

## Prime Minister meets with Hirofumi Nakasone - Chairman of the Japan-Latvia Parliamentary Friendship Group

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On Monday 9 July, Prime Minister Māris Kučinskis met with Hirofumi Nakasone, Chairman of the Japan-Latvia Parliamentary Friendship Group in Riga. During the meeting, the Prime Minister expressed his deepest condolences to the relatives of flood victims in Japan.

Over recent months the political dialogue between Latvia and Japan has been actively developing. H. Nakasone, whom the Prime Minister met during his visit to Tokyo last year, expressed his interest in promoting the close cooperation between the two countries in various areas. Japan is one of the most important economic cooperation partners of Latvia in the Far East.

M.Kučinskis expressed confidence that, with the signing of the European Union (EU) - Japan Economic Partnership Agreement, economic operators would benefit from a comprehensive abolition of import and export tariffs and the elimination of non-tariff barriers to trade in Japan. It is expected that the entry into force of this agreement will soon give a positive impetus to the Latvian timber industry, food production, chemical industry and pharmaceutical sector. The agreement is also a political asset demonstrating the commitment of the EU and Japan to free and fair trade, open economies and clear, transparent rules.

The Prime Minister demonstrated his interest in more active development of cooperation between Latvian and Japanese entrepreneurs. A visit of the representatives of the Japanese Foreign Trade Organization (JETRO) to Latvia is planned already in September this year.

The officials took stock of the successful cooperation between Latvia and Japan in the field of higher education by pointing out that cooperation between higher education institutions should be further developed. Work is underway on specific activities in the fields of tourism and aviation, transport and logistics, ICT and innovation.

M. Kučinskis and H. Nakasone also discussed current external relations matters. As regards current developments in relations with North Korea, it was confirmed that Latvia supports a peaceful and diplomatic solution to the situation in this region – complete and verifiable denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula should remain the main objective. The international community must remain united and should focus on achieving this goal.

"We will continue support the preservation of pressure and strict adherence to international sanctions imposed on North Korea until there is real action and visible progress," said M. Kučinskis.

Prime M. Kučinskis paid a visit to Japan at the end of 2017. In early 2018, a large delegation from Japan headed by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe visited Latvia.

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