



Wilfried
Martens Centre
for European Studies

Ambitions and Limits: The Deepening Security Dialogue Between Japan and the European Union

Valérie Niquet

Summary

The European Union and Japan are increasing their exchanges on security issues and have the ambition to expand possible areas of cooperation despite limitations. The joint statement published at the end of the EU-Japan summit in 2023 lists a series of important domains including economic security, cyber threats, human security but also maritime security. This resolution results from a convergence of threat perception regarding the role of China and of Russia. The US factor also plays a role regarding the uncertainties of Washington's future engagement in Europe but also in Asia. Despite these evolutions, and ambitious declarations regarding a future security and defence cooperation agreement, limitations in the role both Japan and the EU can play in terms of hard security must be taken into account.

Introduction

Faced with the challenges of today's world, characterised by an increase in military threats in their immediate environment, the European Union and Japan, two powers long perceived as exclusively "civilian" and with limited means of action, are increasing their exchanges on security issues and have the ambition to expand possible areas of cooperation. In January 2024, the EU declared its intention to implement a defence and security partnership agreement with Japan, following the joint declaration issued at the end of the EU-Japan summit on July 13, 2023.¹ The joint statement emphasised that Japan and the European Union are key partners in the areas of peace, security, and defence in the Indo-Pacific region, and have significantly strengthened their relations in these areas.² The document called for a deepening of the strategic dialogue due to "unprecedented challenges to peace and stability."

The relationship between the European Union and Japan has a long history with the opening of the European Economic Community (EEC) delegation in Tokyo in 1974, followed by the Japanese delegation in Brussels in 1979, but for a long time, it had little to do with security issues,

¹ Kyodo, « EU to seek security and defense pact with Japan amid China's assertiveness », *Japan Times*, on <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2024/02/20/japan/politics/eu-japan-security-partnership/>, 20-02-2024.

² *EU-Japan Summit 2023 : Joint Statement* on <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2023/07/13/eu-japan-summit-2023-joint-statement/>, 13-07-2023.

particularly "hard security" issues. Economic issues prevailed for these two partners traditionally perceived - rightly - as non-military powers.³

The end of the Cold War marked a first evolution, with the publication in 1991 of a joint declaration (the Hague Declaration) on EU-Japan political relations which emphasised shared values and the need to institutionalise regular political exchanges on general security issues⁴. Until the late 1990s however, the relationship was dominated by the weight of economic relationship and even more by the tensions that accompanied them, with mutual accusations of dumping and protectionism⁵. One recalls the episode of Japanese video recorders blocked in Poitiers (France) in 1982 while the EU's trade deficit with Tokyo reached record levels.

Today, it is the People's Republic of China (PRC) that has replaced Japan as the source of the European Union largest trade deficit and is accused of unfair practices. But this evolution also demonstrates the declining importance of the archipelago as the major economic partner in Asia. In 2019, a significant economic partnership agreement between Tokyo and Brussels came into force, removing 99% of EU tariffs on Japanese exports to the EU and 97% of Japanese tariffs on EU exports to Japan⁶. But in 2021, Japan accounted for 2.9% of EU exports (8.8% to China) and imports from Japan were only 3% of the EU total (20% from China).⁷ Compared to the PRC (People's Republic of China), Japan is no longer the EU's top trading partner, but the 7th, and common security issues are now at the forefront of both countries' concerns.

On these matters, the discourse is ambitious, and considers the military dimension of the threats and challenges to be faced. It reflects a reality based on increasingly converging analyses of the global strategic situation between Tokyo and Brussels.

An Ever-Closer Strategic Partnership

Following the EU-Japan Summit in July 2023, the joint communiqué mentions an "ever closer" strategic partnership, emphasising that Europe's security is directly linked to that of the Indo-Pacific region.⁸ It also endorses the concept of strategic interdependence despite geographical distance. Already, the EU Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy published in 2016, mentions that the prosperity of the EU is linked to Asia's security. On the Japanese side, since the early 2010s, and especially with the return of Shinzo Abe's as prime minister in 2012, Japan

³ Emil Kirchner, « EU-Japan security cooperation in context », in Emil Kirchner, Hans Darussen, *EU-Japan security cooperation, trends and prospects*, New York, Routledge, 2019.

⁴ Marie Söderberg, op.cit. and Emil Kirchner, « EU-Japan security cooperation in context », in Emil Kirchner, Hans Darussen, *EU-Japan security cooperation, trends and prospects*, New York, Routledge, 2019.

⁵ Mari Södenberg, « Japan-EU relations » in Robert J. Pekkanen, Saadia M. Pekkanen eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Japan's Politics* on <https://academic.oup.com/edited-volume/40699>, 01-2022.

⁶ Lluç Vidal Lopez, « The EU-Japan partnership in the post pandemic order: what comes next? », *Journal of Asian security and international affairs*, vol.11 (issue1).

⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Japan-EU_%E2%80%93_international_trade_in_goods_statistics&oldid=558421

⁸ *Shared vision, common action : a stronger Europe* on https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/global-strategy-european-unions-foreign-and-security-policy_en, 14-11-2016.

has also thought to align itself with like-minded partners, including the European Union and its member states⁹.

In 2001, the first Action Plan for EU-Japan Cooperation was published, calling for the establishment of a Strategic Dialogue on Security covering a wide range of issues from security to energy, cyber and environmental risks.

While the Action Plan did not go beyond declarations, it highlighted the new importance of security issues in EU-Japan relations, with possible actions focusing on non-military security aspects such as development assistance and post-conflict reconstruction - an issue that remains relevant for Japan after the war in Ukraine.¹⁰

In 2003, the EU-Japan Strategic Partnership was established to broaden the security dialogue that had been steadily developing since the 1990s on global issues such as development, human security, climate and the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula with KEDO (Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization), in which the EU joined the United States, South Korea and Japan in 1997.¹¹ In 2018, two legally binding partnerships - the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) and, in particular, the Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA), negotiated since 2011 - were finalised. The agreement should enter into force in Tokyo in July 2024, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of EU-Japan relations.¹² The Strategic Partnership involves coordination between the EU and Japan in more than 40 areas, with a focus on climate security, nuclear disarmament, quality infrastructure development, data security and maritime security, and economic security, where joint actions between Tokyo and Brussels are already underway.¹³ In 2019, the EU-Japan Partnership Agreement on Sustainable Connectivity and Quality Infrastructure will also be adopted, promoting quality infrastructure based on transparency, financial sustainability, and social and environmental values.

The EU-Japan Summit 2023

The joint communiqué issued at the end of the EU-Japan Summit on July 13, 2023 is an important milestone in security cooperation. It lists 14 areas, including maritime security, capacity building in third countries, response to cyber threats, protection of critical infrastructure, coordination in counter-terrorism operations, space, and defence issues.¹⁴ In terms of principles, both parties

⁹ Elena Atanassova, Yoichiro Sao, « Asia and Europe in Japan Alignment Policy, Drivers, Strategic Expectations and future outlook », *Asian Affairs* on <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03068374.2022.2093049>, 2022.

¹⁰ Marie Söderberg, op.cit.

¹¹ Emil Kirchner, « EU-Japan security cooperation in context », in Emil Kirchner, Hans Darussen, *EU-Japan security cooperation, trends and prospects*, New York, Routledge, 2019 et “European Union joins North Korea Nuclear security body” on <https://cordis.europa.eu/article/id/9049-european-union-joins-north-korean-nuclear-security-body>.

¹² *EU-Japan: council endorses the conclusion of the strategic partnership agreement*, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2024/04/22/eu-japan-council-endorses-the-conclusion-of-the-strategic-partnership-agreement/>, 22-04-2024.

¹³ *EU-Japan strategic partnership agreement* on https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/57491_en, 01-02-2019.

¹⁴ *EU-Japan Summit 2023: Joint Statement*, op.cit.

reaffirm their commitment to maintaining a free and open international order based on the rule of law. They oppose any change in the status quo by force or coercion "anywhere in the world". Both sides seek to develop cooperation on economic resilience and security, starting with critical commodity supply chains. ¹⁵ A strategic dialogue at ministerial level (foreign ministries) will be established to deepen the EU-Japan security partnership. Cooperation on digital transformation is also mentioned, with the first meeting of the Digital Partnership Council to be held in Tokyo on July 3, 2023, and the signing of two memoranda of cooperation on semiconductors and to support secure submarine cable connectivity between the EU and Japan.¹⁶

At the regional level, both parties recognise the similarities in their respective Indo-Pacific strategies and declare their intention to cooperate on common goals in various areas such as health, climate, environment, sustainable finance, and security and defence. The security partnership will be strengthened in the areas of maritime security, cyber security, hybrid threats, disinformation, information manipulation, interference, and counterterrorism.

The joint communiqué, which marks a real break with the situation that prevailed until the end of the 2010s, is the result of an emphasis on shared values and a growing convergence of threat perceptions.

The concept of common values in the face of autocracies

In its introduction, the 2023 EU-Japan Summit joint communique highlights the importance of "common values" in addressing global challenges, in response to the growing assertiveness of autocracies, particularly in their discourse toward the "Global South." ¹⁷ Since 2013 and the publication of its first National Security Strategy (NSS), Japan has emphasised its desire to build partnerships with institutions such as the European Union based on this concept of shared values, which includes that of an international liberal order under threat. The discourse, especially towards the European Union, also helps to anchor and legitimise Japan's more proactive role on the global scene. It is about defending an international order based on the rule of law, the United Nations Charter, Human rights, and a free and fair trading system. These shared values translate into a willingness to work together on issues related to human security, economic security, sustainable development, climate change and the environment, or health security. Addressing these global challenges, which are also linked to shared values of human rights and democracy, is conducive to peace and stability. The concept of FOIP (Free and Open Indo-Pacific), outlined by Shinzo Abe in 2016 and renewed in 2022, which defends the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity and rejects the use of force or coercion to change the status quo, echoes the EU's strategy for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. But beyond this convergence of principles and global challenges, there is also a significant convergence of threat perceptions.

¹⁵ Mario Esteban, Ugo Armanini, « The EU-Japan connectivity partnership : a sustainable initiative awaiting materialisation» on <https://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/en/analyses/the-eu-japan-connectivity-partnership-a-sustainable-initiative-awaiting-materialisation/>, 14-02-2020.

¹⁶ Ibidem

¹⁷ Ibidem

A real convergence of threat perceptions

All official Japanese documents, including the latest white paper on diplomacy (Diplomatic Bluebook) published in April 2024, mention that Japan has never experienced such a tense situation and that the security of Europe and Japan are closely linked.¹⁸ This sense of urgency revolves around the perception and analysis of the Chinese and Russian threats.

In the joint statement issued after the 2023 EU-Japan summit, many points directly or indirectly concern the People's Republic of China (PRC). The elements on quality infrastructure and connectivity partnerships are intended by the EU and Japan as a direct response to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) projects, which extend to the Indian Ocean, Africa, the Pacific, and even the heart of Europe with partners such as Serbia (non-EU) and Hungary (EU), where President Xi Jinping paid an official visit in May 2024.

For Japan, Xi Jinping's China is seen as a direct competitor and increasingly a threat because of its disruptive actions in the Taiwan Strait, the East China Sea around the Senkaku Islands, and the South China Sea.¹⁹

Since 2019, the European Union has also reformulated its strategy towards China around these three points: China can be a partner on global issues, but it is an economic competitor and a systemic rival. In recent years, the EU's China strategy has undergone a major evolution, largely due to China's aggressiveness since Xi Jinping came to power in 2013 and its handling of the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2004, the European Union essentially saw the PRC as an economic opportunity and a partner to be engaged and integrated into the international system. Despite strong opposition from the United States and Japan, which led to its abandonment, some EU member states, including France, supported the lifting of the arms embargo imposed on China after the Chinese government's violent suppression of the Tiananmen Square protests in 1989.²⁰ Since then, attitudes at both the EU and member state levels have changed dramatically.

Despite these developments however, the joint statement issued at the end of the 2023 EU-Japan Summit also emphasises the need to build a constructive and stable relationship with China, recognising the importance of engaging with Beijing while expressing concerns. The text emphasises the importance of cooperation with China, taking into account its role in the international community, the size of its economy, and the importance of global issues in which China plays a significant role. Tokyo and Brussels share the position that they must therefore continue to engage the PRC, including on issues related to Hong Kong, Xinjiang, Tibet, and Human rights.

In addition to the desire to maintain relations with Beijing, the document also cites "serious concerns" about the situation in the East China Sea, specifically mentioning the issue of the

¹⁸ « 外国青書 2024 » sur <https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/files/100653233.pdf>, 04-2024

¹⁹ Elena Atanossova, op.cit.

²⁰ Emil Kirchner, « EU-Japan security cooperation in context », op.cit.

Senkaku Islands, under constant pressure from Chinese ships, coast guards, fishing boats or the PLAN (People's Liberation Army Navy). Peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait, directly threatened by Chinese gesticulations, are also at risk. Similarly, the security of the sea lines of communication (SLOC), vital to Japan and the European Union, is directly affected by tensions in the South China Sea. This shared recognition of the Chinese threat is also evident in important areas such as maritime security, including the control against illegal fishing, particularly in the Pacific. They also address security issues such as disinformation, cybersecurity, hybrid threats, and manipulation, for which the Chinese regime is regularly accused as demonstrated by recent cyber-attacks targeting EU parliamentarians. However, there is also a shared concern between Japan and the EU about the risks of economic "decoupling" between Beijing and the major Western economies. While Tokyo emphasises the concept of "economic security" and, like the Netherlands, meets Washington's demands regarding technology transfers, especially in critical areas such as semiconductors, it may be more receptive to the European concept of de-risking.

While the European Union has evolved in its assessment of the Chinese threat, Japan has also recently become aware of both the importance of the Russian threat and the benefits of mentioning the Russian and Chinese threats together. This development is recent and is a reaction to Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, but also a consequence of the demise of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, assassinated in July 2022, and the disarray of his political faction within the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). For reasons related to bilateral diplomacy and domestic policy (resolving the Kuril Islands issue with Moscow), as well as external strategy, in the hope of avoiding too close a strategic partnership between Moscow and Beijing, Shinzo Abe was reticent to cut ties with Russia and its president, Vladimir Putin. After Moscow's occupation of Crimea in 2014, Japan reacted only moderately, without imposing major sanctions.

In this respect, the war in Ukraine represents an important turning point. Tokyo's goal is to prevent the strategic concerns of the United States, as well as those of the European Union and its member states, from being diverted from the tense strategic situation in Asia by supporting Ukraine.²¹ The Ukrainian crisis is also helping to strengthen the discourse on shared values that underpins the EU-Japan strategic partnership. During the Shangri-La Dialogue 2022, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida proclaimed that what happens in Ukraine today could happen in Asia tomorrow. That is why Japan, like the G7 members, has imposed sanctions on Russia.²² By standing firmly with the other G7 members and the European Union, Kishida also cultivates his image as a responsible political leader and further justifies in the eyes of the people the need to strengthen the country's military capabilities, including conventional deterrence and long-range strike capabilities.²³

Concretely, Japan, in coordination with the European Union, is providing assistance to Ukraine, including non-lethal military equipment (bulletproof vests, surveillance drones, transport vehicles) due to restrictions on arms exports from the archipelago. Japan has also re-exported

²¹ Lluc Vidal Lopez, « The EU-Japan Partnership in the post pandemic order: what comes next? », op.cit.

²² However, Japan did not withdraw from the Sakhalin-2 gas project, which supplies 9% of the archipelago's LNG on <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/japans-mitsui-says-no-plans-exit-russias-sakhalin-2-lng-project-2023-06-21/>, 21-06-2023 and remains hostile to the use of frozen Russian assets to support Ukraine.

²³ Paul O'Shea, Sebastian Marlow, "Rethinking change in Japan's security policy: punctuated equilibrium theory and Japan's response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine", *Policy Studies* on <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01442872.2024.2309218>, 31-01-2024.

Patriot missiles to its American ally so that the United States can in turn provide this type of equipment to Ukraine. The joint statement issued at the end of the EU-Japan summit in July calls for an end to Russian aggression against Ukraine and the immediate, complete, and unconditional withdrawal of military forces from the internationally recognised territory of Ukraine.

As a result of these developments on both sides, the EU and Japan now share similar analyses of the Russian and Chinese threats, which are at the core of Tokyo's and Brussels' desire to strengthen their security dialogue and cooperation. In addition to these two threats, Tokyo and Brussels also share a longstanding analysis of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the nuclearisation of North Korea - including strong condemnation of the Pyongyang regime's violation of UN resolutions - and Iran. The increasing number of ballistic missile tests by North Korea and the risks of escalation in the Middle East are of great concern to Tokyo and Brussels.

Another factor that is not a threat but also plays a role in the desire for closer ties between the EU and Japan is the American factor, particularly the prospect of a return to power in 2025 of a leader as unpredictable as Donald Trump. Japan's concerns in this regard are similar to those of Washington's European allies within NATO, although not always expressed as clearly. Japan's desire not to antagonise Washington, on which it is entirely dependent for its security also influences Tokyo's possible choices in Europe.

Japan's preferred European partner has long been the United Kingdom, much more so than France, another power with significant projection capabilities in the Indo-Pacific region but perceived in Tokyo as more problematic in its relations with the United States. Despite Brexit, Tokyo continues to pursue its most important projects with London, such as the next-generation fighter jet.

A necessary step: new capabilities

Enhanced security cooperation between the EU and Japan would not be possible, however, if Japan, like the EU, did not provide itself with new capabilities to legitimise its ambitions.

Faced with a strategic situation in its environment that has been described as uniquely dangerous, Japan is pursuing a dual strategy of strengthening its alliance with the United States and developing its own capabilities beyond what has long been criticised as Tokyo's refusal to engage.²⁴ The two goals are partly converging, as the development of Japan's defence capabilities also meets the expectations of its American ally. Strengthening Japan's capabilities also allows it to increase the credibility of its ambitions on security cooperation with the European Union. In 2013, Japan established a National Security Secretariat (NSS) and published its first "National Security Strategy," which aims to make Japan a more proactive player on the international stage.²⁵ As an essential element of this development, in 2014 Shinzo Abe's cabinet

²⁴ In 1991, during the first Gulf War, Japan was accused by its allies, especially the United States, of being capable only of "checkbook diplomacy".

²⁵ Hiroshiyasu Akutsu, *op.cit.*

approved an interpretation of the Japanese constitution that allows for the right to collective self-defence, and thus joint participation in active military operations with allies, including the European Union.²⁶ Joint exercises have increased with Australia, India, the United States - all members of the Quad in Asia - as well as the Philippines, and in Europe with France and the United Kingdom.

In December 2022, the Kishida administration approved three documents that accelerate the previously initiated developments. These include the new National Security Strategy (NSS), the National Defense Strategy (NDS) (formerly the National Defense Program Guidelines), and the Defense Buildup Program. It was also decided to increase the defence budget to 2% of GDP by 2027, reaching 1.6% of GDP in 2024. Projection capabilities will be strengthened, with Japan acquiring more projection capabilities for defensive long-range strikes and small aircraft carriers capable of accommodating American F-35s. Coast Guards will also be strengthened to counter Chinese pressure in the East and South China Seas. The new National Security Strategy also addresses security dimensions such as economic security, cyber threats, and technology transfers that facilitate dialogue with the European Union. Finally, the possibility of exporting arms has been partially lifted to facilitate industrial cooperation, although significant restrictions remain.

For its part, the European Union has collectively recognised the urgency of security issues, including for its own survival. The EU Global Strategy, published in 2016, mentioned existential crises within and beyond the borders of the European Union. And Asia was one of these concerns. The EU has established several mechanisms, including the CSDP (1999) and PESCO (2017), whose operational effectiveness may be debated, but which signal a more concrete commitment to security and defence issues, as well as the potential to deepen dialogue with key countries such as Japan. The EU has demonstrated its ability, albeit limited, to deploy civilian and military means in the service of peace and security on the African continent and in the Indian Ocean against piracy.²⁷

In 2021, the European Union has also published a strategy for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, which specifically mentions the possibility of organising a coordinated presence of European navies in the Asia-Pacific region. This was proposed by the French Minister of Defence, Jean-Yves le Drian, as early as 2012.

The hard security dimension has therefore become more prominent in the EU-Japan security dialogue, with a shared desire to emphasise concrete cooperation. Overall, the maritime security dimension is particularly important and allows for closer cooperation with a country like Japan, which shares the same constraints and concerns regarding freedom of navigation at sea. This is where the EU can be most active, with programs such as CRIMARIO, and where it shares direct interests with Japan in securing the SLOC. For Japan, the fight against piracy and freedom of navigation at sea is also essential to support its opposition, alongside the EU, to territorialisation of international waters in the South China Sea by the PRC. In 2014, Japan participated for the first time in an anti-piracy exercise involving EUNAVFOR Operation Atalanta and the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF), and since then regular meetings and

²⁶ Kawasaki Akira, Celine Nahory, "Japan's Decision on Collective Self-Defense in Context", <https://thediplomat.com/2014/10/japans-decision-on-collective-self-defense-in-context/>, 03-10-2014.

²⁷ https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/2020-04/CSDP_Report_April_2020.pdf

exercises have been held in the Indian Ocean, which has been designated as a preferred area for security cooperation between Japan and the European Union. On March 15, 2023, an administrative arrangement was signed between EUNAVFOR ATALANTA and Japan's Deployment of Surface Forces for Anti-Piracy Enforcement to facilitate joint operations. The joint declaration of the Japan-EU summit in July 2023 also mentions the possibility of joint exercises in the Indo-Pacific region, including the South China Sea.

Conclusion: significant developments but important limitations

Despite numerous declarations in favour of deepening security cooperation between Brussels and Tokyo and a real convergence of threat perceptions, there are limitations that stem from the very nature of Japan, which is constrained by its pacifist constitution despite significant evolutions, and of the European Union, whose Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) only reflects what the member states want to achieve in this area. Going beyond principled statements on EU-Japan security cooperation, especially in areas directly related to hard security, seems difficult. Japan cannot really act militarily abroad, even in the framework of United Nations peacekeeping operations. Politically, no Japanese government has sufficient legitimacy to put the Self-Defense Forces at risk in overseas operations, including anti-piracy operations. Joint operations serve primarily to assert a community of interests and values in the face of threats that affect both the European Union and Japan. In that sense, important items like economic security, hybrid threats, crisis prevention, space cooperation are prone to occupy a major role in the proposal to build a new security and defence partnership between Tokyo and Brussels.²⁸

Perhaps more importantly, the United States remains per nature the most important factor for Tokyo. Only the United States can guarantee the security of the archipelago under the bilateral defence treaty. In times of tension and strategic uncertainty, Tokyo's priority is to avoid the risk of alienating Washington, especially if Donald Trump returns to power. In this context, Tokyo prioritises partnerships with actors (members or non-members of the EU) that appear closest to Washington, most notably the United Kingdom. Brexit has not fundamentally changed the situation for Japan, as projects such as the development of the next-generation fighter jet are being carried out with London. Despite the affront to a member state of the EU, Tokyo is also very supportive of AUKUS and hopes to participate in its non-nuclear technological pillar, emphasising the Anglo-Saxon angle.

When it comes to defence and security in Europe, Japan continues to prioritise NATO as its natural partner, even as the European Union has been developing its own strategic thinking for several years, including within NATO. In 2007, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was the first to visit NATO Headquarters in Brussels and welcomed NATO's increased interest in security issues in Asia. In 2022, Prime Minister Kishida became the first Japanese Prime Minister to attend a NATO Summit. On that occasion, Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg stated, "No other partner is closer

²⁸ Japan would be the first Asian country with which the EU would build that kind of partnership.

to NATO than Japan.” The Japanese Prime Minister again attended the NATO Summit in Vilnius with his Asian partners (Japan, Korea, Australia, New Zealand). Tokyo is strongly in favour of extending NATO’s area of interest to Asia, which it sees as an additional security guarantee against China. The issue of opening a NATO liaison office in Japan would also allow Tokyo to establish itself as the preferred partner in the region, despite its limited means of action.

In that context, the EU-Japan security dialogue can only develop further in a context of great strategic uncertainty, including about the role of the United States in the medium term. On this point, Japan shares the concerns of many EU member states.

About the Author

Valérie Niquet is a French political scientist working at the French Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique, where she works on Asia and is the director of the Japan programme. Her main area of expertise is geopolitics in the wider Asian region. She joined the Martens Centre's Academic Council in February 2024.

Credits

The Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies is the political foundation and think tank of the European People's Party, dedicated to the promotion of Christian Democrat, conservative and like-minded political values.

Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies
Rue du Commerce 20
Brussels, BE 1000

For more information, please visit www.martenscentre.eu.

Cover design: Gëzim Lezha, Brand and Visual Communications Officer
Printed in Belgium by INNI Group

This publication receives funding from the European Parliament.

© 2024 Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies

The European Parliament and the Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies assume no responsibility for facts or opinions expressed in this publication or their subsequent use. Sole responsibility lies with the author of this publication.