

**Joint press statement for the meeting between Chairperson Shizuo Fujiwara of the Personal Information Protection Commission of Japan and Vice President Vera Jourová of the European Commission
(responsible for Values and Transparency)**

20 June 2024
Brussels, Belgium

Today, Chairperson Shizuo Fujiwara of the Personal Information Protection Commission and European Commission Vice President for Values and Transparency Vera Jourová met in Brussels.

The meeting provided an opportunity to reaffirm the close partnership between Japan and the EU in the area of data protection and data flows. The Japan-EU mutual adequacy arrangement, which came into effect in January 2019 and created the world's largest area for the safe and free flow of personal data, provides a unique basis to continuously strengthen this cooperation.

This includes stepping up cooperation with like-minded countries to maximise the benefits of trusted data flows and explore avenues for closer enforcement cooperation, as discussed during the high-level roundtable with countries benefiting from an EU adequacy decision on 4 March 2024, and its follow-up meeting on 30 May.

Building on the successful first evaluation of the mutual adequacy arrangement in April 2023, both sides also welcomed the steady progress in the ongoing discussions regarding the expansion of the EU's adequacy decision for Japan and agreed to accelerate the work with a view of concluding their talks as soon as possible.

Such an expansion, taking into account the 2021 reform of the Japan's data protection framework, which extended protections to new areas such as the academia and public sector, would boost regulatory cooperation and facilitate research. It would also further complement and amplify the benefits brought by the Japan-EU Economic Partnership Agreement and could pave the way for strengthening other areas of cooperation that rely heavily on exchanges of personal data.

Chairperson Shizuo Fujiwara stated the following: "For Japan, the EU is an important partner that shares fundamental values and principles such as freedom, democracy, the rule of law, and human rights. Among these, the Japan-EU mutual adequacy arrangement is particularly significant as one of the key elements of Data Free Flow with Trust (DFFT) in the field of personal information protection and privacy. Our commission is looking forward to intensifying our work on a possible expansion of the EU's adequacy decision, to further complement the mutual adequacy arrangement, which is a priority for us. We also intend to continue our work on developing mutual adequacy arrangements with other like-minded countries as stated in our Global Strategy issued in March 2024. In parallel, we intend to further collaborate with the

EU to strengthen the adequacy network."

Vice President Vera Jourová stated the following: "The EU-Japan partnership on privacy is a key component of our bilateral relationship. I very much welcome the ongoing work on a possible extension of the EU's adequacy decision to also cover data flows to academia and the public sector, to the benefit of both sides. Beyond our bilateral cooperation, there is now also a unique opportunity for the EU and Japan to cooperate with like-minded partners on maximising the benefits of free and safe data flows, and to show common leadership in this strategic area. In this context, I very much welcome the PPC's active participation in the initiative we launched recently for closer cooperation between countries benefiting from an adequacy decision."

The two sides also confirmed their intention to continue working together at international level to promote high data protection standards as a precondition for facilitating data flows, including through the operationalisation of the concept of 'Data Free Flow with Trust' in the area of personal data protection and privacy in the framework of the OECD.