

EU, Japan join forces to improve nuclear safety

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Japan Prime Minister Naoto Kan gives a joint press conference after the 20th EU-Japan Summit at the EU headquarters in Brussels. Europe and Japan agreed Saturday to join forces in efforts to promote tighter international standards for nuclear safety in the wake of the atomic crisis in Japan.

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"Going into the future, nuclear safety is a matter of great importance for Japan and the European Union, for the entire world, and for the Earth," Japanese Prime Minister Naoto Kan said after an EU-Japan summit in Brussels.

At the same time, Kan urged the 27-nation EU to ease restrictions on Japanese food imports that were imposed over concerns of potential [radioactive contamination](#) following the Fukushima power plant accident.

"I have asked for relaxation measures based on scientific evidence," he told a news conference held alongside EU president Herman Van Rompuy and European Commission president Jose Manuel Barroso.

"I have also received a response to that, that the EU also believes any measures should be based on scientific evidence," he said

Last month, EU authorities tightened the acceptable level of radiation in Japanese food imports after the Fukushima [nuclear crisis](#), which was sparked by the massive earthquake and tsunami in March that killed 25,000 people.

The EU and Japan also agreed Saturday to cooperate in monitoring the impact of the world's worst [nuclear disaster](#) since Chernobyl, as well as implementing "comprehensive risk and safety assessments" at plants and encouraging other nations to do the same.

"Radiation does not stop at borders and neither should our collective responsibility. So when we talk nuclear, we talk global," Barroso said.

The Japanese nuclear crisis has prompted the EU to organise "stress tests" on the bloc's 143 nuclear reactors in order to evaluate their ability to survive earthquakes, floods and man-made crises such as plane crashes.

"We want these [stress tests](#) to go beyond Europe," Barroso said.

Nuclear safety was already high on the agenda of a [G8 summit](#) that Kan

attended in Deauville, France, this week, where the leaders of the world's top economies called for stronger nuclear safety rules.

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