

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening. It is an honour for my wife and I to welcome you all here this evening at my residence for this year's garden party reception. It is a most welcome opportunity for us all to meet again in a spirit of conviviality to celebrate the ever fruitful relations between Japan and the EU. Our broad and growing ties are surely represented by all of you here this evening, as we collaborate every day to enhance our economic, trade, cultural, political and security relations among so many others. I very much appreciate all the efforts that go into ensuring that the relations between Japan and the EU remain with excellent prospects.

Japan and the EU have worked closely together to address in tandem all of the world's most urgent issues. Russia's aggression against Ukraine is not only a matter of European security, but also a challenge to the free and open international order itself. Together with the EU, Japan continues to impose severe sanctions against Russia and to provide unwavering humanitarian, military and financial support to Ukraine. Japan has pledged and is implementing \$ 7.6 billion in assistance to Ukraine in vital action including demining and debris clearance, electricity reconstruction,

agriculture and industrial development.

In the context of Japan's G7 Presidency this year, upholding the international order based on the rule of law has been the core guiding principle. At the Hiroshima Summit, we demonstrated the G7's strong determination to continue supporting Ukraine. We have also come together to address urgent matters of our time including energy and food security, economic security, challenges we are facing due to climate change, along with health and development issues. In addition, it was of great significance that the Summit was held in Hiroshima when the G7 leaders renewed their collective commitment toward a world without nuclear weapons even during this harsh security environment.

For the sake of global prosperity, dear friends, the solid ties between Japan and the EU should continue to be enhanced in many fields. Our Economic Partnership Agreement has been a cornerstone for our strong trade and investment relations. Recently, we have stepped up our joint work on the energy and green transitions under our Green Alliance, particularly our cooperation in hydrogen. Digital transformation is another promising field for Japan-EU relations to blossom and we welcome the first Council meeting in July and the signing of several MoCs this year.

Economic security is another priority in which we have our common interest. It was meaningful that the first G7 Leaders' statement on Economic Resilience and Economic Security delivered a comprehensive message with the cooperation of the EU. We look forward to further discussions on ways to strengthen economic security, including through efforts to bolster the resiliency of supply chains, and counter economic coercion.

With us tonight, we have representatives of Fukushima Prefecture who came over especially for this event. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their cooperation.

12 years ago, Japan experienced a devastating earthquake and tsunami that severely affected the region around Fukushima. The Fukushima Nuclear Power Station was also damaged. Since then, Japan has been making its utmost efforts to ensure the safety of people and to decontaminate the area and recover the living environment. Last month, Japan started the discharge of the treated water off the Japanese coast. This treated water is purified through Advanced Liquid Processing System after being used to cool down the nuclear plant's debris. The discharge has been carefully planned and consulted with the international community for several years. I stress that this decision was made strictly based on the

scientific evidence and in full compliance with the international standards. The discharge will be monitored by third parties, including the IAEA, throughout the process and afterward.

Japan has always committed to communicating with the EU and the international community with utmost transparency, accountability and honesty. In this regard, I welcome the EU's decision to lift import measures on Japanese food products, imposed after the Fukushima nuclear accident. Japan has ensured the safety of the food products through a rigorous monitoring and control system based on scientific evidence which have earned support from our European partners. From a personal perspective, it is also my pleasure to contribute to this endeavor because I grew up in Fukushima as a small child and I still have an unforgettable memory of this beautiful region.

I hope you all to enjoy various Sake, liquors and peach juice as well as fishery products and traditional sweets brought from Fukushima for tonight's event. I am very happy and excited that now people in the EU will have more opportunities to enjoy delicious and unique food and drinks from Fukushima and its neighboring region. I encourage you all to meet with the representatives of Fukushima at their stand to discover more about the

region and its products. And please let the delicious products of them known to your friends.

I would also like to thank the Japanese companies joining us tonight for their support and cooperation. You will have the chance to see Toyota's latest electric car, Daikin's heat pump air conditioner and water heater, Kaneka's display on the Green Planet, and Nitto's various tapes with special functions. The companies here this evening are among the many Japanese companies that are contributing to the objectives of the SDGs shared by our EU partners. And of course, if you are interested in visiting Japan, don't forget to ask for information at the JNTO, ANA and JAL stand. The most important means to discover our country is to visit Japan and see what it offers for yourselves. All the Japanese people are happy to welcome you. We also have Uijin beer from a Japanese brewery producing beers in Belgium. Last but not least, we also have the pleasure of being joined by representatives from Hyogo Prefecture.

Before the toast, I would like to invite you all to listen to a recorded speech by the Governor of Fukushima Prefecture, Mr Masao Uchibori sent to us for this evening's event.

[Fukushima Governor's VIDEO]

I would now like to raise my glass and invite you all to do the same, with the beautiful sparkling sake from Fukushima. Let's toast the precious friendship between Japan and the EU and the efforts made by all of you here this evening to enrich our friendship and cooperation.

Kanpai!

Je vous souhaite une soirée heureuse.

I wish you all a pleasant evening.