




Basic information	
2026/0076(NLE) NLE - Non-legislative enactments	Preparatory phase in Parliament
EU–Japan Agreement on participation of Japan in Union programmes Subject 6.20.03 Bilateral economic and trade agreements and relations	
Geographical area Japan	

Key players				
European Parliament	Joint committee responsible		Rapporteur	Appointed
	Pending final decision on the referral			
	Committee for budgetary assessment		Rapporteur for budgetary assessment	Appointed
	Pending final decision on the referral			
Council of the European Union				
European Commission	Commission DG		Commissioner	
	Research and Innovation		ZAHARIEVA Ekaterina	

Key events			
Date	Event	Reference	Summary
20/03/2026	Preparatory document	COM(2026)0133 	Summary

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2026/0076(NLE)
Procedure type	NLE - Non-legislative enactments
Procedure subtype	Consent by Parliament
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 58 Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union TFEU 212 Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union TFEU 218-p6 Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union TFEU 186-p2
Stage reached in procedure	Preparatory phase in Parliament

Documentation gateway			
European Commission			
Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Preparatory document	COM(2026)0133 	20/03/2026	Summary
Document attached to the procedure	COM(2026)0134 	20/03/2026	

Additional information		
Source	Document	Date
European Commission	EUR-Lex	

EU–Japan Agreement on participation of Japan in Union programmes

2026/0076(NLE) - 20/03/2026 - Preparatory document

PURPOSE: to approve, on behalf of the European Union, an Agreement with Japan on its participation in Union programmes.

PROPOSED ACT: Council Decision.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: Council may adopt the act only if Parliament has given its consent to the act.

BACKGROUND: Horizon Europe Regulation governing the association of third countries to the Horizon Europe programme provides for the possibility of association of third countries and territories that fulfil all of the criteria set out therein. Such countries or territories are to participate in the programme based on an agreement covering the participation of the third country or territory to any Union programme.

On 1 April 2022, Japan formally expressed its interest to associate to Horizon Europe. On 15 May 2023, the Council authorised the Commission to open negotiations with Japan for an Agreement on the general principles for the participation of Japan in Union programmes and on the association of Japan to Horizon Europe – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027). Formal negotiations opened on 29 November 2024 and were concluded on 22 December 2025.

In line with the negotiating directives of the Council, the Agreement attached to this proposal is composed of two main parts. First, the 'umbrella agreement' on the general principles for the participation of Japan in Union Programmes and, a Protocol on the association of Japan to Horizon Europe – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027).

Association of Japan to Pillar II of Horizon Europe is expected to unlock a plethora of possibilities for a broader and more systematic EU-Japan collaboration in many strategic fields covered by Horizon Europe's Pillar II, such as health, climate, ocean and environmental research, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), High Performance Computing, clean hydrogen and renewable energy, circular economy, semi-conductors, connected and automated mobility, space, aviation, photonics, and critical raw materials.

CONTENT: the Commission proposes that the Council decide to approve, on behalf of the Union, the Agreement between the European Union and Japan concerning its participation in Union programmes.

The Protocol on Horizon Europe introduces the Horizon Europe-specific terms and conditions for participation in its Pillar II and contains detailed rules on:

- the general principles governing Japan's participation in EU programmes, including respect for programme rules and relevant EU legislation;
- reciprocity – the non-exhaustive list of the equivalent Japanese programmes, activities, actions, projects or, in exceptional cases, parts thereof, reciprocally open to the participation of Union legal entities;
- Open Science - commitment to promote and encourage open science practices in their programmes;
- the financial contribution and automatic correction mechanism;

- exceptionally, the Protocol to this Agreement introduces a bespoke suspension mechanism enabling Parties to suspend ('pause') by mutual consent Japan's participation in Horizon Europe. The reason behind this bespoke suspension mechanism is due to the fact that this is the first time Japan is associating to the EU Research and Innovation framework Programme. This mechanism is necessary for Japan's budgetary authorities as a buffer /safety net in the event of overwhelming success of Japan's association during the first year. The clause is, however, not very likely to be triggered based on that provision of the Horizon Europe Protocol;

- possibility to designate National Contact Points (NCPs).

The Agreement also establishes institutional structures, namely a joint committee to, *inter alia*, monitor the implementation of the agreement and examine how to improve and develop cooperation under the agreement.

The Agreement provides for its provisional application as of 1 January 2026, in order to enable legal entities from Japan to reap benefits from Pillar II calls under the Horizon Europe Work Programme for 2026.