

EU-Japan Joint press statement:

EU-Japan exchange of views on loneliness and social isolation

20 July 2021

Ms **Dubravka Šuica**, Vice-President for Democracy and Demography at the European Commission, and Mr **SAKAMOTO Tetsushi**, Minister for Loneliness and Isolation in Japan, held their first exchange on loneliness and social isolation today.

Both sides agreed that the COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the global importance of tackling loneliness and social isolation and that this is an intergenerational challenge. Loneliness and social isolation pose crucial challenges to the cohesion, economy, and mental and physical health in 21st century societies across the world.

In response to this situation, Japan has adopted a basic direction for measures to address loneliness and social isolation in ‘Basic Policies on Economic and Fiscal Management and Reform 2021.’ Japan is now developing the priority plan for tackling loneliness and social isolation, which will be ready towards the end of this year. Japan will also conduct a nationwide survey to gain an overall picture of the loneliness and social isolation situation and publish the results and analysis by the end of this Japanese fiscal year. The European Commission’s Joint Research Centre has been conducting its own analysis on the current situation and impact of loneliness and isolation as well as current initiatives in EU member states to address these challenges. The European Commission is now looking into possible follow-up to tackle loneliness and social isolation.

With this in mind, both sides agreed to continue their exchange on tackling loneliness and social isolation, particularly by

1. Sharing knowledge and measures regarding the importance of connecting with people in tackling loneliness and social isolation, and the need for community building and fostering solidarity throughout society to achieve this.
2. Sharing knowledge on loneliness and social isolation measures for evidence-based policy making.