

## 2019 Executive Committee Report - AGM 2020



The BJA has continued to foster the economic and cultural ties between our two countries and the friendship between our people on many different levels in 2019, as we have done in previous years.

We had the pleasure of meeting many of you while working intensively with other organizations and institutions, thereby increasing the networking opportunities we have offered to you.



We also had the great pleasure to visit and introduce members to members during 2 VIP visits to member companies in 2019.



The BJA had the great pleasure to invite the members to an exclusive visit of Kaneka Belgium in Westerlo-Oevel

Founded in 1970 Kaneka Belgium was as the company's very first subsidiary outside Japan, and the first production site of a Japanese chemical company in Belgium. Since then, Kaneka Belgium has expanded its business and R&D activities.

In Westerlo, about 330 employees work across three production units, R&D and supporting back-office roles.



After some welcome drinks, the guests were welcomed by Jean Vandael, Plant General Manager, with a thorough presentation of Kaneka Belgium.



The guests were then divided into two groups, and after putting on protective helmets and glasses, started a guided visit through the production facility of Kaneka MS Polymer.



The event ended with a networking cocktail, where the guests could discover a display of the many products using Kaneka's materials and taste local beers and delicacies.



The BJA also had the great pleasure to welcome members to Leuven where we enjoyed an immersion into the world of innovation – imec, Leuven MindGate, Health House, KU Leuven and the City of Leuven.



The visit began at imec, the world-leading research and innovation hub in nanoelectronics and digital technologies. Upon listening to the presentation given by Mr. Van den hove, President and CEO, and by Mr. Merlevede, CEO of Leuven MindGate, the organization that represents the region's ecosystem, the members visited the Clean Room of imec.



Then they all joined on a coach bus to visit the Health House where they discovered the latest evolutions, a showcase for the future of health and care.



On the way to meet with Mr. Sels, Rector of the most innovative university of Europe, KU Leuven, the members received a brief explanation on the city of Leuven from the private guides kindly organized by the City.



The visit ended at the Gothic City Hall where the Mayor Mr. Ridouani warmly welcomed the members and kindly delivered a short speech emphasizing Leuven's extremely rich business environment and its strong ties with Japan. The members deeply appreciated this enriching afternoon.



Next to the BJA Member Company Visits, the BJA Committees set up a variety of activities. The BJA Investment Committee organized the annual Security Seminar together with Nihonjinkai and the Japanese Embassy, in April 2019 held at the Japanese School in Brussels, on (personal) security matters.



This seminar was held with the aim to enhance the awareness of the Japanese community in Belgium on security measures. With a kind cooperation by the Police department of the area of Auderghem, Uccle, and Watermael-Boitsfort communes, an advisor for protection on robbery and burglary gave a thorough presentation to over 50 participants of the Brussels Japanese School, members of the Japanese Association in Belgium and the BJA.



The Executive Committee invited the members to an interesting and highly attended seminar on Brexit.

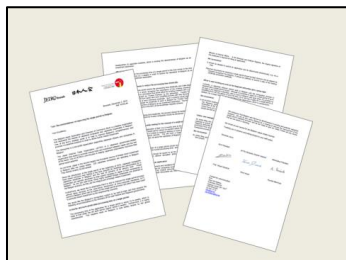
In March 2019, as the original deadline for Brexit was fast approaching then, the level of political uncertainty as well as the potential impact for any company doing business in Europe and in the UK was very high. The BJA, in co-operation with Linklaters LLP, were therefore delighted to invite all to a seminar to look together at some of the key issues Japanese and EU businesses needed to consider when preparing for Brexit in the context of the latest developments and the various withdrawal scenarios that were unfolding.



After a most elaborate and delicious walking lunch, experts Lucy Fergusson, Partner at Linklaters LLP, Roel Verhelst, Manager Employment Consulting at EY, Xavier Taton, Partner at Linklaters LLP and Daan De Vlieger, Director Customs & Global Trade at Deloitte, discussed topics such as the Brexit process, HR aspects, and Contracts & liability aspects during a two hour seminar.



Tanguy Van Overstraeten, Partner at Linklaters LLP and BJA Vice-President introduced the session and Masatomo Nomura, Founder of Nomura Consulting Europe & BJA Investment Committee Chair, wrapped up the discussions, which continued during the closing drinks.



Throughout 2019, the BJA has dedicated a lot of time and effort in trying to smoothen the process and improve the situation concerning the single permit, reaching out to the various regional and federal stakeholders through its Investment and Tax & Legal Committees, together with the Executive Committee.

The most recent initiative consisted of sending letters to the relevant regional Ministers, the relevant federal Ministers of the Government of pending affairs as well as to the federal government negotiators. For this initiative, BJA was supported by both Nihonjinkai and JETRO. In this co-signed letter, we highlighted the main issues around the single permit process as shared by our BJA members, and also included recommendations based on what we see works well in other countries. We saw our recommendations taken into the actions of Minister Maggie De Block, as just one example. We keep following-up on this issue.



In April 2019, as one of the co-organizers of the #YES2Belgium Election Debate, together with 12 international chambers, we questioned 10 political parties on their plans for the investment and business climate in Belgium.



More than 200 representatives of the international business community in Belgium gathered at ING Marnix to hear first-hand what each party proposes to further strengthen Belgium's position as a place to invest and do business.

It started with introductory remarks by Erik Van Den Eynden, CEO of ING Belgium, and Marcel Claes, Chief Executive of AmCham Belgium, who set the scene. Then, the 10 panelists representing their political parties took the stage to exchange their viewpoints on how to make Belgium more competitive after the 2019 May 26 elections.





For about two hours, the panelists discussed the following four topics which reflect the concerns of the international business community: mobility, labor market, corporate taxation and country governance.



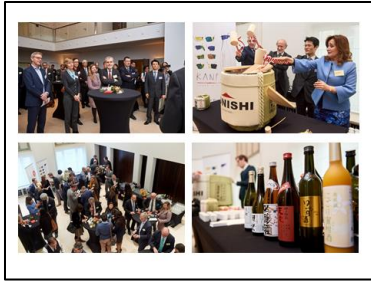
After this very successful debate, Wim Eynatten, Partner at Deloitte and BJA Tax & Legal Chair wrapped up the event. The participants then continued discussing during the networking reception the political proposals they had just heard.



Belgian exporters and importers to and from Japan, and Japanese investors in Europe were enthusiastic to participate in the BJA-FEB co-organized EU-Japan Trade Agreement Seminar gathering many high-level speakers, experts and guests to exchange views on this auspicious moment in time.



After an introduction on the political aspects of the deal given by high-level representatives of the Belgian, Japanese and EU authorities, a vast number of experts (from the European Commission, Belgian authorities and specialist committees) discussed the operational aspects that would allow Belgian importers and exporters to take full advantage of the numerous benefits of this trade agreement during two interactive workshops, one focusing on goods (and the agri-food sector) and the other on services.



Following the workshops, representatives of the FEB, BJA, Embassy of Japan and European Commission symbolically broke a sake barrel to bring good fortune upon the companies in their business with EU-Japan. The participants then enjoyed the networking cocktails, with a nice sake tasting opportunity offered by Kanpai.



Another event organized to highlight success to come was the VIP Business Luncheon in November kindly sponsored by Deloitte and JTI with as main speaker the Coach of the Belgium National Hockey Team preparing for Tokyo2020.



Following some opening words by Wim Eynatten, Partner at Deloitte & Chairman BJA Legal & Tax Committee, Coach McLeod took the floor to share his leadership experience, and explain how the Red Lions became the team that won the World Cup and hopefully will win the gold medal at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics!



Following his inspiring speech, Red Lion Félix Denayer gave a player's perspective on the team's success, before answering the many questions from the audience jointly with Coach McLeod.



In 2019 we also assisted the King Baudouin Foundation's Marilo Fund in enhancing the professional and entrepreneurial communication in the Belgian press regarding Japan by selecting not one, but three journalists whose reports will be published soon in their respective media.



We are currently calling journalists to apply for two Funds, the Marilo Fund and also the 150 Years Fund, a special initiative of the Celebration Committee of the 150 Years of Friendship between Japan and Belgium, specifically allocated to scholarships for Belgian journalists who will contribute to articles and broadcasts on the 2020 TOKYO OLYMPICS and PARALYMPICS GAMES from 2017 to 2021.

If you know anyone interested, please welcome them to get in touch with us. The application period is until end of April.

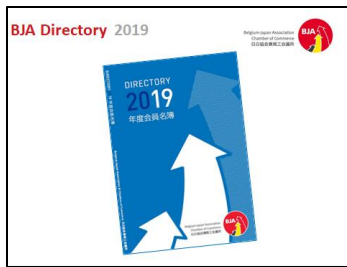


The constant updates of the website [www.bja.be](http://www.bja.be)



as well as our Trade Flows and Cultural Newsletter (sent by post and electronically)





and BJA Directory are further evidence of our commitment to provide our members with the necessary platforms to network and maintain business or cultural exchanges.

In 2020 we are planning to renew our website and hope an increasing number of members will take full advantage of sharing their news, events and job offers with us through these tools.



In 2020 we are looking forward to serving you all to the best of our efforts, just like in 2019.  
Thank you for all your support!