

## **Joint Press Statement**

### **The Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Visegrad Group countries - V4 (the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia) and Japan**

Budapest, 6 June 2011

The Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the V4 countries and Japan (“V4+Japan”) was held in Budapest on June 6, 2011 on the occasion of the 10th ASEM Foreign Ministers’ Meeting. The V4+Japan Ministerial Meeting was attended by Mr. Takeaki Matsumoto, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, Mr. Mikuláš Dzurinda, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic, Mr. János Martonyi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Hungary, Mr. Radosław Sikorski, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland and Mr. Jiří Schneider, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic.

The Ministers discussed the current situation and prospects of dialogues and cooperation within the framework of “V4+Japan”. Recognizing shared values, the Ministers pointed out that the cooperation between Japan and V4 countries, a leading group in the Central and Eastern European region with abundant potential for further growth, is value-adding and promoting not only bilateral but also EU-Japan relations.

#### **Overcoming the Great East Japan Earthquake and Enhancing of Nuclear Safety**

1. The V4 Ministers expressed solidarity with Japan and reiterated efforts of their governments, business community and society to assist in reconstruction of the areas affected by the devastating earthquake and tsunami of March 11, 2011 as well as by the accident at Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station. They expressed full confidence in the ability of Japan to recover from this disaster. The V4 countries admire the courage and diligence of the Japanese people facing such a difficult situation. Minister Matsumoto expressed sincere gratitude on behalf of the Government and people of Japan for the solidarity and support including relief supplies and donations provided by the governments and people of V4 countries.

The Ministers shared the view that it is important for public policy responses to be based on solid scientific evidence, including in relation to goods and travel. The Ministers reiterated that the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami’s impact on the supply chains was a reminder of deepened economic integration on the global scale, and also were convinced the ongoing recovery of the affected areas would contribute to the economic well-being of the world. Minister Matsumoto expressed willingness of the Government of Japan to pursue a future oriented and open reconstruction program in cooperation with the international community. The V4 Ministers expressed their readiness to support Japan with necessary contribution and participation in rebuilding programs.

Minister Matsumoto explained that Japan is continuing its full efforts to settle the situation at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station, to provide information to the international community with maximum transparency and to share with the international community the lessons learned from the accident, which will be conducive to enhancing safety of nuclear facilities around the world. The Ministers reaffirmed the utmost importance of strengthening nuclear safety and resolved to enhance international cooperation leading to the highest levels of nuclear safety. The V4 countries and Japan are fully committed to international efforts in this respect and will use every appropriate international forum, especially the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

### **V4+Japan Dialogue and Cooperation: Promoting and deepening partnership**

2. The Ministers appreciated the regular political dialogue and welcomed further development of the result-oriented cooperation manifested in a number of joint projects since the last V4+Japan Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Hanoi in May 2009. The Ministers also welcomed that the V4 countries and Japan are deepening equal partnership by holding workshops and seminars on both sides.

3. The Ministers supported further strengthening of friendly ties between V4 countries and Japan. The Ministers expressed their intension to continue holding Foreign Ministers' Meetings on a biennial basis using such occasions as ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meeting as well as annual consultations at Political Directors' and experts' level.

The successful joint seminars and workshops, organized in the period of 2009 – 2011 in the fields of environment and climate change, economy and finance, development assistance, energy saving, tourism, innovation and small and medium enterprises have contributed to further fostering of V4+Japan economic and technological cooperation.

4. The Ministers emphasized the importance of developing collaboration, which is reflecting new challenges and delivering practical and tangible benefits to their countries in the areas such as climate change, energy supply security and efficiency, nuclear safety, trade and investment, science and technology, innovations, support of small and medium enterprises' cooperation, tourism and development assistance. In this context, the Ministers welcomed the fact that Japan and V4 member countries have been contributing together to the reconstruction and stability in Afghanistan in the framework of Japan-NATO/PRT (Provincial Reconstruction Team) cooperation. Possible future joint projects will be considered on an ad-hoc basis.

## European Union - Japan: Strengthening bonds of friendship and cooperation

5. The Ministers welcomed the results of the 20th EU-Japan summit held in Brussels on May 28, 2011, in particular the start of the process for parallel negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA)/Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), and for an agreement covering political, global and other sectoral cooperation. The Ministers highlighted their intention to further strengthen their political and economic ties through closely working together with a view to moving ahead with agreements.

The Ministers welcomed the fact that Japanese companies have significantly contributed to the economic growth and job creation in V4 countries and to the strengthening of economic ties between V4 and Japan. The V4 Ministers expressed their expectation for further flow of mutually beneficial investments preferably into high value-added sectors and new advanced technologies (innovations, renewable energy sources, green and energy saving technologies).

In addition to the deepening of bilateral economic integration, the Ministers welcomed further development of concrete cooperation in the other areas, including nuclear safety, energy and disaster management, which were set out following the Great East Japan Earthquake and the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station. Japan will continue to work closely with the incoming Polish Presidency. On this occasion Minister Sikorski informed about the Polish Presidency priorities.

Recognizing the important role of the science and technology for economic growth and sustainable development, the Ministers welcomed the entry into force of the Agreement between the Government of Japan and the European Community on Cooperation in Science and Technology.

6. Minister Dzurinda gave an overview on V4 activities towards the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries, including on extended informal Foreign Ministerial meeting which took place under the current Slovak V4 Presidency in Bratislava on March 3, 2011 with participation of V4, Germany, the EaP countries and the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. Minister Matsumoto explained Japanese contribution for the consolidation of democracy and establishment of transparent market economy in EaP countries. The Ministers shared their expectation that the EaP Information and Coordination Group would contribute to appropriate coordination between the EU programs supporting the EaP countries and similar actions taken by non-EU countries.

7. The Ministers exchanged views on the regional security environment of East Asia. Reaffirming that security in Asia and Europe affect each other and both are in the interest of the international community as a whole, the Ministers shared current security concerns in the regions and confirmed to pay due consideration to those concerns.

## **Reform of the United Nations Security Council**

8. The Ministers confirmed that Japan and V4 should work together to achieve reform of the UN Security Council to be more representative and effective, including enlargement in both the permanent and non-permanent categories of the Council.