**[Press Release]**

# At COP31, Civil Society Groups from Japan and Europe Issue Joint Letter Urging Japan and the EU to Stop the Rollback of Methane Regulation and Counter the Expansion of Fossil Fuel Dependence Driven by U.S. Tariff Pressure

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At the 31st Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP31), to be held in Antalya, Türkiye, 50 civil society organizations from Asia, Europe, and beyond have issued an open letter to the leaders and parliamentarians of Japan and the European Union. The letter expresses concern over the EU's proposal to postpone by one to three years the application of the import requirements under the EU Methane Regulation (EUMR), and over Japan's expansion of public financial support for U.S. fossil fuel infrastructure under its tariff agreement with the United States. It calls on Japan and the EU to maintain and strengthen robust methane regulation and to stop the expansion of fossil fuel dependence - in particular driven by U.S. tariff pressure and energy dominance agenda.

Japan and the EU have made commitments to reduce methane emissions and to end new direct public support for the fossil fuel sector, including through the Global Methane Pledge and G7 leaders' communiqués. Yet both continue to provide financing for fossil fuels. In exchange for lower tariffs, Japan has agreed to invest up to USD 550 billion in the United States, including in fossil fuel projects, and to purchase approximately USD 7 billion worth of U.S. energy, including LNG, every year. The EU has not only begun considering a postponement of the Methane Regulation, but has also pledged, in return for less higher U.S. tariffs, to purchase USD 750 billion worth of U.S. energy by 2028 and to invest USD 600 billion in the United States. Such agreements risk deepening fossil fuel dependence and undermining both climate action, energy security and political sovereignty!

Genuine energy security requires ending dependence on imported fossil fuels. To close the gap between their pledges and actual policies, the civil society organizations make the following five requests of the leaders and parliamentarians of Japan and the EU:

1. Stop the rollback of methane regulation: The EU should steadily implement the EUMR. Japan should support the regulation, further develop the CLEAN Initiative, and promote the introduction of binding regulations that require companies to achieve effective methane reductions.
2. Stop the expansion of fossil fuel dependence driven by tariff pressure and US energy dominance agenda: Put a stop to the expansion of fossil fuel investments and purchases through trade agreements with the United States, and safeguard the climate action and energy independence of Japan and the EU.
3. End financing for fossil fuels: Public and private financial institutions in Japan and the EU should stop financing fossil fuel projects, and should require the companies and projects they already finance to measure, report, and verify methane emissions and to take measures to prevent leakage.
4. Reduce fossil fuel imports and promote renewable energy-based electrification: Lead global electrification, with an emphasis on energy efficiency and demand management as well. In doing so, ensure that the benefits reach people who lack access to energy, and prevent repeating the harms of extraction.
5. Work together as Japanese and EU parliamentarians: Cooperate on strengthening methane reductions and moving away from fossil fuel dependence, making use of opportunities such as the Japan–EU Joint Parliamentary Committee.

The civil society organizations urge Japan and the EU to make COP31 an opportunity to demonstrate leadership on climate action, to move away from fossil fuel dependence, and to

accelerate the transition to a sustainable energy system centered on renewable energy.

**Quotes**

**Andy Gheorghiu, coordinator of the transatlantic anti-LNG network**
“For over a decade the gas industry claims that methane is the low-hanging fruit in tackling the existentially threatening man-made global heating we’re all experiencing. However, unmolested by legal requirements, the same industry let this low hanging fruit grow into a polluting tree of its own. Now, with the US becoming the LNG dominance global power, this toxic fruit has developed into a serious geopolitical threat the EU and Japan must robustly address. Tackling methane emissions equals breaking free from the US dominance agenda while being climate champions at the same time.”

**Flora Witkowski, Gas Policy Coordinator, Climate Action Network (CAN) Europe**
“Deepening dependence on US fossil fuels under pressure from Washington is costly and risky for Europe and Japan: it locks us into fossil fuels, exposing us to repeated supply shocks and price volatility that undermine our energy security.
Rapid methane cuts offer a way to reduce such dependence, yet the lobbying crusade the US administration and fossil fuel giants are carrying out to delay EU methane rules is putting Europe’s key energy security shield at risk.
The EU cannot allow foreign interests to dictate its energy policy. It must safeguard timely implementation of the Methane Regulation and commit to phasing out US LNG imports altogether.”

**Satoko Endo, Policy Coordinator, Mekong Watch**
“We call on Japan and the EU to immediately end fossil fuel expansion and show seriousness in climate change mitigation including reducing methane. Japan is especially of concern as its ECAs, JBIC and NEXI are now considering supporting new LNG projects in Papua New Guinea and Indonesia in addition to the projects in the US, and JICA as well is considering a new gas fired power plant in Vietnam. These projects may be a promise of profits for fossil fuel corporations, however they come with a cost of placing the whole world under increased danger, thus should not be allowed.”

**Hiroki Osada, Campaigner, Friends of the Earth Japan**
“The ‘Japanese model’ is not about meeting demand. It is about manufacturing it with. Japan uses public finance to back the import terminals and gas power plants in Asia that will absorb Japan’s LNG surplus through trading. Now that surplus is increasingly destination-free, methane-laden US gas, and Europe is the one of the main markets for Japanese LNG trading. Delay the EU Methane Regulation, and Europe gets the gas that leaks Methane, the prices that spike, and the dependence that sticks. Just ask Japan.”