

Question for written answer E-016047/2015
to the Commission
Rule 130
Hilde Vautmans (ALDE)

Subject: EU-Japan: status of negotiations on partnership agreement and human rights clause

Japan and the EU have been negotiating for some time on a strategic partnership agreement, in parallel with the negotiations on a free trade agreement. The deadline proposed at the EU-Japan summit in mid-2015 was the end of 2015.

We are aware of Japanese objections and reservations concerning the inclusion of standard human rights clauses, which automatically trigger procedures with an impact on the trade agreements. Japan's argument is that the human rights situation in Japan is not such as to justify extremely stringent human rights protection clauses. However, since then two more executions have been carried out, on 18 December 2015. Furthermore, precedents appear to exist in similar agreements with Singapore and Canada.

What is a realistic deadline for these negotiations? In the Commission's view, what options exist for including the human rights clauses, taking account of Japanese objections while maintaining our position on the death penalty?