Statement by Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission, at the joint press conference following the EU-Japan Summit in Tokyo

Tokyo, 29 May 2015

It is a pleasure to be here in Japan. It is my fifth time here and it's already the second time I meet Prime Minister Abe since I became Commission President.

In events like this, we come together to achieve outcomes. Japan is Europe’s longest standing strategic partner in Asia. And we want to continue reinforcing our relationship. Today, we discussed common challenges and common answers in five areas:

First, we need to continue to stimulate growth and jobs. The way to do it is by boosting investment. During the financial crisis, investment in Europe has fallen off a cliff (430 billion EUR drop compared to 2007 level) - from transport and energy to broadband and education. We have tabled a strategy to change that: a 315 billion EUR Investment Plan for Europe.

Yesterday, the EU institutions found an agreement on the European Fund for Strategic Investments that is at the heart of our €315 billion investment plan for Europe. This means that the Fund will be operational and start financing projects at the end of the summer. We are delivering.

Second, on Greece: The Commission is working day and night with the ECB and the IMF and the Greek authorities to find solutions that are in the interest of the stability, solidity and integrity of the euro zone. This is a very difficult issue that will be solved in the days and weeks to come. We will solve it.

Third, taxation: for our economies to prosper, we need fair, transparent and predictable tax systems for businesses to invest and for consumers to regain confidence. This is a global challenge. We must not let loose - I will not let loose - on the commitments made within the G20 and OECD to tackle tax avoidance, establish greater tax transparency and ensure fairer tax competition - within the EU and globally. Otherwise globalisation risks becoming a lost opportunity for citizens and businesses.

Forth, removing barriers to trade and investment. Alongside the EU-US TTIP, the EU-Japan Free Trade Agreement is one of our biggest and most important trade initiatives, with benefits for both sides. We want to be ambitious: eliminating tariffs and relevant non-tariff measures; opening up services, investment and public procurement; fully protecting geographical indications. This trade agreement needs both speed and substance. Progress has been too modest recently. I strongly believe in the necessity to have a free trade agreement with Japan being concluded as soon as possible, possibly by the end of this year. If not, in the first months of 2016. Speed is important but substance and quality are more important. Today, we discussed how to accelerate the talks and I submitted a five point Action Plan to Prime Minister Abe's meditation which we expect Japan to address and to make concrete progress on.

Fifth and last point: climate change. We are just a few hundred kilometres and less than two hours' Shinkansen ride from the city of Kyoto, where the landmark change agreement was adopted 18 years ago. In Paris in December this year we also want to see an ambitious and robust global climate change agreement, its worthy successor. Prime Minister Abe and I and all other G20 members showed their commitment to this in Brisbane.

The EU has made an ambitious and specific commitment. We want to see ambition from Japan. It is the world’s 4th largest economy and 7th largest emitter. Japan cannot pass this issue on to the next generation: we call on Japan to be strong and swift in resolving it.