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Annexe 1 : Entretien avec Christel Schaldemose

S : Is the sound okay?

D : I think, yes.

S : Great.

D : So first question. Could you introduce yourself in a few words, you personally, but also the mission you are carrying out within the European delegation for Japan?

S : Yeah. My name is Christel Schaldemose. I'm a member of the European parliament elected in the [xxx] representing the social democratic party. I've been a member of the parliament since 2006. I am currently a member of three different committees. I'm full member of internal market and consumer protection committee, the environmental committee where I'm a substitute, and then I'm a full member of the artificial intelligence sub committee. And then I'm a chairman of the delegation with relationships to Japan. In the European parliament we have these delegations where we try to, at the parliamentary level, having contact with parliamentarians throughout the world in order to mostly exchange views on different topic, create a closer relationship between EU and that specific country and being a chairman means that I am chairing the meeting but I'm the one, the Japanese, goes, they go to me if they would like to, you know, say something or present something, or, if they are sad about a resolution, if Japan is mentioned, then they think that is wrong. Then they often go to the chairman. And so I kind of work as a, I'm a politician, but I also work as a diplomat. You could say in these specific things but the special relationship with Japan is that, I mean, we, this is the oldest delegation in the European parliament for relations with other countries. So in that respect, this has been a very long standing commitment between EU and Japan.

D : Okay. So what were the most important points during the negotiations of the free trade agreement between the EU and Japan?

S : First, it's important to say that the agreement we have made is of a very special nature. It is a very, it consists of both, economic, but also partnership more in general so that we are sending signal that EU and Japan wants to work together, not just for trade, but also in a closer context, on legislative and, other topics. So, but one of the most difficult points was of course the economic part on specific sector, food sector, and car sector. And it's always about creating a balance because opening up for trade means that you will get more competition. And sometimes

there is a fear on both sides for this particular competition. And that was also the case here. But I think, so it was on specific sectors, the Japanese side were afraid of opening up on the food sector. They have special, you know, strong rules on additives and things like that. And we were concerned in EU about opening up on the car sector, but we ended up finding a good balance. So I think that EPA and SPA is a special and a very good tool. And we also saw immediately after, you know, a year after it entered into force, we could see an increase in the trade between EU and Japan on the basis of this agreement. So it had an impact.

D : Okay. Did the EU and Japan put any conditions to for the implementation of this recent economic trade agreement?

S : Well, I did not negotiate the trade agreement myself, so we were only, given, some few information. No, we were presented. Every twice a year, we were giving in, you know, a state of play on the negotiation. So all the, any specific conditions I cannot sit here and tell you about, because I can't remember that.

D : Okay.

S : But during the process, there are always considerations and never, you know, it is never, ever when you make an agreement, it is never ever a completely full opening up for each other's markets. It's always conditionals. And that's goes also here, there are conditions, but I think that the fact that we have an intention to make sure that we trade more with each other on an equal footing. That is important. But of course, I mean the Japanese side were afraid of changing their agricultural sector with European food coming in, that they didn't like with too much additives. And on the other hand, we were afraid of getting too much competition on cars.

D : Okay. In your opinion, what are the benefits of this agreement for the European union and most specifically for the European people?

S : Yeah, you could say one of the reasoning behind the EU is that, you know, if we trade together we become more dependent of each other. And if we are more dependent, we will not go to war. I think the same logic is behind the trade agreement between EU and Japan. Not that we are in a situation where there was a risk of this, but the more we trade, the more, the closer we come to each other, the more dependent we become of each other. And the more we have interest in working together in the world. But I have to say that one of the things is that we really got an EU, got an ally in Asia. The Japanese society and politicians, they support many of the same values as we do in EU, you know, rule of law, fundamental human rights, cetera.

So together with Japan and especially with this very close agreement, which is more than just an economic partnership. We also have an ally when it comes to creating a better world and a more safe world and also we have a very big support from Japan in the most lateral society. So in many ways it just builds a stronger tie between EU and Japan. And I think that is important. We need EU and the Western world need allies in Asia.

D : Yeah. And in your opinion, has this economic partnership generated or still generates any particular problems?

S : I think it's too early to say, because it's still new. It's only a couple of years old. We saw an increase in the trade, but then Corona came and so therefore it is honestly a bit too early but of course there's always, you know, issues that needs to be tackled. And I think that in certain ways, not so much the financial things or economic things, but we even though we are close allies and are based, we have based our societies on the same type of values, we still have, you know, some different ways of looking at the things. So let me give you an example, Fukushima, the power, the nuclear power plant who had this problem, the water around, what to say. They use water to cool down the plant and this water is contaminated and it is in big containers around the plant. Now Japan is considering dumping this water into the seas and in EU, we don't like that and we will fight it. And here, I think that there are a difference in the way we're looking at things. So, this could go and be maybe an issue at a certain stage. We also have the whale question in EU, we are very concerned about animals welfare and the Japanese side is not so much. So this is also, you know, a topic that sometimes comes up. So we have issues where we don't look at things on the same side. But, so potentially this could lead to, you know, some conflicts, but not so much on the financial side, more on the cultural side.

D : Yes. Okay. Are the Japanese EU delegation and Japan currently working on a new step forward in their economic and diplomatic relations?

S : Well, this is something I was keen on trying to do before Corona, because I think that we need, you know, how to put this. We have some barriers between EU and Japan when it comes to language, for instance, and also the fact that we are so far away from each other, physically, so it's difficult. And I wanted to have more meetings. I wanted to have the meetings to be more than just talking about foreign policy and economic questions. I also want us to know more about each other societies. I think for instance, we have some of the same challenges with an aging society. We have an aging society in EU. Japan has that. So how could we maybe learn from each other? And therefore, in my opinion, it's important that we here in our delegation try

to extend and deepening the work and the way we're working together. But. When I started, I'm a new chair and when I started this, when I became a chair, it was or acting chair in the beginning. It was just when Brexit took place last year, because of that, I became chairman. And then the Corona came. So I really haven't had a chance yet. But I'm a very, in a very close contact with the Japanese ambassador. And I think that we are, we need to do more to meet on a more regular basis and exchange views of more often.

D : Okay. In view of the recent economic partnership between the EU and Japan, or more recently the discussions with the MERCOSUR or ASEAN region, do you think that we are facing a model change regarding the place that the EU is trying to take on the international scene ?

S : I think globally things are changing. But I think that in that perspective it becomes more important for EU to get really close partners throughout the world because the, I mean, EU is becoming, when you look at the, for instance, size of population, but even financially would become smaller and smaller part of the world. So we have to fight for our values and our way of looking at it. And therefore we need partners and Japan is one of these partners. And if you look into the discussion about MERCOSUR I see that here we have, we have other types of issues, you know, labor force, labor things and not enough done in the area of climat. And on Japan side, it's the completely opposite. We have them as an ally, also on climate questions and you know this multilateral society. So I think that Japan is important also in order to show that, trade agreements are not dangerous and they are useful also for EU. So I hope that it can be kind of role model on how to work together with countries outside EU or regions outside EU. So in that respect, I think in Japan and the partnership between EU and Japan is a role model that maybe can change also how we look at other regions, but we are facing some challenges as an EU region. And therefore we need more allies.

D : Okay. So, the last question, are you familiar with the notion of interregionalism? And if so, do you think that we are experiencing a transition of the EU towards the, this new model of economy and diplomacy?

S : I'm not really sure. Could you maybe explain.

D : Yes, I put the definition behind.

S : Oh, you put it, yeah.

D : It's a concept that makes sense on the international level. It consists in seeing the emergence of stronger transregional links between the different regions of the world, with the aim to establishing or preserving the balance between the different regions and creating a form of interdependence. This notion also propose the idea that this form of economic and diplomatic model on an international level seeks to allow relative autonomy from the superpowers.

S : So the funny thing is that I did in fact, say it without knowing that the world was into interregionalism, because that is, I think EU is a region and we need to get into contact with other regions in order to play a role. So we are not so dependent on China or on United States. So in that respect, the more partners we get around the world better, it is. And I do believe that it will create, I would not say, you know, this, it says a autonomy. I would rather say that it will create, you know, a basis for, you know, more mutual, respectful, partnerships and discussions. But of course, I hope that it means that it's not Russia or China or United States alone who should decided the development of the world, we need to play a role. And I think that EU is a role model for the rest of the world in the sense of creating a good regional level decision making, but we also need to have allies around the world. But I see it and here I might be naive, but I see it. Not as a way to keep others down, but to create a better functioning global world and better relationships between the world in order to make sure because, you cannot, United States and China, they are big countries and they have a lot of citizens. The United States, not so far away from EU on size but you know, they play a role but I think that we need to balance the globe in a better way. And here I think EU can help. And here, I think that EU is trade and partnerships agreement around the world is playing an important role as well.

D : Okay. Thank you.

S : You're welcome.

D : Thank you very much.

S : I hope it was enough.

D : Yeah. Sure. Thank you a lot.

Annexe 2 : Entretien avec Chris Williams

D : I think it's fine. Okay. So, first, could you introduce yourself in a few words, you personally, but also the mission you are carrying out. So what does this consist of?

W : Okay. My name is Chris Williams. I am a political advisor for the Socialist and Democrat group. I am an advisor on the committee on international trade and also responsible for the parliamentary delegations with Japan. And what this involves is basically coordinating amongst our MEPS researching trade policy to try and find common position of our members internally, but also to represent our members externally to stakeholders, such as the Japanese government, Japanese stakeholders, and also European stakeholders as well, European partners that we work with, such as trade unions or consumer groups or any other kind of interest groups. So I am essentially a research for the members and I am also a representative.

D : Okay. What were the most important points? Difficulties, objectives, et cetera, during the negotiations of the free trade agreement between the EU and Japan.

W : I think in general, I think one of the problems was a change in the culture of Japan. Japan is a very, has been for a long time, a very insular, inward looking country in many ways and especially economically as well. Obviously they wanted to work with European union. But we have many, let's say different values to them and to try and concretize and to cement these values into the way that we do trade. Cause we obviously have a very value based, trade policy was very difficult sometimes to match with the Japanese. And what I'm talking about here is, not only opening certain sectors of the economy, but also as well, talking about certain really fundamental, important issues for our group, for the Socialists Democrats group, which such as environmental protection, protection of workers, certain elements of human rights. It was difficult to talk to the Japanese about this, of course, on a certain level, they respect them and they. You know, do have laws that, you know, have environmental protection and do protect workers rights. But it was difficult to kind of match these with our European values and our European standards, which in many areas were a little bit higher also as well, the Japanese, in terms of cultural, in terms of cultural dialogue, don't like to be dictated to. And don't like to have things demanded of them, which was very difficult and delicate in negotiations. It wasn't easy to just say to the Japanese, we want you to do this because in many ways they could take this as a fence and they would just simply block that area. And therefore this, made the negotiations a bit, little bit difficult overall.

D : Okay. Did the EU and Japan put any conditions to the implementation of this recent economic agreement ?

W : Yeah. I mean, one of the things that the EU did. And I must say this is really thanks to our group was shift the thinking on workers' rights and protection of workers and unions, because this was something that the Japanese hold very very deep to their constitution and they don't want to change or kind of implement their constitution in a different way. And one of the things they were saying was that we will not have, we will not implement certain ILO international labor organization, core conventions, because this is simply not part of our. It doesn't flow from our constitution. And one of the two things that we insisted on were the right to freedom of somebody which is not sufficiently protected to ILO standards in the Japanese law and also discrimination as well. This was something that Japanese said, it's not a problem, but we were saying, we want to abide by the international standards of the international labor organization on this. So these two elements were very, very difficult and to get the Japanese to actually commit to implementing these and ratifying these was a big success and it was one of the key conditions for not only our group, but of the EU in the end in actually ratifying this. Another thing that we both convened on and we both agreed on in the end, which is very, very important for our group was implementation of the Paris agreement as well on climate change. This is now something, a standard that we have in all the trade agreements. And it was one of the key things for our group. I mean, it's something that obviously we worked very closely with Japanese on climate change in the past, but it was a key element to get this to get this put into the agreement.

D : Okay. In your opinion, what are the benefits of this agreement for the European union and more specifically for the European people?

W : Well, I mean, one of the, the problems, I mean, hopefully it will. The intent is that it will increase sustainable trade and therefore increase jobs and opportunities and sustainable economic growth. That's the intent, but I mean, the problem is, as we see in many trade agreements as well, you know, some sectors are going to lose out. And the problem is, you know, the gains of such agreements are shared very widely and thinly amongst society, but the losses and the, the people who lose out hit the hardest and it is in certain sectors and more specific sectors. So, I mean, it's difficult to, I would say it's very difficult to measure tangible effects for this, for the citizen. I think in the bigger picture, this is something where is that EU and Japan working together to shape the world economy and to put certain standards into the world economy. But I mean, that's something that's very difficult to explain to. I dunno, maybe somebody in the edge, you know, it's very, it's very, very distant.

D : Yes. What are the objectives that the European union and Japan are seeking to achieve by setting up this economic agreement? Are the objectives exclusively economic?

W : No, I think this, you know, this kind of relates back to what I was just saying about this. And I think when negotiations started on this. And when negotiations intensified over the last, you know, five years, the world was in a very kind of precarious situation with the US and China. And obviously we saw, you know, a crazy erratic president in the US and we've seen China make big, big moves in the Asia Pacific region as well. So I think this was really a geopolitical move as well by both countries to kind of come together and let I say to try and put some of their rules on the world economy and certainly for the EU to be more involved in that region. Basically to get there before the US and to get there before China as well. I mean, you also had, at the same time, the Asian country, the Asian Pacific country signing the transpacific partnership. And now you've seen them also as well, signed the ASEP, one of the biggest trade agreements in the world. And so I think the EU intention was really to get in there first before, these agreements were signed amongst the Asian countries so that the EU had a gateway into Asia as well.

D : Okay. We already speak a bit about that, but, in your opinion, has this economic partnership generated or still generates particular problems?

W : Well, I think one of the issues that are still come is this, this agreement so far was basically split to two and we've only got a trade agreement. We don't have an investment agreement and the negotiations are still continuing for that. The way trade is done now, and the way trade agreements are done. It's very, very different to, let's say 10, 15 years ago. He's not trade agreements now are not just about, you know, shipping goods from one side of the world to the other. It's about standards and also standards, you know, affect, you know, many, many secondary standards of, you know, standards about, how public services are run standards, about how, you know, services are actually defined. And this is not just simply about, you know, shipping things from one side of the world to the other. So I think, there are going to be problems like that have been in the past when it comes to investment, because investment really is about defining how we want big companies and big business and investors with a lot of money to go into another country and operating in another country, balancing that alongside public policy, genuine public policy in that country. So I think one of the big things will be when it comes to investment, because certainly on investment, Japan favors the old model of investor, state dispute settlement, which is basically, I mean, I'm not sure how to work, you know for this, but, investors state dispute is basically the ability of private companies to operate in essentially

private non-transparent courts and hold the government to ransom, basically changing public policy and being able to sue governments for a lot, lot of money. Whereas what we want to see and what we've seen in recent trade agreements is a move away from that to say that, investors should settle this in a transparent court system, which is not run by private interest, but it's done transparently with professional judges in place and there should be right to appeal.

D : Okay. What is the committee of international trade currently working on regarding relations between the European union and Japan?

W : Well, I think one of the things that is most important on the minute is actually implementing and scrutinizing what we've agreed to in the trade agreement in the EPA. And like I said before, Japan made a lot of commitments to raise up to certain standards, such as ratifying the two ILO conventions. Now Japan has committed to do that is currently doing that process internally, but one of the things we want to do and we want to monitor and we want to see in the coming months and years is for Japan to actually formalize that and to implement this and to ratify those ILO conventions and put them in place. So that's one of the key things that we will be doing through our monitoring and through our scrutinizing is to, first of all, make sure that the commission is still talking to Japan about this, but also secondly, to keep the pressure up directly on Japan and tell them you promised to do this, we want to see you do this. Well also as well. We have to work with Japan in other areas where we're talking about, you know, the WTO is a crucial point at the moment where it's all almost not functioning at all. We've got the COVID issue, which I see as the next question as well. And you know, we've got to work with them. On the other hand, we've got to work with them as partners and the allies internationally to come to solutions on WTO, on COVID and on the environment as well.

D : Okay.

W : I think one of the, you know, one of the other issues as well that we have to keep monitoring, we have to keep a very close eye on is on data protection and data sharing as well. Japan is quite a unique agreement in the fact that we've got a very comprehensive chapter on data security and data transfers. So it's something that it is very, very important for the youth, a fundamental right in the European union. And we've really got to make sure that we get this right as one of the first agreements to have such a comprehensive chapter on data.

D : Okay. We already talked about that as well but are the committee of inter international trade and Japanese counterparts currently working on a new step forward in their relatable economic

and diplomatic relation ? And if so, what are there, or if not, what are the reason for not pursuing or other collaborations between the EU and Japan ?

W : Well, I mean, I must say in terms of the committee in the parliament and in terms of the EU as well, a lot of unpredicted things have happened. I mean and I think it's really kind of diverted resources away and we've not been able to give the time and energy to Japan that we would probably normally do. I mean, first of all, Brexit, it wasn't easy and getting an agreement with the UK wasn't easy. And that took a lot of time and a lot of resource in life by the commission. And that was kind unforeseen. I don't think they realized how difficult and how big that would be. And then also as well, like every policy area we got hit by COVID and I think everybody had to turn attention to COVID and we see the problems that we're having now with export restrictions and problems with producing and trading the vaccine that we've had to spend a lot more time and energy on this. Excuse me. I think this has kind of slowed the whole trade agenda down and really, I think negotiations and talks with Japan have kind of been, you know, had to take a step back. So, you know, the way that we've been talking to Japan at the minute is as part of, you know, an international Alliance international partners in terms of keeping supply chains open for COVID and COVID recovery.

D : Yes, I will continue with the other question with COVID. So, has the COVID 19 crisis slowed down the consolidation of relations between the EU and Japan and if yes, how does this manifest itself in practice?

W : Well, I mean, I don't think, like I just said, I don't think it's slowed down bilateral relations. I think we both, The EU and Japan have understood that we need to work together on this. I mean, Japan hasn't been, and Japan, isn't one of the kind of essential countries in terms of producing the vaccine and health products, but it's certainly an ally in that. And I think, you know, we've tried to work within the WTO with like-minded partners, including Japan, that we need to come forward and we need to establish some rules for the future on how we deal with pandemics and how we deal with medical equipment and vaccines. And. You know, we've been working with Japan on that as we have with other groups, other like-minded countries, such as, you know, as Canada, Australian, New Zealand, the US hasn't been so helpful, but, Japan's been helpful in that, but bilateral relations, have had to kind of take a step back. I don't really think there are many countries in the world devoting a hundred percent attention to bilateral relations at the minute, I think because of the change, the gender, and because of COVID, we've had to kind of work more cooperatively with more partners.

D : Okay. In view of recent economic partnership between the EU and Japan, or more recently the discussions with the MERCOSUR or ASEAN region, do you think that we are facing a model change regarding the place that the EU is trying to take on the international scene?

W : Yeah, absolutely. I mean, I really think this comes from what I was saying before as well about how the EU tried to place itself geostrategically. You see it in many, you know, it is the reason why the EU is trying to make agreements with many partner countries. I mean, you look at every part of the world, like you say, MERCOSUR, that's a, basically a race with, you know, China, China is investing heavily now in South America in countries like Chile, where we're trying, I'm finishing agreement this year as well. That's clearly a geostrategic race with China as well, but you see Austral countries like Australia and New Zealand. That is something where that the EU is effectively embracing with the UK now to try and get an agreement. Like I said, ASEAN. I mean, ASEAN is a region is very, is problematic. And I think you've seen many Asian countries actually move away or shift from ASEAN and they've taken different formations. And you've seen that with ASEP, the regional comprehensive economic partnership. Which involves basically nearly all of the ASEAN countries plus more, the EU has realized that these moves are happening and that these things are taking place. And the EU has tried to really get agreements with all of these countries in some way or another.

D : Okay. In your opinion, what elements international or internal contribute to the change of model in terms of economic and diplomatic strategy of the EU? What's such an evolution like that?

W : Well, right. You know, the big picture is geo strategic that the commission is aiming for. But I think you've seen in many countries, especially in Belgium with trade agreements over the last couple of years, how the power of the citizen and the power of protest has really changed the way that the commission had to do trade agreements. And it's a good thing. I mean, it's been really good to see people, first of all, be aware of what, what is at stake? What the commission is doing, you know, 10, 20 years, well, 20, 25 years ago, I don't think people really cared about trade degrees. People don't really know, they didn't have so much prominence and they probably weren't so comprehensive and had the power to affect people's lives in so many ways. So it's been very good. It's been very encouraging to see the way how people have, first of all understood the effects of trade agreements they've reacted and they've expected more of their policy makers, when it comes to trade agreements, realizing how it can affect their daily life. And I think in the last 10 years, certainly we've seen the commission go from kind of ignoring this and just, you know, brushing it off and kind of denying that, you know, citizens curse so

much to actually listening to the citizen's demands and changing the way that they do trade agreements, making trade agreements more transparent, not negotiating in certain areas. For example, you know, clearly taking away public services, or trying to take away public services out of the scope of the agreement, demanding high, higher environmental standards, higher food standards. So, I think on the one hand, the commission has really tried to kind of have a geo strategic role, but I also think they've had to change the way that they do business because they've seen the power citizen, citizen interest in this.

D : Finally, are you familiar with the notion of interregionalism? And if so, do you think that we are experiencing a transition of the European union towards this new model of economic and diplomacy? If yes. Why? And if not, why not?

W : Well, if you talk, I mean, just so we understand the same thing, I mean, interregionalism in terms of blocks like, for example, EU.

D : Yes.

W : I think, I mean, I think so it's, I mean, it all depends a lot of it depends on our partner countries as well, and our partner regions. You know, you've seen, I think we have to be careful with this when it comes to trade agreements, because, you know, we've seen, in MERCOSUR for example, a lot of the MERCOSUR countries have decided that they want to come together and they want to make an agreement. Whether we agree with that agreement, the content of the agreement is a different thing, but these countries have said that they want to work together and they want to negotiate together. So that's their decision. When it comes to Africa. For example, you know, we the EU is the one going over there and saying, right, west Africa, we're dealing with you, right? South Southern Africa, we're dealing with you. Eastern Africa, we're dealing with you. And often, you know, these countries were throwing very diverse countries together and trying to negotiate as a block with African countries. When the African countries really don't have much in common with each other. It's an artificial creation of a region that we're creating for them and it doesn't really serve their purpose. It doesn't really help them. You know, so I think it's really important that our, the partners in the regions that we negotiate with actually want to be a region themselves. Obviously it makes it easier for the commission to negotiate with regions. Obviously, as we know very well in the European union problems, cross many, many problems, don't stop at borders and it's, you know, it dealt with more effectively in a region, but it's really up to those countries to decide that they want to be a region. But yeah, I mean, it all comes, you know, full circle. It all comes right around and we know very well in

Europe that, you know, things have dealt with better together and that many of the, you know, the problems of the past and many of the problems in the future will be dealt with, you know, more in solidarity with each other. And if we can work together with regions, it's always better, we're stronger like that.

D : Yeah. Okay. Thank you, the interview is over.

W : No problem. I hope that was helpful and I hope that was, clear enough.

D : Yes it was very well.

W : Good. Good. If you have any other questions or if you want any follow up. No, no problem. You can.

D : Okay. Thank you. Thank you very much.

W : Okay. Well, good luck with everything.

D : See you.

W : Bye. Bye. See you.

Annexe 3 : Entretien avec Pedro Silva Pereira

SP : Well, hello?

D : Hello good afternoon, sir.

SP : Good afternoon. Sorry, being late, but have some problems.

D : No, no problem. Its ok, Thank you for accepting my invitation.

SP : but looks like your connection is not very stable, but.

D : Yeah, I know I have difficulties with my webcam. I dunno why, but.

SP : But I'm listening you well.

D : Okay, nice. So as I said that in my previous email I'm Boris Dardenne, currently a student in political science at the university of Liège in Belgium. And so I'm currently doing an internship in the team of Mr. Marc Tarabella. So if I contact you today, it's to conduct an interview about the relations between the EU and the Japan, and most specifically about the

latest develop in the field of economy and diplomacy especially concerning the free trade agreement conclude in 2018. So first, first of all do you agree that this interview will be recorded?

SP : Yes, of course. No problem.

D : Okay. So first, could you introduce yourself in a few words, you personally, but also the mission you are carrying out within the EU delegation for Japan. So what is consist of ?

SP : Okay. Very well. So I'm Pedro Silva Pereira. I'm currently vice president of the European parliament I'm member of the socialist group. I'm also member of the delegation for the relations with Japan, where we don't have specific missions assigned. So, the delegation deal with all the issues of relationship with both countries. But previously I was in the international trade committee for the economic partnership agreement with Japan. So, I followed very, very closely the negotiations of the agreement. I chair the monitoring group of the inter committee on this trade negotiations. And, finally I submitted to the parliament the proposal to say yes to the agreement and happy to say that it was a substantial majority in favor of the agreement. And finally, I'm Portuguese. And the portugese were the first in Western people to arise to Japan. So we have a one tradition of our relation [xxx].

D : Okay. So first question, do you know what were the most important points during the negotiations of the free trade agreement between the EU and Japan?

SP : Well, I would say that, the most controversial issues were related with economic balance between the socalled offensive of and defensive interests of both parties. It's always, it is always the same, but in this particular case, the European union was interested in getting additional market assets because the Japanese market is considered to be traditionally not very open. So market assests was an issue in particular for our exports from the agri-food sector. Which were issues considered to be sensitive by the part of the Japanese. On the Japanese side they were particularly interested in improving economic conditions for some key economic sectors in particular, the automotive sector so that they could get a reduction or even full elimination of tariffs in the car sector. There were other issues. I would underline perhaps the railway sector where the European industry had a lot of complaints regarding the regulatory barriers to trade, because they used the concept of the socalled operational safety clause that in preco (traduction française du portugais : tarif) terms became a barrier for European companies. But this was solve during the negotiations and in the end it was mostly the balance, the economic balance between the agri-food sector and the automotive sector that had to be sold. Finally the

agreement is quite and positive, I believe for both parties. And we were, we managed to get a number of important concessions in terms of market assets, public procurement, and also the assets of our agri-food products to the Japanese market. Moreover, it was also important to ensure protection of what we call the geographical indications. Meaning that in [xxx] property arrives and the specific protection of our products and the agri-food sector can be protected. And we manage to negotiate with Japan a list of geographical indications that is even larger than the one we had with Canada. So, these were the main needs, I would say from the economic point of view.

D : Okay. Interesting. Did the EU and Japan have any conditions for the implementation of this recent economic agreement? Did they put any conditions ?

SP : No, I wouldn't call it conditions. I would say that as always happens in trade negotiations, both parties, we're trying to achieve a reasonable balance for the economic interest involved. What I would say is that for the opinion it was important to ensure that this trade agreement is in fact an agreement of a new generation. In fact, it is no longer called free trade agreement. If you look carefully, it is now called economic partnership agreement. Cause it is not only about free trade, not only about elimination of tariffs and tariff barriers. It's about a strategic economic relationship and the safeguard of sustainable development from sense. This makes of this agreement a progressive one. Where concerns regarding climate change. This is the first agreement that may have a specific reference to the Paris agreement and are other environmental, lateral conventions. Also concerns in terms of the illegal logging and fishing, finally also social rights and labor rights. So, for the opinion an agreement would only be acceptable with reverse clauses on sustainable development protection. And I believe this was achieving in a satisfactory manner.

D : Okay. In your opinion, what are the benefits of this agreement for the European union and more specifically for the European people?

SP : Well, I think that for the opinion, union agreement is important, firstly, from a strategic point of view because it allows the European union to be in a better position to fight for straight flows in a important region of the world and where everybody is paying attention at this stage. We were in a way also benefiting from the historic mistake of Mr. Trump, where he decided to withdraw from the transpacific partnership agreement and Japan fell free to look for alternatives. And we were there prepared to conclude an agreement with Japan. So from the strategic point of view, this is important in terms of our economic relationship with this region

of the world. But also strategically important from the point of view of a rule based trade order. Because an agreement allows European union to, implement its own standard that can be inspiring for other trade agreements and trade relations all over the world. So it is also important from that point of view. Now you asked me a benefit for citizens. Well, to begin with the agreement is positive for the European economic sector. And if it is positive for the European export, for instance, it is also important for the European citizens as workers, because it creates jobs. It improves the economic growth. This is positive for all I believe. Of course it is a balance. I do not deny that some sectors will benefit and other sectors will have difficulties in this new framework, but in the global assessment, I think it is positive for European economy. It is positive for European citizens. And is positive for consumers because it allows of course for more choices for the consumers. So I think that the agreement is broadly positive for European citizens.

D : Okay. Okay. Well, what are the objectives that the European union and Japan are seeking to achieve by setting up this economic agreement? Are the objectives exclusively economic? I know that you already respond a bit about that, but.

SP : Yeah, yeah. As I said this is an important economic partnership agreement because of course we are talking about one third of the world GDP. So we're talking about two major economies, the European one and the Japanese one. It is really unprecedented from the point of view, at least of bilateral agreements. But it has a strategic importance that has to do with our relationship with Japan, with our relationship with Asia, and also with our position regarding based trade order, because in fact, this agreement. I call it a peace agreement in a way because, it was negotiated in the context of a trade war where a number of protectionist trends were being defended by important players as the United States. On the contrary, this agreement defends an alternative, which is a positive relationship between both parties. So really a peace agreement against the trade war and against the protectionist approach. And it is strategically important of course.

D : Okay. In your opinion, has this economic partnership generated or still generates particular problems on both sides?

SP : Well, we are in the early stage, still of the implementation of the agreement. The first results are positive, but, then we had this global economic crisis due to COVID 19. So, it is difficult to make an assessment of the economic impact. Although we can say that, the first months before the COVID 19 were positive in terms of results. And, if we compare the figures

of our relationship with Japan, with others that suffer with COVID 19. I believe we can say that, the situation would be much worse without this agreement, but to come to your point, we have to be careful regarding the monitoring of the implementation of the agreement to be sure that the commitments are fully respected, but also to be sure that the businesses and I include their small and medium size enterprises can benefit fully from these new opportunities given by the agreement. So this is a work in progress and the European parliament will continue to be paying attention to that.

D : Okay. What is the European delegation for Japan currently working on ? Are the EU delegation for Japan and Japanese currently working on a new step forward in their economic or diplomatic relations. If yes. Why? And if not, why not?

SP : Well these agreements foresees negotiations on a new and separate investment protection agreement. Because the EPA is on trade and investment protection was left for a separate track negotiation. Well this was for two fundamental reasons. In one hand, this is the new strategy of European union. Since, in trade agreements, we are dealing with EU competencies. So the final vote is made by European parliament and then the agreement enter into force. But, in investment protection agreements, we are dealing with mixed competencies. So the agreement has to be approved by all national parliament and in certain cases also by regional parliament. So the strategy is to separate the two. So the opinion is still interested in moving forward, in order to get an agreement on investment protection. But then there is the second issue which is still a divergence on the dispute settlement mechanism, because the European union is no longer willing to sign any agreement with the so-called ISDS, Investor to State Dispute Settlement mechanism. And the alternative proposed by European commission is an investment court system. The fundamental difference is that the investment they are old fashioned ISDS is a private arbitration system. Where the investors also indicate arbitrators and the investment core system proposed by European commission is a public arbitration system or where only the states of both parties indicate the arbitrators. Now the Japan is still showing some reluctance to these alternative. And so any progress will depend very much on a conversions on this, because it is very clear that the European parliament will never sign an agreement with an old fashioned ISDS. So this is a topic of ongoing discussions also in the allegations for the relations with Japan. But I would say that other issues are on the table, not only, of an economic nature because besides the economic partnership agreement, we have a strategic partnership agreement that deal mostly with political corporation. And so the delegation for the relations with Japan also takes care of issues like security and defense, where Japan has a number of important and

difficult challenges with the dangerous neighbors they have. But also, other political issues. And I would say political and economic, because for instance, issues like connectivity. And there's a lot of room for cooperation regarding the two main strategic goals of European union. I mean the green deal and the corporation on climate change and the digital transition where of course Japan has a lot of knowledge and capacity and it is an important partner. So these topics are also on the table for the work of our allegation, for the relations with Japan.

D : Okay. In view of the recent economic partnership between the EU and Japan, or more recently the discussions with the MERCOSUR or ASEAN region, do you think that we are facing a model change regarding the place that the European union is trying to take on the international scene?

SP : Well, first of all, I think it is important to note that the European trade agenda is very ambitious and very active and sometimes we see some difficulties from the part of the European union to move forward, to take decisions, but on the trade front, we have to recognize that we were able to concludes very important negotiations with important strategic partners. And this is important for the role of European union in the world. So I think that, yes, the European trade agenda shows how important the European economy is in the world economy. Now MERCOSUR is a different story. Each agreement is always a different story. I would say that in the discussions with Japan. If I look to the trade, the sustainable development chapter, perhaps the most difficult issue had to do with the ratification of the ILO conventions, the conventions on labor protection. We've managed in the end to get concrete commitments from the part of Japan in this aspect. And again if we look to the discussions on MERCOSUR, of course we have always the problems of the economic balance of the agreement for the most sensitive sectors in the EU. But, the sustainable development chapter is again, the important topic for discussion because the European union really wants, and the European parliament for sure, to get additional commitments regarding climate change, measures in the MERCOSUR, in particular, in MERCOSUR in Brazil and regarding forestry management. So we hope to manage, to get political commitments for additional cooperation in those front. But the MERCOSUR agreement has also very important strategic importance for the EU because in the agreement with Japan it was about Asia in the MERCOSUR agreement it is about Latin America. So, they are both strategically very important for European union.

D : Okay. I have a last question. So are you familiar with the notion of internal regionalism and if so, do you think that we are experiencing a transition of the European union towards this new model of economy and diplomacy ?

SP : Yes. Uh, I know the concept. I think that, the European union is still convinced that the proper framework to deal with trade issues Should be the world trade organization. So a multilateral approach. The bilateral agreements and the interregional agreements are an alternative only because we see that the world trade organization is facing a number of operational difficulties and political boycotts from a number of members. And so, it has not been possible to use the platform of the world trade organization to set the standards and the rules and to move forward. So, it has become impossible to avoid alternative solutions with interregional agreements. Where, yes, there's a the regional institutions have a role to play. European union, for instance, is also interested in negotiating with ASEAN, not only with several countries involved. But, ASEAN as such, MERCOSUR is in a way also regional institution. So we, in Africa, the same is happening. So, yes, there's a room, an alternative room, I would say for bilateral agreement and interregional agreements. But this is only a second best because preferable solution would be to solve things through the multilateral channel or trade organization.

D : Okay. Thank you very much for your time and for your interest.

SP : Okay. It was very interesting.

D : Yes. Thank you very much. That was very interesting. Thank you.

SP : And last for your work. Also my sympathy to Marc Tarabella.

D : Sure, I will say to him. Thank you very much, sir.

SP : Thank you.

D : Good bye.

SP : Bye bye.

Annexe 4 : Entretien avec Sylwia Czerska

D : Now it's working.

C : Okay.

D : Let's go. So.

C : Do you wanna proceed in going through all the questions or do you wanna focus on some of them ?

D : I think it's...

C : I'm asking you. I'm asking you because I can help you mostly with the EPA specific questions.

D : Okay.

C : And some are very general like whether your policy is going, et cetera. And in that respect, of course, I can tell you my views or what I have as line to take from European commission. But for you, I think the most useful thing, if you are interested in the kind of direction of EU trade policy would be to contact my colleagues in digital trade directly responsible for shaping this policy. And we have now I sent you this morning. I don't know if you check your email, but I say,

D : Yes, yes.

C : Exactly. So we, because really recently, I think in February only last month a new, let's say trade strategy, was adopted. I don't know if you have heard of it or had a chance to look at it, but this is exactly a summary where that EU trade policy is going globally now for the whole world not only Japan. So I would suggest that we focus on EU Japan, especially IPA. I can also suggest some other people to talk to when you, when I would explain you why on about other issues and maybe for the strategy where the European unions going is interregionalism or more multilateralism that this kind subject matter. I could help you to find the right people to talk to. I don't know what to think about this suggestion.

D : Okay. Okay. We can do that.

C : Yeah. So I think you'll be most useful now. Cause this would be in yeah. If I start with the first yeah.

D : Just the first question is important for the interview. Just you can introduce yourself in a few words.

C : I'm losing, losing almost your, I cannot hear. I can really hear you not so well.

D : Oh my God.

C : I don't know why. Okay. So I dunno if the mic is some here somehow, or your connection is weak or.

D : Sorry, my connection is normally good, but.

C : I have this kind of noises background and then, okay. Let's continue and I cannot hear you, i will ask you to repeat.

D : Yes, sure, sure. So.

C : Okay, so for work, just to introduce myself. Okay. My name is Sylwia Czerska. I am the policy officer, trade policy officer and I work in the trade section of the EU delegation to Japan. I am posted from Brussels. So I work for the European commission for digital trade. I know, I imagine that you must know more or less when you are in the European parliament. You must know the division now in the commission that is divided into different director generals. Right? I don't need to explain that or.

D : No, it's okay.

C : So, okay. Exactly. So I work for the director at general for trade. And now I am posted to Japan, to the trade section. And here in the trade section, I am the policy officer responsible mainly for the implementation of the EU Japan EPA. The agreement, you mentioned, which 13 to fourth and 1st of February, 2019. So what I am doing here is over say having kind of general overview of the situation in different fields, as well as, looking specifically in, into certain things like agriculture and customs and rules of origins, et cetera. But just to sum up in general terms, I am responsible for the EPA implementation. So make sure that the agreement we negotiated and which enters into force, yeah, three years ago, function right. That underground basically brings benefits to the stakeholders and et cetera. So this is what I do here.

D : Okay.

C : Do you have any questions on.

D : No but let's continue. So, what kind of question do you like to answer? Maybe you can.

C : Let's go one by one. I can tell you what I think what I can answer specifically and please, because some, I have questions to, what do you mean? So we can go one by one. And if there are some questions I would, I could give you a general idea and also direct you to people who would know more or work on that. I will, I will help you with this.

D : Okay. So, so the second one, were the most important points, difficult subjects during the negotiations of the trade agreements with the you and Japan ?

C : Of course the main overarching general objective is to strengthen and facilitate bilateral trade between the EU and Japan. Right. To make it easier for companies, both Japanese and European to import export to trade. So this was the overarching, let's say, a general goal of the negotiations. But I must say that agreement is not, this is another question I think in the fifth one you're asking, is this like the objective so only economics?

D : Yes.

C : So of course it is the main objective because this is FTA, we call it now EPA, but normally it's an FTA so the, of course the main objective is to facilitate trade exchanges and ensure that the bilateral trade increases, but, this agreement has also very big political significance. Especially in the current circumstances when some countries like withdrawing from international corporation, you know, protectionist measures are being, you know, adopted, et cetera. So in the whole concept of. Some difficulties in WTO, the US under Trump, you know, behaving the way they did this agreement was also concluded with objective to show that EU and Japan are like minded partners. We believe in free trade with open trade, with rule based trade. So we wanna show the world that we wanna cooperate. We have this very ambitious agreement, this agreement, now we have a new agreement. We negotiating new agreements, but this one was one of the most ambitious, not the kind of new type, free trade agreement we concluded. So this is a very ambitious agreement with many chapters. Not solely limited to, I don't know, custom or tariff reductions and this kind type of provisions or trading services. If you go, I imagine that you saw the agreement itself now

D : Yes.

C : And the structure and the chapters. So there are many, many more from TSD (Trade and Sustainable Development), to regulatory corporation to SMEs (Small and Medium-sized Enterprises), et cetera, cetera. Now, so this agreement is fairly ambitious. So the idea was to also show that EU Japan. We are on the same side. We wanna have open. And as I said, trade based on rules and we support that. So this is a signal that we wanted to send to the world. Basically. When you have the US, China, other countries, as a closing or fighting between themselves, we wanted to have this free trade agreement. So those are the objectives, but of us as, of course, I dunno if you're aware, that at the same time we have like two pillars of our relationship with Japan. On the one hand we have this very ambitious EPA, FTA with Japan,

but we have also SPA this is the strategic partnership agreement. I dunno if you're aware of it or not.

D : Not really, to be honest.

C : So please check, because this is also concluded and this agreement is much more political, much more general. And there, we intend to cooperate with Japan on many issues to this. So this is a kind of political leg and FTA, is a kind of, you know, economic, let's say, economic leg, but those both agreements build the whole concept of EU Japan relations. Dont forget about this SPA, strategic partnership agreement, because it also gives a tone. Yeah. Strategic partnership agreement with Japan. So it provisionally enters into force. And then we have numerous initiative. And if you are interested, I will. Exactly, for example, for this, if you are interested more into the kind of more political landscape not only FTA or EPA. I can, if you're interested, I can give you some contacts of people who are dealing with implementing SPA. So what type of initiative, because one of the questions you have, what other initiatives are you now working on, et cetera. So the delegation have really many initiatives.

D : Okay.

C : And many of them are under SPA. Some of them of course are under FTA. So EPA. Okay. I will call it EPA, but please keep in mind that it's just FTA, you know, and we call it like that for Japan. That was the negotiated outcome. So, yes. So we have those two, let's say pillars. And then, yeah, this is the kind of over writing structure of our relations with Japan today.

D : Okay. Well. Let's continue maybe with the third question. So did the EU and Japan put any conditions for implementation of these recent economic agree?

C : To be honest, I don't understand what you mean here.

D : I speak about maybe, for the EU, maybe the human rights for example.

C : Human rights, you will have in the SPA.

D : Oh, okay.

C : You see, this is the other agreement.

D : Okay. Okay.

C : So we don't have condition. We have corporation on human rights. It's in SPA. It's not in EPA. In EPA we don't have a human rights because we have a corporation human rights and a

respect of human rights. And all of this is the SPA. So here we don't have any conditions because you also have to remember that we consider Japan as an equal partner. So we, you know, it's sometimes with different countries, the conditions are there. Because of the specific situation in that country. So Japan, we consider that the human rights are observed. They're not major. I don't know. Or any, we don't consider that Japan is, you know, infringing human rights, et cetera. So the conditions, we don't think they're necessary here. But of course in the SPA you'll find many provisions. I don't have it with me, but you can check on importance of human rights and cetera. So of course it's there, but there's no such condition per se in EPA.

D : Okay.

C : And other conditions, I don't know exactly what new you mean, but the conditions, but, so I don't see any specific conditions, except the fact that, of course the parties needs to implement the agreement in good faith and implement it now and applied, et cetera. But I don't see any conditionality in that kind of sense that you may refer to, but as I say, I don't fully understand this question if you could. Yeah.

D : I would like to know if the EU and the Japan ask for something before putting in place free trade agreement. If, if they put any, I don't know how to explain this. If EU and Japan ask for something before put this agreement in place. I don't know if you understand that.

C : But for what ? What do you mean ask for something? Because everything is negotiated in the agreement and this is the outcome of the negotiations.

D : Yes, but previously before this free trade agreement.

C : I don't see anything what you may be referring to, but I said, this is not very clear to me, so, but I would know, because everything we wanted to put in the agreement is negotiated in the agreement. Right. And then there is enforcement mechanism. There is the dispute settlement chapter. When one of the parties in breach of the agreement, you can activate it and enforce it. You see? And also there's a close, you can terminate the agreement. And I don't know. So if we are not happy with something, but I don't see any immediate direct provision in the agreement, which you may be referring.

D : If EU and Japan put any, you know, stipulation. For this question, I think mainly about the human rights, you know, because I noticed that the EU is very strict with human rights. And I hear that Japan have already the death penalty in his country. And maybe this could...

C : No, we don't have anything like that in, in the EPA. But having said that we have many project with Japan to promote the abolition of death penalty on the political side. I don't do that, but my colleagues in the political section indeed have some, how have a lot of cooperation with Japan on human rights, but it's not under the EPA. It's more under the political corporation, it's not in the EPA.

D : Okay.

C : We didn't say in EPA that if you breach human rights, we'll terminate the agreement. Directly. But there is a clause that we can terminate. Right. We don't imagine that we would do that with Japan, that we have a specific issue with Japan that we would need to put it.

D : Okay.

C : But as I said, please go to the SPA and check because this is a human rights part is there

D : Okay. I will check.

C : Yeah, exactly. You need to check over there, because this is more on this political side. Not the EPA side.

D : Okay. So, I don't know if this question is very, interested for you, but what are the benefits of this agreement for Japan and most specifically for the Japanese people and for the EU and it people ?

C : I can briefly explain, and then I send you already a website of EU Japan EPA of digital trade. And there, you will have a lot of examples, a lot of explanations because we have a lot of, we produce a lot of fiches, you know, like kind of sets of information and questions. So you have a lot of answer there, but of course the main thinking was to facilitate trade. So basically that our European companies can sell and export more to Japan and visa versa. So we wanna boost trade, right? Because we think that open trade is good and then we can of course sell more, which would of course be beneficial for our as well Japanese companies. So this is the first thinking. Second for citizens. Of course, we consider that they will have access to much broader variety of goods at a cheaper price, right? Because now when you don't have custom duties, for example here you will also have it on the website, but on the first year of implementation, we have a big increase of exports from Europe to Japan of agriculture food product. From cheese, dairy, wine, meat, really big increase for the first year. Second year, unfortunately COVID happened. So we had some decrease, but during the first year we saw that European companies exported, I think on 5.7% increase in comparison to the previous year,

only in the first year. Right? So imagine we would imagine that with time, the agreement will bring any much more benefits. Of course, the same for Japanese companies to Europe. Now they were selling cars and other goods. I don't know Sake, Kobe beef et cetera. So we wanna just boost economy and et cetera at the same time, as I said, people here, I live in Japan, so I see now that much easier access to European food and wine and et cetera. So we also raise awareness about European products, European culture, European, you know, this is the kind of bond is getting stronger. So these are the direct, very direct benefits. But as I said, this agreement is also kind of ambitious in other terms, like train, sustain and development. So I don't know. We have under SPA and under EPA, kind of discussion under environmental standards and some, you know, labor standards and how to help SMEs and how to inform them and how to cooperate. We have the regulatory cooperation chapter, which is very important for EPA. This is the first agreement when we introduce this regulatory cooperation, where the idea is that Japan and EU will cooperate on setting maybe some standards, which would have a direct benefit for European and Japanese companies, because they will be able to avoid, for example, double testing and double costs and more bureaucratic procedures. We have a huge chapter and, sanitary, phyto-sanitary measures, very important. There are still some barriers to enter Japan for European products, but under the EPA, we are trying to discuss with the Japanese authorities, how to of course, facilitate it, make it easier, make sure that European product can actually access Japanese market. And here, I don't know, one example I can give you, we call it in jargon wine package. But it is, just to explain in simple terms, is that under the agreement, Japan and the EU set a very clear timeline and framework for approving certain wine additives, substance used, for example, in wine in Europe, which were not allowed in Japan. So the products, the experts could not come to Japan from Europe and the products couldn't be, of course sold here. Under the EPA, we have clear timeline and Japan is approving them successively according to the timeline we are now in the second phase, the third phase is in front of us. But normally this procedure was super cumbersome and difficult and long, et cetera, almost impossible. Under the EPA, Japan took this kind of burden and they, you know, approving, conducting the approval procedures on the say, on their behalf. So it's much easier for us. And thanks to that, basically very simple example, European companies can export wine, which includes those selected additives to Japan, right? So this is a very practical example of what EPA delivered, and there are many, many issues like that. So I really let me check. I really encourage you to have a look at the EPA website when they really explain in a very simple form many many benefits. Now we have, as you see sanitary measures, technical barriers to trade. So if there are still any technical barriers we discuss with Japan, how to remove them

basically, right. Trade in services. How to improve it, what is very important for us. And this will also cuz one of the questions to what is now maybe a kind of point we were working on the EPA. And one of the very, very important points at this stage is government procurement.

D : Okay.

C : Because EPA opened the Japanese market at central and sub central level for Europeans companies. Of course you need to read exactly for which government procurement tenders, et cetera, but basically EPA allowed European companies on a much better conditions than the general one in WTO to beat in Japan for government procurement contracts. This is kind of new for Japan, especially at, let's say perfectional level. So we are now focusing very much on making sure that it functions, meaning that the tenders are published accessible, that the European companies can find them, that they can apply that there's no discrimination against European companies based on the fact that they are not Japanese ones, et cetera, et cetera. So we are now putting a lot of, a lot of efforts on this chapter.

D : Okay.

C : To make sure that it starts functioning. Of course, it's a long term process. It'll not be solving one or two years, but we have done a couple of studies and seminars and discussing with Japanese authorities in the government procurement, committee. What can we improve cetera. For example, I dunno for one very important idea. Area for us is offshore winds. This is a longer story, but Japan is also trying to change the economy into green and invest more into green energies. And European companies are very strong in technology and know how and et cetera and offshore wind. So we are trying to make sure that now when Japan is just starting and establishing some tenders for building this, you know, offshore wind parks, our companies have exactly the same access as any other Japanese company. So we are now really discussing in details. The conditions, et cetera, that there is no discrimination. This is a process. So we spotted some problems and now we are in the process of discussing them. You have the whole intellectual property rights chapter in Japan. We don't have major problems. What is one of the biggest achievement is of course the geographical indications, which are super important for Europeans. I don't know if you know what it is. Geographical indication.

D : Indication. What do you mean about indication? Geographical indication?

C : I don't know, for example, Cheso Manchego or Champagne or Bougon, or Feta at least.

D : Ah, okay.

C : You know, so they are protected in Europe by geographical indications, which means that this is the good produced in a very specific area from according to a specific method, et cetera, et cetera. Right. So we are in Europe very proud, and this is huge economic value behind it. And we wanna make sure that these names are not misused because in many countries they become generic, whatever. Right.

D : Yes okay, okay, I understand.

C : It is a huge problem, but this agreement, first of all, to be honest. Before, even entering negotiations, we asked Japan to establish the whole system of geographical indications, which they did. We said we will not talk to you unless you have the system because we cannot have an FTA with you without GIs. So Japan established a whole new system of geographical indication protection, and the agreement includes a whole annex. I think European GIs, we have more than 200. Japanese less, because as I said, they just established a system is very new for them, but we have more than two... Now it's more I explaining why, but at the beginning we had 210 names, which are protected directly in Japan, which is a big achievement we believe because no one can use those names. And the interesting part is that there is a provision that we can keep adding new names. So this year in the second year of implementation, we added, I don't remember the, the number exactly 50 some, no, 30 something, something like that. A couple of new GIs the next year, we will add still new GIs, et cetera. So this is a process. So for example, this is another example, very practical, where the EPA brings benefits to Europeans, right? European companies. I will not go trade and sustainable development, but it's a very, also important chapter. You have different standards of labor and environmental and et cetera. So this is a very high standard when we confirm that we gonna observe them and it's there. Okay. Transparency chapter that everything, yeah, this is maybe not. So we have cooperation in the field of agriculture. Now we are, for example, discussing how we can introduce more digitalize and environmentally friendly agriculture. For example, not just to give you an idea. So yeah, these are, these are many practical examples.

D : And maybe did you know if Japan and EU collaborate previously for the crisis of COVID ? With masks, tests, between laboratories,...

C : We need to check, but of course we on the same side that we should be open, we should not block the supply chains, et cetera, et cetera.

D : Okay.

C : But I think, there is, I would need to check with my colleagues who deal with that, but there is some kind of technical cooperation and financial assistance.

D : Okay.

C : But this, I would probably refer you to the political section in specifically.

D : Okay. Maybe we can go with the next question.

C : Which one is now that ?

D : It's what are the, we already speak about that, but what are the objectives that the EU and Japan are sticking to achieve by setting up this economic agreement? Are the objectives are exclusively economic. But you already speak about that. So.

C : I think I already explained to you that this is, of course the core is economic, but, it's much broader now. It's just a, yeah. Just to so show the signal that we are partners and we, we opted for, you know, open and fair trade. And this is very important nowadays, as you know, because the world is turning into protectionism. We wanna defend open trade and free trade. And of course, a rule based trade. This is very important. Now it's not free and everyone does whatever, but it's rule based. So we have clear rules preferably established at the international level, if not possible then of course, bilaterally. And then we, we follow them. So this is mainly the, the other objective. And I also mentioned some other ones indirectly like trade and sustain and development, et cetera. So, we wanna, of course you have trade, but the fir the trade should be fair and should be sustainable. And should, you see, this is not like just any trade we wanna have with Japan. We wanna have trade, which meets certain conditions. An environment of blendy and et cetera, cetera. So, yeah. So this is the objective of this agreement.

D : And in your opinion, has this economic partnership generated or still generates particular problems?

C : Do you have anything specific in mind ? Because...

D : No, not really. It's an open question. So.

C : But do you mean in the application or in general of the fact

D : No, in general for the population, for the governments, for the countries, maybe with China? I think about China, maybe. I don't know.

C : Well, I don't think that it generated any particular problems. To be honest.

D : Okay.

C : And also you have to, if you are interested in Japan, you also see that Japan is now concluding many, many agreements, recently huge one where China is in. So I don't think that this agreement creating any problems. Of course we have preferential treatment for our goods. But that how it works. Right. And maybe some other would not have this preferential access to Japanese market. For example, only our agreement has certain tariff rate quotas for dairy products like cheese now. So this is advantage for our producers and other countries don't have it fine, but this is the nature of free trade agreements, right?

D : Okay.

C : So yeah. I don't see any particular problems in the general ones.

D : Okay. Okay.

C : They ed, but this agreement, they are of course, general problems due to other things, right. Trade wars, et cetera. But this is another story.

D : What is the delegation of the EU to Japan currently working on? You already give me some information.

C : Yeah. So I want to give you a lot of things regarding EPA that basically our daily work is to implement it. We have all the specialized committees under the agreement. If, you know, if you look at the agreement you have specialized committees on technical barrier to trade, SPS, agriculture corporation, proper regulatory corporation, and name it so many. And this is our daily work to implement it. So to meet with Japan and discuss issues, which could be solved or which are still problematic. So this is the big part of FTA. But beyond that, this is a very broad question because it, the delegation itself works on so many issues. For example now, but if you are interested, I would need to refer you to my colleagues who deal with that. But for example, we have now huge, huge push for cooperation with Japan on climate, on energy, on transport, on digital, on research, on education, on name it. There's so, so many areas that the delegation is working on. Basically the commission is working on and the European union as a whole, right. We are only like a kind of messengers here and conveying the message. So there are many, many, many areas and you would need to specify, which are you are interested in and then I can refer you to my colleagues, right? Because really we adopted the green deal and Japan recently, under the new prime minister also adopted it its green strategy. So we are now really intensively are looking into what, what can we do? How can we cooperate? Not even

mentioning, we have this connectivity with Japan here. I have a colleague dedicated who is, you know, say focusing on the connectivity aspect, there is a huge connectivity. Let's say, agreement, or I call it agreement. It's more like a kind of cooperation now, but how to cooperate with Japan on that aspect. So there's many, many, many really areas but if you're interested in anything in particular, you just, maybe after the call, you drop me an email and saying which areas exactly.

D : Okay.

C : I would advise you to look into climate energy. Transport as well, but really. And also the political side, as I mentioned before, there's a lot of cooperation exactly on human rights and, name it.

D : Okay. I will send you an email after.

C : So if you want, I can tell you only in general, but there are colleagues working on it daily, so they are. Basically with Japan, we are very active. So almost in every area, the commission is working. We have some kind of dialogues. We have, we have many dialogues with Japan, for example, on digital matters. It's a whole really intense dialogue between the you, the commission and the Japanese agency and on AI on blockchain, or really, really, really many, many areas. So I cannot now name all of them. but if you just specify exactly what you're interested in because yeah.

D : Okay. I will check and I will come back to you after that.

C : Exactly. So what is of interest for your work.

D : Are the delegation of the EU to Japan currently working on a new step forward in their bilateral economic or diplomatic relations ? So as you said many...

C : I just mentioned, there are so many now. Yeah. As I said, from green Alliance, regulatory corporation did no, really they, we are, of course, It's not that the agreement is the end. It's just the beginning, to be honest.

D : Yeah. Okay.

C : So this is just the beginning of our, let's say, deeper cooperation in many aspects and also the SPA. Right. You have to remember the other way.

D : Yeah. I will check that. Yeah. Okay.

C : So let's check that. So we are cooperating on so many issues with Japan that, yeah, definitely. The work is just, has just started, is not over. Definitely.

D : Okay. Has the COVID 19 crisis slowed down the consolidation of bilateral relations between EU and Japan and if yes, how does it manifest itself in practice?

C : Of course we observed, I don't have the latest data because the data will only have in April for the 2020 financial year bilateral trade from Japan customs. So, to know the exact imports from Europe, I will need to wait for the latest data, but we can already say that the trade decreased due to trade [xxx], right? Because there were many lockdowns in Japan and the restaurants were closed and people were not going out. So obviously, for example, for agriculture goods, it had a big impact, not mentioning also probably machinery, et cetera. So we can see that the trade suffered, but it's already recovering slowly. So we have hopes that it'll go back to, the kind of, you know, increasing trend rather than, but it's true. The COVID 19, especially the first month where. We, I don't, I don't wanna give you a number because the number will definitely change when I received the final data. Right. And I have numbers for the beginning of the year, but not for the whole year. So as I am saying, this is now improving, so I don't wanna give you a specific number, but we observed a decrease in bilateral trade between on both sides. Yeah. From EU to Japan, from Japan to EU, clearly. Everything slowed down.

D : Okay. in view of the recent economic partnership between the EU and Japan, or more recently the discussions with the MERCOSUR or ASEAN region, do you think that we are facing a model change regarding the place that the EU is trying to take on the international scene?

C : And this is the type of question I would, I can tell you my view, but, if you wanna have a [xxx] trade, opinion. I think you should contact people who are in the strategy unit, dealing with the policy making. And I also send you the latest trade policy strategy.

D : Yes i see that.

C : Which you, when you will read, you will seek very clear priorities. So depending what you understand by changing the model, but for us, clearly we wanna reform WTO is one of my main objective for the months and years to come, because we believe that we have, we need to have clear common set of rules. So we at any stage none, the fact that we are concluding international agreements with the FTAs with other partners or regional organization doesn't mean that we

wanna go walk away from WTO, right? Because we believe this is that way. And, but of course it's difficult. There are difficulties, not everyone is open for changes, cetera. Therefore, we also think that we, at the same time to ensure our interests and not to be left behind, we need to work on concluding agreements with the other partner like MERCOSUR, ASEAN, I don't know. We are negotiating Australia and New Zealand and name it, but our clear objective. From how I see it is multilateral system based on rules, but here, if you want, I would really refer you to colleagues in Brussels who are basically drafting the strategies and that would be the best for you to talk than me here in Japan.

D : Right. Okay, sure.

C : From my perspective, we will focus on repairing to the extent possible. And, cause it's not only depending on us. Right. And depending on the partners preparing WTO at the same time, of course, trying to remain stronger in different regions and et cetera, because I think it can be can, we can do both things at the same time. Cannot do one or the other. Yeah.

D : I don't know if you want to answer to the two last questions. So if you don't prefer to. Do you read already this two last question ?

C : This strategy EU will have in the.... I can not tell you more than you have in this new trade strategy. If you have a trade angle.

D : Okay.

C : So you will have it explained basically what are the most important regions we are looking at and what is our strategy? Right. So we wanna of course have, I dunno, reform WTO, but we are also looking at ways to cooperate with the US. We are of course, aware of China and this is a kind of difficult partner. When we have the one hand we need to cooperate. On the other hand, we need to protect ourselves from some practices. So I think the EU is looking very kind of broad way, trying to, not to put every, you know, eggs in one basket, but trying to develop different options, different solutions, different approaches and, you know, because I dunno if the current complex situation you can have only one. So diplomatic strategy, we are becoming more assertive. Probably. I would say you will see in this new policy that we are open because we believe in open trade and we are the biggest exporter, et cetera. And our basically economic growth and wealth is based on trade. That's why we need to keep the, you know, open trade going for Europe. But also we are now aware that we cannot be naive and if needed, we need to protect ourselves. So in the strategy, you have many instruments that the EU is working now

from invest screening mechanism to other mechanisms that we are now, you know, adopting or strengthening a European level to protect ourself, basically. Right. Our interests. So yeah, we need to adopt the new reality now. It's like the fact. And why such evolution it's basically, you know, probably observe what the US was doing at some point and China is doing so we need to take it into account in our policy. It cannot be, you know, passive or act as we used to, because the reality has changed. So basically we're trying to adapt that's why you have this communication, trade policy review. You have open sustainable, because it's a very important green aspect that we really wanna base everything we do on kind of green recovery, et cetera, including our trade. But you also have assertive because of what China is doing and et cetera. So, this is kind of shift I see.

D : Okay.

C : What is also important, maybe it's ? You would also see in this communication. But we will be much more focusing on enforcement of our agreements. We will, we were shifting from negotiating, cause there are not so many partners left who are able to conclude of FTA with us because we, our FTA's ambitious and environmentally and cetera, et cetera, it's not only trade. So we are very much shifting in trade into enforcement. We wanna make sure that now when we have those agreements in place, we will make sure that they function. And if someone is not basically observing the provisions of the agreement, we will enforce them. So this is a very strong change in [xxx] trade right now. Enforcement being serious about enforce. You have this new enforcement officer, totally new, a very high level. Let's say position in digit rate, looking into all the agreements, the concluded one, the one in force and trying to see where should we push for really enforcement? So this is a very big change as well.

D : Okay. Well, I think it's over, so thank you. Thank you for your time for your interest. I'm really sorry for the inconvenience with connection. I don't know why.

C : Ah, no problem. I can hear you. Please send me a follow up email in which, because there are, so this is a very broad area, what you are now touching.

D : Yeah. Okay.

C : So if you have any particular interest, I would, if you are interested in human rights, then I would, give you a email address that my colleague did in the delegation in human rights, human rights in the context of Japan, right? Not in the context of European union.

D : Yeah. Sure, sure.

C : If you are more interested in the general overview and strategy, I would also recommend you to talk to the people who are drafting the strategy. You know. I can only tell you what I know from the communication and from the briefings I received from Brussels, but they are people working on that, but of course in Japan, we will, our main focus is now as I said at the beginning, in my job in particular is to make sure that the agreement is implemented correctly and it functions and it brings benefits now, because otherwise there is no point of concluding anything. If you cannot have effect results. I also recommend you, there is a report when you go to this EPA website.

D : Yes.

C : And you dig a bit in the documents. You will have one year implementation report, which shows exactly the problems, which we face at the beginning with the implementation, how we solve them, et cetera.

D : Okay, I will check that.

C : If you cannot find it, let me know. I will send it to you, the link.

D : I will check it and I will come back to you after that.

C : Exactly.

D : Thank you. Thank you very much.

C : Good luck now with your work and then thank you for the interest.

D : Thank you to you for your time.

C : Yeah, my pleasure. My pleasure. So let's stay in touch. Let me know if you need anything more.

D : Okay. Thank you.

C : And have a look at the documents I send you there. Kind of answering a lot of your questions. Bye bye.

D : Thank you. Bye.