハイブリッド。環境性能を飛躍的に高める「フルハイブリッドシステム」、そしてSUVで初の標準装備となるアラウンドビューカメラ「Area View」。4台のカメラと液晶ディスプレイで、操縦席にしながら周囲360°を一目で把握できるように。衝突の危険性を自律的に感知するフロントモニタリングシステム「Front Assist」も搭載。未来が求めるクオリティを内に秘めたトゥアレグハイブリッド。あなたとともに、さらなる高みへと駆け登っていきます。

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EU special

Confident in Japan's recovery

Hans Dietmar Schweisgut
AMBASSADOR OF THE DELEGATION
OF THE EUROPEAN UNION TO JAPAN



Hans Dietmar Schweisgut

I would like to start by expressing my heartfelt condolences and sympathy on the huge loss of life in the Great East Japan Earthquake of March 11, as well as my desire to see all those who have been adversely affected by the events of the past weeks rebuild their lives as quickly as possible.

It is a great pleasure to address the readers of The Japan Times as the European Union marks Europe Day — the day in 1950 on which then French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman issued a declaration urging France, Germany and other European nations to take the first step toward a more integrated Europe by jointly managing their coal and steel resources. It was the moment that the seeds of European integration were sown, a movement that has for more than six decades helped foster peace and stability in Europe.

This is my first Europe Day since becoming EU ambassador to Japan in February, assuming the helm of the Delegation of the EU to Japan under the newly created European External Action Service, the EU's foreign policy arm. The EEAS was established to enable the 27-member EU to speak with one voice in the international arena and thereby make it more effective and influential. The delegation now coordinates the positions of the member states, and the EU ambassador speaks on behalf of them when holding discussions with the Japanese government.

While these past few months have been trying ones for Japan, they have shown to us all the great courage, patience and perseverance of the Japanese people, and have also proved that the international community — including the EU — stands

ready to assist and stand together with Japan, one of the world's most generous aid donors, in its time of need.

Japan is a strategic partner for the EU, sharing common values such as democracy, open markets, respect for human rights and the rule of law. We also take similar positions on the challenges of our time, such as global warming, aging society, terrorism and development. In addition to this, I would like to stress that the EU sees Japan as a close friend.

It was only natural for us to offer our assistance immediately after the news of the earthquake and subsequent tsunami broke, and the EU activated its civil protection coordination mechanism on March 15 in response to the Japanese government's request. Since then, the European Commission and 19 EU Member States have offered both cash and much-needed supplies for the relief effort through the EU Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operation for Japan. In addition, some member states have also provided assistance through other channels.

While we hope that such humanitarian contributions have been useful, the EU is also look-

ing to beef up its relations with Japan in the longer term; indeed, this was high on its agenda even before the March 11 disaster, and recent events have confirmed, if not strengthened, the relevance and necessity of doing so.

The leaders of the EU and Japan will be holding their annual summit in Brussels later this month. The meeting will hold particular relevance in that they are expected to make key decisions on the way forward for our bilateral relationship. It will be the culmination of a year of discussions where the two sides looked at various ways to galvanize our partnership in both the political and economic spheres. The summit agenda will also include such timely issues as how we might join forces in the areas of nuclear safety and disaster relief.

Concerning Japan's interest in entering into negotiations toward a free trade agreement, EU Member State leaders agreed at the March European Council that the forthcoming bilateral summit should be used to "bring forward our common agenda, including through the potential launch of negotiations for a free trade agreement on the basis that Japan is willing to tackle inter alia the issue of non-tariff barriers and restrictions on public procurement."

Now let me turn briefly to another issue that has often come up in the news concerning the EU — the sovereign debt crisis. This has been a major topic of interest for more than a year, but the EU has taken decisive steps to strengthen coordination and economic governance in the euro area, both for the short and the long term, to restore confidence and stability in the financial markets.

To prevent a recurrence of the events that led to Lehman Brothers' fall in 2008 and subsequent shock to financial

markets, a new system of financial supervision that covers the banking, insurance and securities sectors has been established in Europe from the beginning of this year. Furthermore, to provide financial assistance to Member States, we have established mechanisms that enable the EU to provide funding when necessary. Most recently, we have agreed on the size, scope and mode of operation for a permanent mechanism that would put market jitters to rest. And last but not least, in order to ensure a higher quality of economic policy coordination, we have introduced the European Semester, where the budget plans and structural reforms of EU countries would be assessed by the European Commission, the administrative arm of the EU, early on in the year when they are still in the preparatory phase, as well as the Euro Plus Pact, agreed upon by the euro nations and joined by Bulgaria, Denmark, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Romania, which strives to improve competitiveness and the convergence of economic policies among its signatories.

The euro is one of the most significant and tangible achievements of European integration — a single currency that is now used by 17 EU countries, or some 330 million of the roughly 500 million inhabitants of the EU. The measures that have been introduced over the course of the past year aim to ensure that it remains a key global currency.

In closing, I would like to state my utmost confidence in the fact that Japan can and will rebuild, and rebuild an even stronger country than before. The calm determination with which the Japanese people have faced such devastation and uncertainty has won the admiration of all Europeans, and our thoughts continue to be with them.

Expressing solidarity with key partner Japan

Jose Manuel Barroso
PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

In penning this message on the occasion of Europe Day, I would like to express the European Union's solidarity with the Japanese people, who are dealing with this crisis with great courage and dignity.

The EU is doing all it can to help. Upon receiving a call from the Japanese government for specific in-kind assistance to bring relief to its citizens, seven flights have been dispatched from Europe, delivering much-needed supplies such as blankets, food and clothing.

I spoke with Prime Minister Naoto Kan

by telephone soon after the earthquake, when I stressed that the EU stands with Japan and is ready to provide further assistance if so requested. We intend to work closer with the Japanese authorities in international discussions to enhance the safety of nuclear power.

I also stated that the EU would like to comprehensively strengthen bilateral relations in all areas, including politics, economics and people-to-people exchanges. To this end, I look forward to the upcoming EU-Japan summit, where all parties hope progress can be made in bringing the EU-Japan relationship into an even higher level.



Jose Manuel Barroso EUROPEAN UNION

Milestones on the road to union since 1950

May 9, or Europe Day, is the anniversary of the Schuman Declaration, which is celebrated as the birthday of the European Union.

The evolution of the EU from a regional economic agreement in 1951 to today's supranational organization of 27 member states across the European continent stands as an unprecedented phenomenon in the annals of history.

On May 9, 1950, French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman (1886-1963), in a speech on behalf of the French government, called for pooling the production and consumption of coal and steel, and setting up a European organization for the purpose of bringing France and West Germany together. He proposed an eventual union of Europe.

Schuman believed it was necessary to end the discord between the two countries by settling the question of coal and steel, which had often caused disputes between them, and that without peace and friendship between France and West Germany, there would be no peace in Europe.

His proposal, dubbed the Schuman Declaration, led to the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in April 1951, comprising six countries — France, West Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg —



Robert Schuman

that signed the Treaty of Paris.

The Schuman Declaration reflected the opinion of Jean Monnet (1888-1979), a French planner often referred to as the "Father of Europe," who had worked to build the future out of the ruins of the past, promoting the idea of gradually uniting the economic interests of democratic European nations.

The ECSC was so successful that within a few years the decision was made to integrate other parts of the countries' economies. In 1957, the Treaties of Rome created the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom), and the six member states undertook to eliminate trade bar-

riers among themselves by forming a common market.

In 1967, the institutions of all three communities — ECSC, EEC and Euratom — were formally merged into the European Communities (EC), creating a single commission, a single Council of Ministers and the European Parliament. Members of the European Parliament were initially selected by national parliaments, but in 1979, the first direct elections were undertaken and they have been held every five years since.

In 1973, the first enlargement of the EC took place with the addition of Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom. The 1980s saw further expansion with Greece joining in 1981, and Spain and Portugal in 1986.

The 1992 Treaty of Maastricht laid the basis for further forms of cooperation in foreign and defense policy, in judicial and internal affairs, and in the creation of an economic and monetary union, including a common currency. This further integration created the EU.

In 1995, Austria, Finland and Sweden joined the EU, raising the membership to 15. A new currency, the euro, was launched in world money markets Jan. 1, 1999; it became the unit of exchange for all EU states, except the U.K., Sweden and Denmark.

In 2002, citizens of the 12 euro-zone countries began using euro bank notes and coins. Ten new countries joined the EU in 2004 — Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia — and in 2007, Bulgaria and Romania joined, bringing the membership to the current 27.

To ensure that the EU can continue to function efficiently with an expanded membership, the Treaty of Nice (in force as of Feb. 1, 2003) set forth rules streamlining the size and procedures of EU institutions. An effort to establish an EU Constitution, begun in October 2004, failed to attain unanimous ratification. In December 2007, the Treaty of Lisbon amended existing treaties, making it possible for the EU to make important decisions by majority instead of unanimous vote.

In December 2009, the Treaty of Lisbon entered into force and Herman Van Rompuy became the first permanent president of the European Council.

In July 2010, the council adopted the decision to establish the European External Action Service (EEAS), aiming to make the EU's external actions more coherent and efficient, and setting out its organization and functions. The service was inaugurated on Dec. 1, 2010.

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EU special

The European Union's relief efforts in Japan since March 11

The following is a brief overview of some of the European Union's efforts to help Japan since the March 11 earthquake and tsunami:

March 11: On the initial report of the earthquake and tsunami that struck the northeast of Japan and the ensuing crisis at the Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant, a joint message of solidarity from Herman Van Rompuy, president of the European Council, and European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso is delivered to Japan:

"We are deeply concerned at the news of the devastating earthquake which has struck Japan, causing a number of fatalities and serious material damage. The European Union expresses its solidarity and condolences to the people and government of Japan, and to the families of the victims at this difficult time. We stand ready to assist in any way we can in case of need."

At the same time, the European Commission initiates the process of activating the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, whose members are the 27 EU states along with Croatia, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

March 12: A humanitarian expert is dispatched to join the United Nations' Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UN-DAC) mission in Japan.

March 14: At the meeting of G-8 foreign ministers in Paris, the EU's high representative for foreign policy, Catherine Ashton, meets with Minister of Foreign Affairs Takeaki Matsumoto. On behalf of the EU, she expresses sympathy for and solidarity with the Japanese people. The high representative repeats the EU's offer of support.

March 15: The EU receives a request from the Japanese government for a coordinated EU response, focused on in-kind assistance to bring relief to the affected population.

March 19: An EU Civil Protection Assessment and Coordination Team of 15 experts in transport, logistics and radiological matters, and support staff arrives in Tokyo and starts EU-level relief activities, with support from the EU Delegation, working on solutions for the delivery of European assistance and coordinating the reception and transport of the aid in Japan.

March 22: European Council President Van Rompuy calls Prime Minister Naoto Kan to express the concern and support of the European Union.

During the telephone conference, the president extended the collective sympathy and solidarity of the 27 EU member states to the people affected by the earthquake and tsunami in

Japan, and also expressed their admiration for the way the Japanese people were working together in the wake of the natural disaster.

He continued: "To be clear, Mr. Prime Minister, we have full confidence in the Japanese government's handling of this catastrophe. The immediate response by the Japanese government has saved countless lives.

"We stand ready to assist in any way that we can. An EU Civil Protection Assessment and Coordination Team arrived in Tokyo on March 19 to coordinate an operation at EU level, bringing together assistance from different member states.

"We stand ready to respond to any further request and would like to ensure you that Europe will do its utmost to assist you in the weeks and months to come.

"I also want to stress the importance of the EU-Japan strategic relationship; we are true friends.

"Finally, I intend to raise the issue at the European Council this week. I am ready to bring your messages to my colleagues. Let me know how best the EU can assist your country at this very difficult time. I look forward to seeing you at the EU-Japan summit at the end of May."

March 23: The EU sends to

Japan 70 tons of relief items, including 25,000 blankets, 2,000 mattresses and 300 sleeping bags, offered by its member states through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. Seventeen members of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism have offered in-kind or financial assistance to help Japan's substantial relief operation.

March 24: Kristalina Georgieva, the European commissioner for international cooperation, humanitarian aid and crisis response, leaves for Japan. Her missions in Tokyo are to discuss the ongoing relief operations with the Japanese authorities and aid providers, and to oversee the logistics of European assistance that is being delivered to those in need.

Before her departure, Commissioner Georgieva says: "I will go to Tokyo to personally take part in the handover of European aid to the Japanese authorities. At a time when Japan is coping with a very tough humanitarian crisis, I want to personally convey Europeans' message of solidarity and compassion, and reiterate that Japan can count on the full support of the European people."

March 25: Commissioner Georgieva arrives in Tokyo and meets with key Japanese interlocutors, including the Japanese Red Cross Society, Disaster Management Minister Ryu Matsumoto and State Secretary for Foreign Affairs Yutaka Banno.

March 26: Commissioner Georgieva visits Ibaraki Prefecture and takes part in the handover of EU relief supplies that had arrived at Narita airport in Chiba Prefecture on a cargo flight on March 24. With the guidance of Masaru Hashimoto, the governor of Ibaraki Prefecture, the commissioner also inspects the damage situation at Otsu port in Kita-Ibaraki and goes to the gymnasium in Doho Park, Tsukuba City, to visit some evacuees from Fukushima Prefecture.

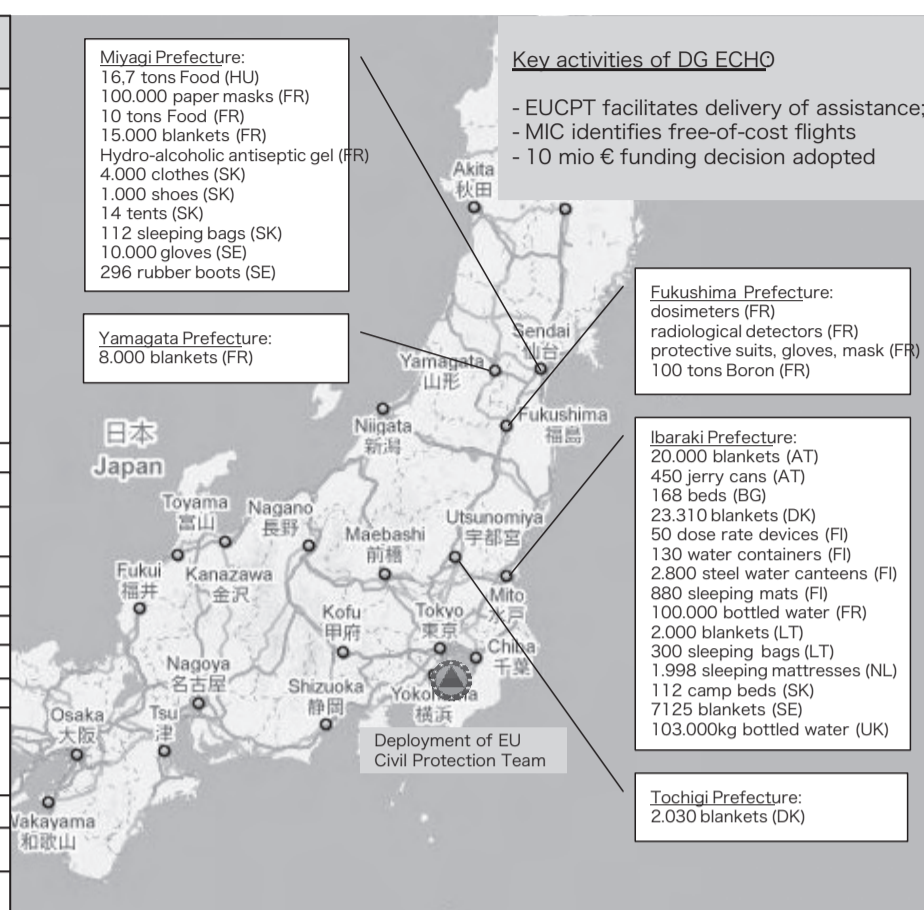
April 4: The European Commission decides to add €10 million for humanitarian funding to help the Japanese population cope with the massive consequences of the earthquake and tsunami. This boosts the EU's aid to Japan to more than €15 million. The new funding will provide assistance to more than 30,000 people who live in temporary shelters and rely on aid for food, water, blankets and



EU Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operation Japan

Update: 20/04/2011

Country	Financial assistance (source: 14p)	In-kind assistance delivered (source: MIC)
Austria	1,000,000 €	20,000 blankets, 450 jerry cans
Bulgaria		168 beds
Czech Republic	205,000 €	
Denmark		25,340 blankets
ECHO	10,000,000 €	
Estonia	200,000 €	
Finland	500,000 €	50 dose rate devices, 130 water containers, 2,800 steel water canteens, 889 sleeping mats
France		23,000 blankets, 100,000 bottled water, 100,000 paper masks, 10 tons Food, Hydro-alcoholic antiseptic gel, dosimeters, radiological detectors, protective suits, gloves, mask, 100 tons Boron
Germany	630,000 €	
Greece	100,000 €	
Hungary		16, 7 tons of food
Ireland	1,000,000 €	
Latvia	142,288 €	
Lithuania		300 sleeping bags, 2,000 blankets
Luxembourg	250,000 €	
Netherlands	1,000,000 €	1998 sleeping mattresses
Slovakia		1,000 T-shirts, 1,000 pants, 1,000 shirts, 1,000 pullovers, 1,000 shoes, 1,000 blankets, 14 tents, 112 sleeping bags, 112 camp beds
Slovenia	150,000 €	
Sweden		296 plastic boots, 10,000 gloves; 7125 blankets
United Kingdom	1,706,100 €	103,000kg of bottled water



The European Commission and individual EU Member States have together contributed some €17.2 million in financial and in-kind humanitarian assistance through the EU Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operation for Japan. Items mentioned on the map do not preclude contributions made through bilateral or other channels. THE DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION TO JAPAN

mattresses and other immediate provisions.

The new funding decision was spearheaded by Commissioner Georgieva.

"We continue to stand by a brave friend in need," Commissioner Georgieva says. "I have no doubt Japan will emerge from this disaster more resilient. While we support the affected people, we need to also draw our conclusions and prepare for a world where disasters are both more frequent and more destructive."

This €10 million decision al-

lows the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) to distribute relief items to evacuees and other people in need in Japan, in partnership with the Japanese Red Cross Society. The European aid will target some 8,000 families in the affected provinces of Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima prefectures.

April 6: A 26-ton shipment of relief supplies from the EU, including tents, canned food and clothing, that is earmarked for Miyagi Prefecture arrives in Japan. It is the fifth flight to arrive

with EU-donated supplies and the first to be delivered to the prefecture, which has been hard-hit by the earthquake and tsunami.

April 21 and 24: The latest shipments of relief supplies from the EU arrive at Narita airport. The shipments are comprised of beds, canteens and blankets that are delivered to the Ibaraki Prefectural Government office in Mito and a depot in the city of Ishioka in the prefecture.

At this point, 19 EU Member States have contributed finan-

cial and/or in-kind humanitarian assistance through the EU Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operation for Japan.

The EU's relief efforts are now entering the homestretch. The two shipments bring the number of flights carrying EU-donated relief supplies to seven.

Please see the adjacent map for more details on the relief supplies delivered.

With information provided by the Delegation of the European Union to Japan



Firsthand: EU Ambassador Hans Dietmar Schweisgut (center) and European Commissioner for humanitarian aid Kristalina Georgieva (left) meet with Ibaraki Gov. Masaru Hashimoto at the port in Kita-Ibaraki on March 26. THE DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION TO JAPAN

Helicopters aid search, rescue

The Eurocopter group was created in 1992 with the merger of the helicopter divisions of Aerospatiale-matra of France and DaimlerChrysler Aerospace of Germany. It is a wholly owned subsidiary of EADS (European Aeronautic Defence and Space Company), one of the three largest aerospace groups in the world. By a process of successive integrations, Eurocopter has become one of Europe's leading aeronautical groups.

In Japan, Eurocopter acquired its distributor, Euroheli, in 2009 to enlarge Eurocopter Japan's activities. Based in Tokyo and run by President and CEO Stephane Ginoux — who also serves as CEO of EADS-owned Airbus Japan — Eurocopter Japan markets and distributes Eurocopter products and services, while also providing technical support for helicopters.

The recent disasters in Japan have highlighted the continuing need for helicopters, which can reach areas that are difficult to access in other ways. Ginoux spoke with The Japan Times in light of the events.

What was Eurocopter Japan's first reaction after the March 11 earthquake and tsunami? Did you relocate any of your operations to the Kansai area?

Like everybody in Japan, we were very shocked by this terrible event and our first thoughts went to the victims and their families.

After having checked the safety of our own employees, we reflected on what could be our best contribution to the relief efforts and decided to concentrate our activity on the support of our helicopters, especially those in the devastated areas.



Stephane Ginoux, president and CEO of Airbus Japan and Eurocopter Japan

any of our operations since our main support activity is already in Kansai, at Itami airport in Osaka. In order to increase their efficiency, we did, however, move some staff from Tokyo to Osaka. Thanks to this enhanced support activity, the logistics and technical support chain was never disrupted and contributed to ensuring the full availability of helicopters for their vital missions.

How has Eurocopter assisted with relief efforts for the devastated areas? Please tell us of any achievements and further plans regarding support activities.

Watching TV news, you could see many helicopters engaging in rescue missions. More than half of those helicopters — firefighting, police and coast guard — were actually our helicopters.

In this kind of crisis, the helicopter is the best, sometimes the only means for search and rescue, and relief goods transportation. Therefore, our top priority after the disaster was to ensure the best support of those helicopter operations.

First of all, we established 24-hour shifts on maintenance to swiftly answer the needs and

thus increase efficiency. We also lent our own helicopter, pilot and mechanics to help transport Kobe City's investigation mission from Kobe airport to Fukushima airport. We offered also a free rental of our aircraft to one of the prefectures that suffered from the tsunami to replace one of its submerged helicopters.

As far as radioactivity is concerned, we established special measures against potential radioactivity observed when maintaining aircraft. So far, the level has been within the authorized limit.

Since the creation of direct maintenance service provider Eurocopter Japan T&E (Technics & Engineering) in July 2009, have there been any significant developments in your business in Japan?

By establishing Eurocopter Japan T&E as a subsidiary, Eurocopter became the first foreign-affiliated aircraft manufacturer in Japan that provided directly to the customer total support, from sales to product support, including maintenance, design activities and training. This has been generally highly appreciated by customers, who are able to discuss issues directly with the manufacturer.

What is the impact of the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear emergency on your future strategy in the Japanese market?

The earthquake and the tsunami did not cause any direct impact on our business except additional needs in terms of product support. When such a catastrophe happens indeed, the leading role of the helicopters for rescue and relief operations become obvious as much as the necessity of a perfect sup-

port operation to keep them flying as much as possible.

Please tell us about your plan to set up your main operation base at Kobe Airport Terminal.

In order to meet the growing demand for customer support and to enlarge our scope of activity, we decided to move our facility from Itami airport to Kobe Airport Terminal in April 2012.

We will not only reinforce maintenance and design activities but also create a new training center with a full flight simulator that will be introduced for the first time in Asia. This new activity will allow Japanese pilots to experience flights in critical situations without taking actual risks.

There are still very few accidents with helicopters but also still too many attributed to human error. Helicopters are used in very demanding situations and we think that with recurrent training of pilots in critical conditions, we can contribute to a higher level of safety of Japanese helicopter operations. Kobe City, Hyogo Prefecture and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry are very supportive of our plans.

It would be much appreciated if you could please extend a message to our readers, including the people in the devastated areas.

Having lived in Japan for 20 years, I was personally deeply shocked and would like to extend my deepest sympathy and condolence to the victims and loved ones affected by the March 11 earthquake and tsunami.

I would like also to contribute myself as much as possible to the support of the victims and the recovery of the devastated region.

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EU special

What's next for EU-Japan ties?

Tommy Kullberg
CHAIRMAN, THE EUROPEAN
BUSINESS COUNCIL IN JAPAN



Tommy Kullberg

Later this month, leaders of the European Union and Japan will meet to consider the next steps for strengthening EU-Japan political and economic relations. When they set themselves this target at their summit meeting last year, they can scarcely have imagined its significance, for in the intervening months not only have both economies struggled to overcome recession and unemployment, but Japan has suffered the tragic consequences of the Great East Japan Earthquake and now faces an enormous and costly reconstruction effort.

So the opportunity offered by the 2011 summit to launch a new era of enhanced cooperation and prosperity could hardly come at a more propitious moment. Seizing this opportunity would bring enormous benefits to business, consumers and the Japanese and EU

economies as a whole. The question is, are summit leaders finally prepared to roll up their sleeves and commit to work together for this brighter future — or will the opportunity be forever lost?

The European Union was deeply shocked and saddened by the devastating events of March 11. An EU response was quickly mobilized, focusing at Japan's request on in-kind assistance. Some €15 million of

aid is already on its way to the affected regions. Members of the European Business Council in Japan (EBC) were also eager to help, establishing a disaster relief fund to assist the setting up and running of temporary clinics where medical facilities, supplies, staff and services have been lost. Individual European companies based in Japan have also launched relief initiatives, organizing donations of garments, duvets, food and personal care products to evacuees, transport for relief efforts, and significant quantities of nuclear safety equipment as well as technical experts to assist the Tokyo Electric Power Co.

These and many other ongoing projects demonstrate the sense of solidarity felt by Europeans with the people of Japan, as well as a desire to support and work with them to overcome this crisis. The Japanese people have shown, to universal admiration, their resilience and determination to rebuild their country. But the truth is

that Japan needs much more than this.

Even before March 11, Prime Minister Naoto Kan and Keidanren Chairman Hiro-masa Yonekura had reached the conclusion that bold action was needed to boost the economy and were calling for Japan to "open up", seeing increased competition from abroad as a vital stimulus to domestic competitiveness. Since that date, Japan's economic challenges have multiplied. Meanwhile, the EU is still struggling with the legacy of the financial crisis, which, according to the European Commission's latest Annual Growth Survey, has resulted in "a large loss in economic activity, a substantial increase in unemployment, a steep fall in productivity, and badly weakened public finances."

This situation argues strongly for the EU and Japan to act now to unlock the economic energy and prospects for prosperity in their mutual trade relationship. In 2010 the

EU, with its market of some 495 million people, ranked third for Japan both as a source of imports and as a destination for exports. Meanwhile, Japan was the EU's sixth largest import partner and export destination. Yet research undertaken by consulting company Copenhagen Economics has shown that removing tariff and non-tariff barriers could increase Japanese exports to the EU by more than 60 percent and EU exports to Japan by more than 70 percent. Such increases would translate into a huge boost for the economy as a whole and the creation of many more jobs — a prospect which right now neither Japan nor the EU can afford to ignore.

The old EU-Japan Action Plan aimed at removing barriers to trade has been a disappointment — a drawn-out dialogue that failed to deliver results. A new approach is needed, sufficiently comprehensive to address the issues that matter to both sides and to lead to bind-



Partnership: Prime Minister Naoto Kan, Herman Van Rompuy, president of the European Council, and Jose Manuel Barroso, president of the European Commission, meet on the sidelines of the 8th Asia-Europe Meeting in Brussels in October 2010. EUROPEAN UNION

ing commitments. It is for this reason that the EBC is calling for an EU-Japan Economic Integration Agreement.

The agreement we envisage would incorporate all aspects of trade in goods and services, including regulations, standards, market authorizations, government procurement and investment rules. The huge potential benefits of such an agreement have been widely researched. While these bene-

fits may take time to be realized in full, the launch of negotiations would immediately enable both sides to agree to quick wins where barriers can be easily lifted. So the earlier negotiations start, the earlier Japan and the EU would reap the benefits.

The ground has been prepared, the time for talking is over: now is the moment for decision. If the 2011 summit cannot commit to strengthening

the EU-Japan economic relationship, momentum will be lost — summits will be no more than talks about talks, and business will lose interest. So we urge the leaders at the upcoming summit to decide on starting work immediately on an Economic Integration Agreement. The people of Japan and the EU need this opportunity to boost economic prosperity. They should not be made to wait.

Leading the way in import cars in Japan

There are three reasons why a Volkswagen vehicle is a good choice for people in Japan who are thinking of buying a car, according to Volkswagen Group Japan (VGJ) President/CEO Gerry Dorizas.

The first, he said, is that Volkswagen stands for innovation, describing the German-based automaker as an engineering company first and foremost.

"Volkswagen has perfected the combustion engine," Dorizas said in an interview with The Japan Times late last month. "The philosophy is to create smaller engines with high power and good fuel consumption."

"The second thing is that Volkswagen is a responsible brand that delivers what it says to its customers," Dorizas said. "It takes into consideration the environment and human aspects when it develops cars."

And finally, Dorizas said, Volkswagen delivers value: "The customer gets more than what they expect from the car, whether it is the driving feeling — the pleasure — or whether it is the options that are included in the car that other manufacturers would charge for. The customer gets driving pleasure — he has a product that he commands. It's not just a utility. It's an intimate driving experience. That's the difference between Volkswagen and other brands."

Volkswagen's history in Japan goes all the way back to 1953, when the automaker began selling vehicles in Japan through import-auto specialist Yanase. In 1991, VGJ — a wholly owned subsidiary of Wolfsburg, Germany-based Volkswagen AG — began importing vehicles to Japan, and now markets them through 243 franchised dealers nationwide. It is the biggest import-car dealership network in Japan.



Focused: Gerry Dorizas, president and CEO of Volkswagen Group Japan, speaks to The Japan Times in his office in Tokyo on April 22. YOSHIKI MIURA

VGJ also handles pre-delivery inspection of some of the automaker's other brands, such as Audi, Bentley, Bugatti and Lamborghini.

In 1991, some 30,000 Volkswagen vehicles were sold in Japan, and since then that number has increased by more than half and at some points has more than doubled, making Volkswagen the most popular imported car brand in Japan for the last 11 years.

"Business is very good here," said Dorizas, a native of Athens

who has lived in Japan for a total of 20 years and has headed VGJ since 2007. "It's been a long development. Volkswagen has invested a lot of money in Japan, such as our pre-delivery inspection facility in Toyohashi, Aichi Prefecture." The Toyohashi complex, with an unloading capacity of 100,000 vehicles a year, is Japan's largest import-car facility.

Dorizas noted that while Japan has always been an important and strategic market for Volkswagen, it has been difficult

to penetrate. Imported vehicles, he observed, still account for just 4 percent of the Japanese auto market.

Although Volkswagen vehicles meet the Japanese government's environmental standards, Dorizas said Volkswagen "had to break down the psychological barrier regarding the perception of imported cars versus Japanese cars. We had to communicate to the Japanese public that we have a product that meets their needs."

Volkswagen also had to explain why its vehicles are priced some 8 to 10 percent higher than domestically made cars on a list-price basis.

"What makes Volkswagen attractive in Japan is that through the years we have innovated our engines and come to Japan in line with Japanese requirements — the low emission certification," Dorizas said. "In that way, our customers have the advantage of the eco-car tax incentives. Nevertheless, they do not miss out on the driving pleasure of the car, the quality of the car."

A major boost for the automaker's brand image in Japan came in February 2010, when the Volkswagen Golf became the first imported gasoline-powered vehicle to achieve the coveted four-star environmental impact rating. Currently, 85 percent of VGJ's fleet meets the four-star standard.

And in April, Volkswagen's popular Polo subcompact was awarded the Japan New Car Assessment Program's top rating of six stars plus for occupant safety. The Polo performed impressively in a total of three different crash tests.

Like many other companies, VGJ saw its sales decline with the onset of the recession in 2008. Dorizas said that Volkswagen adopted a "back to basics" strategy with four key objectives:

- Providing the best customer satisfaction
- Providing the best dealer satisfaction
- Providing the best employee satisfaction
- Being sustainable in business

That strategy, Dorizas said, has put VGJ well on the way to increasing its sales in Japan to 55,000 vehicles in 2011 from 47,000 in 2010.

Recently, Volkswagen has been doing its bit to help victims of the devastating March 11 earthquake and tsunami. Volkswagen's German head office donated €2.5 million (¥300 million) — excluding voluntary contributions by employees — to the German Red Cross Society to aid its recovery efforts, while VGJ has mounted its own in-house fundraising campaign to help people in Tohoku suffering from the aftereffects of the disaster. VGJ also sent three vans to help with the Japanese Red Cross Society's relief efforts.

VGJ decided to temporarily close its Tokyo office following the events of March 11.

"We did this for security and psychological reasons," Dorizas said. "It wasn't fair to ask people to work in a high-rise building (given the threat of aftershocks). So we kept functioning in Toyohashi."

"Our priority was to find out if everybody was OK," he continued. "We have three dealers close to the most severely hit area in Sendai. But everyone was fine."

Marking 20 years since it began importing Volkswagen vehicles, VGJ seeks to further develop Volkswagen as the most familiar import car brand in Japan.

"I want to see more Volkswagen cars on the roads and the happy faces of the customers driving them," said Dorizas.



Links: Eighty amateur golfers from the EU and Japan participate in the 2010 EU-Japan Friendship Week Golf Tournament.

EU-Japan Friendship Week 2011

Since 2001, EU-Japan Friendship Week has been held to celebrate relations between the European Union and Japan.

Running from May through June each year, the event comprises cultural, social, educational, academic and athletic activities that take place throughout Japan, aiming to mix fun, friendly, informative exchanges with a view toward giving the Japanese public a chance to learn more about the EU.

The Delegation of the European Union to Japan organizes selected events and sponsors or promotes many others. The program contents come in a variety of forms, such as exhibitions, symposiums, quiz shows and cooking workshops. Participants can learn how to cook European cuisine, play in a golf tournament, have fun with school projects and attend film screenings.

On May 10 and 11, the fifth EU School Project will be held, which will encompass 111 high schools and some 53,000 students across Japan, featuring 66 EU diplomats who will give presentations about the EU and their native countries.

The golf tournament, to which anyone from Japan or the EU can apply, takes place on May 21 at the Haruna no Mori Country Club in Takasaki, Gunma Prefecture.

The ninth EU Film Days introduces selected films from 22 of the 27 nations in the EU. The 23 films that will be screened include six that will be shown for the first time in Japan.

All films will be screened at the National Film Center, The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, from May 27 to June 19. The films this year include the Academy Award-nominated "The Secret of Kells" from Ireland, the Oscar-winning film

set in Spain and directed by Woody Allen, "Vicky Cristina Barcelona," and "The Misfortunates" from Belgium. Tickets are ¥500 per film for adults. See the program listing below or visit www.eufilmdays.jp for more information.

As part of EU Film Days, a special talk show is scheduled to take place on May 28 at the National Film Center. The event starts from 2 p.m. and admission is free. Planned participants include renowned Polish film director Jerzy Skolimowski, who will also make an appearance before the screening of his film on May 27.

Screenings of some of the films will be held in June in Kyoto, Hiroshima, Okayama, Yamaguchi and Takamatsu, Kagawa Prefecture.

For more information on EU-Japan Friendship Week, call (03) 3239-0441, or visit <http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/japan/fv>.

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EU FILM DAYS 2011		Screening Schedule		Tokyo		
Date	Time	Title	Country	Time	Title	Country
May 27	15:00	Vortex	Lithuania	19:00	Four Nights with Anna	Poland
May 28	11:00	Starring Maja	Sweden	14:00	Special Talk Show	Poland
May 29	11:00	Eastern Plays	Bulgaria	14:00	The Viceroy	Italy
May 30	CLOSED					
May 31	15:00	Vicky Cristina Barcelona	Spain	19:00	Ata/ Six	France
June 1	15:00	The Viceroy	Italy	19:00	Starring Maja	Sweden
June 2	15:00	Twisted Roots	Finland	19:00	Eastern Plays	Bulgaria
June 3	15:00	Duska	The Netherlands	19:00	Vicky Cristina Barcelona	Spain
June 4	13:00	Twisted Roots	Finland	16:00	The Ride	Czech Republic
June 5	11:00	Colorado Kid	Hungary	14:00	The Misfortunates	Belgium
June 6	CLOSED					
June 7	15:00	Our Beloved Month of August	Portugal	19:00	Duska	The Netherlands
June 8	15:00	Colorado Kid	Hungary	19:00	Hong Kong Confidential	Latvia
June 9	15:00	The Ride	Czech Republic	18:30	Our Beloved Month of August	Portugal
June 10	15:00	The Secret of Kells	Ireland	19:00	The Temptation of St. Tony	Estonia
June 11	13:00	The Secret of Kells	Ireland	16:00	Vortex	Lithuania
June 12	13:00	The Temptation of St. Tony	Estonia	16:00	Dust	Luxembourg
June 13	CLOSED					
June 14	15:00	Dust	Luxembourg	19:00	The Misfortunates	Belgium
June 15	15:00	El Greco	Greece	19:00	Earth	United Kingdom
June 16	15:00	Earth	United Kingdom	19:00	The Rest is Silence	Romania
June 17	15:00	A Year Ago in Winter	Germany	19:00	Toto	Austria
June 18	13:00	The Rest is Silence	Romania	16:00	El Greco	Greece
June 19	13:00	A Year Ago in Winter	Germany	16:00	Toto	Austria

The National Film Center is a one-minute walk from Kyobashi Station on the Tokyo Metro Ginza Line. For more information, call (03) 5777-8600. For details of screenings in other areas, visit www.eufilmdays.jp, or call (075) 251-3270 (Kyoto), (082) 223-3525 (Hiroshima), (086) 222-0051 (Okayama), (083) 901-2222 (Yamaguchi) and (087) 832-1241 (Takamatsu). The above schedule is subject to change without prior notice due to unavoidable reasons.