



# Japan opens to European business more than ever: it's time to combine EU support with the new trade agreement

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The biggest agreement ever negotiated by the European Union, the EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), has entered into force this month, allowing businesses from Europe and Japan to take advantage of the largest open trade zone in the world. Most of the tariffs have been eliminated or reduced, and import requirements are now simplified.

*"European companies will benefit from removed tariffs and simplified customs procedures. [...] It is now up to businesses and individuals to make the very most out of these new trade opportunities."*  
Cecilia Malmström, Commissioner for Trade.

In this context, the EU Gateway to Japan Programme can be used as a springboard to access the Japanese market. This EU-funded initiative focuses on many of the key points of the EPA. Among the

many points, that of procurement in the railway sector appears to be a winning combination. Japan is constantly looking for solutions to help improve its transportation system, and companies offering advanced technologies have good opportunities at thriving on the market. With these companies in mind, the Programme has organised a second [mission to Tokyo in the Railway Technologies & Services](#) [1]: European firms can apply to exhibit at Mass-Trans Innovation, from 26-29 November 2019, with the support of the EU, which includes coaching before, during and after the mission.

Another joint commitment between the EU and Japan is that towards sustainable development and the issue of climate change. In this sense, an important role is played by Green Energy Technologies, which will be the focus of the [EU Gateway to Japan mission to World Smart Energy Week Osaka](#) [2] from 24-27 September in 2019.

The EU and Japan have also committed to promote forestry. Thanks to the EPA, most tariffs on wood have been immediately dropped, opening new opportunities for European countries exporting such products. Building material of wood from sustainable forestry in Europe, are one of the many promising subsectors targeted by the upcoming [mission to Japan for Construction & Building Technologies](#) [3] on 12-15 November 2019, when 40 selected European companies will showcase at Japan Home & Building Show 2019 in Tokyo, the largest conglomerate exhibition for housing and the building industry in Japan.

Finally, the EPA makes life easier to European companies trying to access highly regulated Japanese markets, such as that of medical devices. Japan has adopted the international standard on quality management systems (QMS), on which Europe also bases its system for medical devices. This greatly reduces the costs of certification for exported European products, and EU Gateway to Japan has already scheduled a [new mission in the Healthcare & Medical Technologies sector](#) [4] on 15-18 March 2020.

The EU Gateway to Japan Programme is a great opportunity for European companies to take full advantage of the EU-Japan EPA and to benefit at the same time from the support of the European Union: it only takes a click to apply to a market scoping mission that will facilitate establishing long lasting business collaborations with new valuable partners overseas.

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