

**Letter of intent on urban and regional policy dialogue between  
the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure,  
Transport and Tourism of Japan and the  
Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy of the European Commission**

Japan and the European Union face common economic, social and environmental challenges such as an ageing and declining population, budgetary constraints, intense international competition, rapid advance of innovation and digital transition, climate change and intensifying natural disasters.

In addressing these challenges, the City Bureau of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism of Japan (MLIT) and the Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy of the European Commission (DG REGIO) have been working together through the dialogue on urban policy. This cooperation led to the signing of the Letter of Intent in 2013. The Strategic Partnership Agreement between Japan, of the one part, and the European Union and its Member States, of the other part, includes the specific provision on urban policy cooperation.

Recognizing the importance of continuing and expanding this successful cooperation, the City Bureau and the National Spatial Planning and Regional Policy Bureau of MLIT and DG REGIO hereby intend to establish a dialogue on the territorial implications of the above-mentioned challenges, especially with regard to urban and regional policies. The dialogue should promote greater knowledge and mutual understanding through exchanges of information and sharing of experiences on urban and regional policy. It should establish the communication channels necessary for a strong policy dialogue in this field.

The dialogue should address exchange of information and good practices, *inter alia*, on:

- Demographic change and competitiveness: against a background of demographic change especially ageing and declining population and intense international competition, MLIT and DG REGIO (hereinafter referred to individually as “side” and collectively as “both sides”) intend to discuss themes such as territorial structures to cope with demographic and economic dynamics and to adapt to change in the socio-economic situation over the medium- to long-term period.
- Environmental sustainability, disaster risk reduction and climate change: both sides intend to discuss policies and practices towards achieving international commitments, such as renewable energy sources, transport modal shift, enhancing resilience and incentives to reduce GHG emissions.
- Regional innovation and smart specialization policies and practices as a key factor for sustainable competitiveness and growth of cities and regions, including promotion of smart and innovative technologies in cities and regions.

Upon mutual consent, both sides can jointly carry out activities on the abovementioned topics to achieve sustainable and inclusive urban and regional policy.

The dialogue should be open and flexible so that it can be adapted to new priorities; the topics and structure of the dialogue should be reviewed every 4 years. Both sides should ensure that suitable organizational arrangements are put in place for the pursuit of the dialogue including the nomination of senior officials as co-chairpersons of the dialogue and

should establish contact points in on each side. The working language will be English; it is acknowledged that MLIT will need sufficient time to prepare communications in English.

Both sides intend to organize a meeting every year. The venue of the meeting should alternate between Japan and the European Union, unless otherwise jointly decided. Other partners, including those from academia, businesses, local governments and other actors from each side can be invited to participate in the dialogue as appropriate. Both sides will bear the cost of the participation of their own delegation in the meetings and the costs of organizing meetings held in their respective venues.

This Letter of Intent does not entail any legally binding effects in respect of either side.

Place, date,

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*Brussels, 21.05.2021*

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