

## Kobe University Brussels European Centre Opening Symposium Friday 4 March 2011

Opening Address by Hideki Fukuda, President of Kobe University

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, it is a great pleasure for me to welcome you to the Opening Symposium of Kobe University Brussels European Centre.

As the President of Kobe University, I am proud to have the opportunity to make the opening address.

Needless to say, the development of education and research in Japanese universities in the past proceeded upon the basis of various strong academic ties forged and established between Japan and Europe. Especially in recent years, there has been an increase in the number of joint researches and other academic collaboration and exchange taking place on equal terms among researchers.

We find these instances of educational and academic collaboration between Japanese and European universities have fundamentally been carried out on bilateral bases. However, in the course of the rapid integration of the European countries, education and research have been carried out in the form of such international frameworks as FP, the Erasmus Mundus programme, and with such joint research facilities as CERN. A movement has also started in Japan to convert the form of international collaborations in education and research from a bilateral to a multilateral one. The purpose of this symposium is to illuminate the new aspects of the developing Japan-EU academic cooperation.

Our relationship with the EU dates back to 2005 when we became the co-ordinating university for the "EU Institute in Japan, Kansai".

When President Van Rompuy, who is with us today, visited Japan last April in order to attend the EU-Japan summit, he also made a special stopover in Kobe to

present us with a memorable and impressive speech.

It is last September that Kobe University established our first European office in Brussels, the capital of Europe, with a sincere hope that this Brussels office will play the role as the very basis on which a Japanese national university can maintain and develop its initiative in its close connection with the study and research going on in Europe.

In the symposium session to be held this morning today, His Excellency, Herman Van Rompuy is going to give a keynote address.

In appreciation of President Van Romuy's significant contribution toward academic exchanges between Kobe University and institutions in Europe, please let me take this occasion of the session prior to the symposium today, and, as the President of Kobe University, let me have the honour of conferring Doctor Honoris Causa on the Chairman, President Van Rompuy.