Europe/Japan relations: the next steps

1995/2053(COS) - 18/09/1997 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

In adopting the report by Mr James MOORHOUSE (PPE, UK), Parliament believed that the Union should support and encourage a greater role for Japan on the world stage, hoping that Japan, in turn, would support the Union's policies in Asia. It, therefore, supported the strategy employed by the Union demanding a global, coherent and continuous change of policy from Japan and emphasized how important it was for the Union and its Member States to coordinate their action in this field with the help of the business community. At a political level, it called on the Union and the Member States to work closely with Japan on disarmament and a nuclear test ban. At an economic level, Parliament welcomed the fall in the global trade surplus between Japan and the Union (a fall of 36.2%) but noted that there was a very large and persistent imbalance between European Union investment in Japan and Japanese investment in Europe. It was concerned that, over the past 10 years, direct investment by the European Union had remained low, and it welcomed the announcement by the Commission that a study was to be set up to examine this issue. It also noted that, whereas Japanese investment in the Union had been falling almost continuously since 1990, EU investment in the newly industrialized countries in Asia had been steadily increasing. Parliament underlined, in addition, the importance of the ongoing deregulation programme operated by Japan, although progress in this field had been limited. It believed that this programme should be strengthened and expanded. It also called on Japan to create conditions that would encourage free trade in the country (without using established trade monopolies), since this was the only way to ensure that European products had greater access to the market. It acknowledged the positive effect of the Trade Assessment Mechanism and asked for the implementation of a far-reaching Mutual recognition agreement (MRA) for testing and certification of products. It also pointed to the need for the EU and Japan to cooperate within the WTO, in particular on issues such as competition, investment, environmental protection, etc., and asked that the WTO dispute settlement procedure be followed when appropriate. In addition, Parliament considered that any opening up of the market should occur on a multilateral basis. It was in favour of the structural cooperation agreements in science and technology between the EU and Japan and supported the 'Human Frontiers Programme' set up by Japan (integration of basic research in human biology and brain function with informatics and cybernetics). It asked that the Exchange Fellowship Scheme between the EU and Japan (for young scientists and engineers) be expanded and welcomed the idea of a protocol which would allow European researchers to benefit from the research and logistical facilities in the research centres in Tsukuba. Finally, it called for continued enhancement of industrial, scientific, environmental, and cultural cooperation with Japan as well as cooperation between trade unions, and it regretted the fact that no progress had been made on the 'Europe House' project aimed at promoting the image of the European Union as a cohesive body.