



TRADE FLOWS & CULTURAL NEWS

Number 90 - March 2011

EDITORIAL

Former Belgian Ambassador becomes Honorary Consul General of Japan in Flanders

by Mr Piet Steel, Honorary Consul-General of Japan for Flanders

It is a great privilege to write this month's Editorial of the BJA-magazine "Trade Flows and Cultural News".

Last December, I became Honorary Consul-General of Japan for Flanders, succeeding Mr René Peeters, who retired last summer.

I feel honored, and humbled, by this nomination and for the trust in me given by the Japanese and Belgian Governments. I also find it somewhat strange that, as a former Ambassador of Belgium and Consul-General of Belgium, I now find myself, at the age of sixty, Honorary Consul-General for Japan. But this makes it all the more special and exciting for me.

Here I would like to pay special tribute to my predecessor, Mr René Peeters, who was instrumental in having erected in the Centre of Antwerp a sculpture of "Nello and Patrasche", the two heroes of a popular Japanese folk story that has its origins in Antwerp. This sculpture is now attracting many Japanese visitors to Antwerp. For his work as Honorary Consul-General for Japan, René was awarded by the Emperor the "Order of the Rising Sun". René will not be an easy man to follow!

You may like to know something about my "credentials" to be nominated Honorary Consul-General of Japan. I have been a Belgian diplomat for 23 years. I was never posted to Japan, but during those years I had many opportunities of working closely with Japanese colleagues. I have particularly fond memories of my postings in Hanoi and Hong Kong where my Japanese colleagues were also my closest neighbors.

However, my real understanding of Japanese culture were the six years spent with Toyota Motor Europe as Vice-President for European Affairs. Those were not easy years, especially the last two, but I felt proud to be part of this globally respected automotive company. It was an immensely rich experience for me. I learned a great deal from my Japanese colleagues, many of whom have become friends for life. I became a great fan of the Toyota Way, a set of basic management skills which all Toyota members have to learn and develop. I left Toyota last October but continue to have an advisory role with respect to its European and Belgian activities.

There is no well-defined job description of an Honorary Consul General of Japan in Flanders. His principal function must be to listen to and help Japanese citizens living and working in Flanders or coming to Flanders. He will be a useful interface between Japanese business people and investors, and the Flemish business community. He will be a strong promoter of Japan in Flanders, strengthening wherever possible the existing close bonds between Japanese people and Flemish people. He will be an advocate of Flanders' great economic potential - a unique logistical hub in Europe with its three international sea ports, Antwerp, Ghent and Zeebrugge, and a sure haven for foreign investors, including many top Japanese companies.

I will be striving to make a substantial contribution to this strong ambitious programme but realise, of course, that this requires the full support of the members of organisations such as the Belgium-Japan-Association & Chamber of Commerce. The BJA has long experience of fostering strong relations between Belgium and Japan.

keep reading on p.11



Mr Piet Steel

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BJA REPORT

Concert with star conductor Seikyo Kim 金聖響 - 定期演奏会・イン・ベルギー

Monday 8 November 2010 - La Monnaie, Brussels



Mr Seikyo Kim, star conductor, surrounded by Mr & Mrs Sudo and Mr & Mrs Tomonaga of Mitsui & Co. Benelux, Mr & Mrs Nakamura of JETRO and Mrs Kurita.



HE Ambassador Yokota, Japanese Ambassador to Belgium and Mr Mahler, Honorary BJA Director exchanging their appreciation for music - a language without borders.



Mr De Prest, Partner at Deloitte and Chairman of the BJA Legal & Tax Committee, discusses the influence of business on music and vice versa with his wife and Mr Arnoud Declerck, Chairman of the Symphony Orchestra of Flanders.

On Monday 8 November, the Cultural Committee of the Belgium-Japan Association & Chamber of Commerce had the pleasure of inviting the members of BJA and partners to the concert of the Flanders Symphony Orchestra conducted by Mr Seikyo Kim, a star conductor from Japan in the Centre for Fine Arts in Brussels (Bozar).

Nearly 60 participants gathered to see Mr Kim's gloriously opening the new season as a Principal Conductor for the Flanders Symphony Orchestra with a vibrant and lively work of Mozart. In addition, the Flanders Symphony Orchestra generously offered a private cocktail after the concert where H.E. Ambassador Yokota and Mr Kim honoured us with their presence.

All participants enjoyed this precious opportunity to meet and greet personally Mr Kim who is one of Japan's leading young

conductors today. Mr Kim kindly spared his time to exchange conversations with the guests while showing his enthusiasm with his new orchestra and his appreciation towards the BJA members who wished him continuous success in Belgium.

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vlaanderen**
.VZW



BJA Bonenkai - Ending the year 2010 in beauty

BJA 忘年会

Tuesday 14 December 2010 - MoMu Fashion Museum, Antwerp



Mr Patrick Dejager, President CEO of Europal Group of Companies, and Mr Stephen Jones, an extraordinary British milliner, accompany Mrs Shirley Ceccato, international fashion top model, to explore the exhibition.



The Leysen family and the d'Haen family enjoy the beauty of the inspirational hats at the museum.



Mr Bruloot, Co-Founder Flanders Fashion Institute, surrounds himself with beautiful lady members.

With generous sponsorship by Europal Group of Companies, the Belgium-Japan Association & Chamber of Commerce was thrilled to invite its members and partners to an exclusive evening to end the year 2010 in beauty with Mr Stephen Jones, an extraordinary British milliner at the MoMu Fashion Museum in Antwerp.

The evening was opened with a few words from Mr Thomas Leysen, President of the BJA and Chairman of Umicore, who was happy to greet the members in his home town, followed by Mr Patrick Dejager, President CEO of Europal Group of Companies, BJA sponsor member, and foremost initiator of this lovely event, and Mrs Kaat Debo of MoMu Fashion Museum.

After the speeches, the group was kindly guided through the



Mr Edward De Beukelaer, CEO President of E. & H. De Beukelaer & Co., BJA Board Member and Chairman of the BJA Editorial Committee, discusses with HE Ambassador Yokota the new world of hats.

exhibition of the largest collection of Stephen Jones' hats outside Great Britain. The boxes of Europal and the hats rapidly carried the members away in the fantastic artistic world of design and fashion. They explored all the originality, extravagance and elegance of the milliner through the shapes, textures and decorations of the hats.

At the end of the exhibition, while savoring oysters, champagne and other delicacies, the guests expressed the admiration of the art pieces to the artist, and dreamed out loud of what could be the result of the imagination of the milliner on their head.

Before closing the night, Mr Dejager and his team surprised us all with an imaginative present as well. A true ending in style - putting many smiles on the faces of the invitees.



BJA REPORT

K. Lierse S.K. vs KRC Genk, with Japanese star player, EIJI KAWASHIMA, Goalkeeper of K. Lierse S.K. リールセSK 対KRC ゲンクリールセSKで 活躍する日本代表GKの川島永嗣選手の試合観戦

Saturday 18 December 2010 - Lier



The Japanese star player, Mr Eiji Kawashima, goalkeeper of K. Lierse S.K., kicks back the ball strongly to the snowy field.



Mr Isamu Koike, Managing Director of Kaneka Pharma Europe (left) and Mr Shinichi Fujii (right) proudly hold the Japanese National Team scarf together with Mr Kawashima.



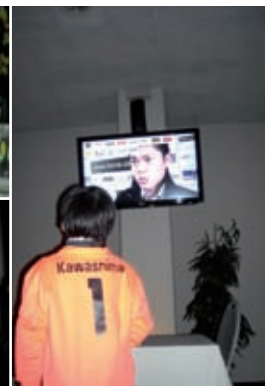
Over 60 participants are overwhelmed to meet Mr Kawashima during the cocktails.

With generous support by K. Lierse S.K., the Belgium-Japan Association & Chamber of Commerce was thrilled to invite the BJA members, their families and friends to watch one of the hottest matches of the season, K. Lierse S.K. vs KRC Genk from the business seats of the Lierse football stadium on Saturday, 18 of December 2010.

It was one of the very icy cold evenings with the soccer field covered with some snow - over 60 great fans of soccer joined together to watch the match and Mr Eiji Kawashima, the goalkeeper of the Japanese national soccer team, who plays at K. Lierse S.K. since this summer.

The BJA guests were nicely welcomed by the club Lierse with welcome drinks, followed by speeches given by Mr Maged Samy, President SK Lierse, and Mr Stefan Van Heester, Assysta Sports Management. Afterwards the guests enjoyed watching the game from the VIP seats, supporting of course Lierse and Mr Kawashima! K. Lierse S.K. made the first goal and performed a quality game against the currently number 1 team in Belgium.

After this exciting match, the guests welcomed Mr Kawashima at the cocktail room, and they fully enjoyed this precious opportunity to meet and greet with the super star of the Japanese national soccer team.



BJA New Year Cocktail Reception BJA 新年カクテルパーティー

Monday 17 January 2011 - Hotel Metropole



H.E. Ambassador Yokota, Japanese Ambassador to Belgium, joins forces with Mr Van Overstraeten, BJA Vice-President and Partner at Linklaters LLP, to break the barrel of sake to share happiness and success in 2011.



Les Ondines - fresh young faces on the Belgian-Japanese musical scene.



Mr Verheyden, Partner at Jones Day, discussing the great opportunities Japanese companies find in Belgium with Mr Fujita, Director of FPNI Belgium/Ariake.

In honor of H.E. Mr Jun Yokota, Japanese Ambassador to Belgium and Mrs Yokota, the Belgium-Japan Association & Chamber of Commerce had a great pleasure in inviting the members to celebrate the New Year.

Mr Tanguy Van Overstraeten, BJA Vice-President and Partner at Linklaters LLP, opened the evening with a short welcome speech thanking the members for their continuous support to the BJA. In addition he expressed his gratitude to the Hotel Metropole for their kind sponsorship for this cocktail evening. H.E. Ambassador Jun Yokota kindly extended his New Year

greetings to over 200 members and guests, followed by performing the traditional 'Kagamiwari' - breaking of a sake barrel ceremony together with Mr Van Overstraeten. A few pieces of music were performed by 'Les Ondines', a trio group of Mrs Laurianne Angeon, violinist, Mrs Elodie Starzak, harpist, and Mrs Michiko Fujita, flutist, during the cocktail, adding a pleasant atmosphere to the evening.

The members shared a lively evening with meeting one another while savoring delicious canapés, fresh sushi and sake. The start of many more events to come!

(From the left) Mr Dhanens of Japan Tobacco International, Mr De Prest of Deloitte, Mrs Vissers, Mr Dom and Mr Kaisin of AW Europe, toasting to many events of the BJA to attend in 2011.



The Young Executive Stay Program YES VII in Japan

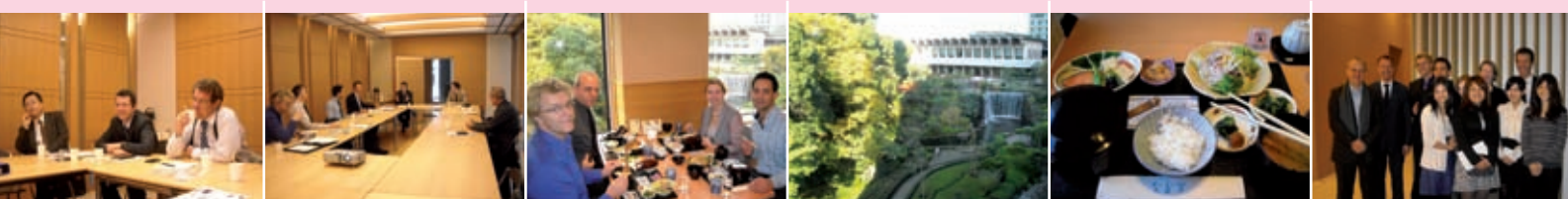
13-21 November 2010



After going through a strict selection procedure, being instructed by experts and business people about dealing with business in Japan during two briefing sessions, having the honour to meet HRH Prince Filip of Belgium under whose auspices the program is held, being introduced to all facets of what to expect in Japan, all the hard work in Belgium ended and Japan was awaiting. The YES candidates were ready to do business.

Tokyo welcomed the YES participants in a warm atmosphere of 19 degrees Celsius on the 13th of November for one busy week. The young executives, the BJA and the BLCCJ directors met up with the respective business coaches, Sophia University students, sponsors and other parties involved in the program during a welcome cocktail. A time to relax that evening just before the first week filled with BLCCJ seminars, case studies, meetings with the Belgian Ambassador and other staff of the Embassy and Regions, and business-to-business contacts would lift off...

Four dynamic YES participants would like to share their experience of doing business in Japan in the following articles.



Mr Luc Willems of Manau - Helga Verlinden

WWW.HELGAVERLINDEN.BE

As designers, producers of costume jewelry, we were in recent years regularly pointed by colleagues and former clients to the Japanese market potential for our products. For us at first, Japan - next to being close to China - means fierce competition.

On a contact day "Japan" organized by FIT I had the pleasure meeting Mr George Nagels who showed me the possibilities of the YES program of the BJA & BLCCJ. The program would allow us to learn and understand the Japanese market with a small investment. We immediately applied with the necessary documents. In June we received a call and letter that we were selected for the program. The preparations could begin.

At the meetings with the other selected participants we had very interesting lectures on various levels regarding export to and doing business with Japan. It was very professional and well prepared. We also had the honor to meet HRH Prince Filip of Belgium.

At the end of summer we received the visit of the assisting Japanese students from Sophia University. We planned a whole day to visit our stores with the young ladies, to visit the studio and give the necessary feedback. Fully prepared they returned to Japan.

A little later we received a package with leading popular fashion magazines from Japan divided by age. This was for us important information. On the basis of this, we customized our collection to the needs of Japanese consumers. Mr Bert Winderickx of the BLCCJ, - *who we thank very much for the work he did for us in Japan* -, together with our student, contacted a number of companies from their own database, an important contact that we had, and some more interesting leads obtained from FIT Japan.

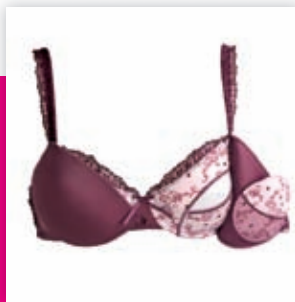
As for the preparatory stage to go and do business in Japan, one should not wait for things to happen, but take initiative, prepare well and follow the advices given.

At our departure we had four appointments; one for each day, two major players in our market, and two smaller ones. Upon arrival in Tokyo we were kindly welcomed and escorted to our beautiful hotel. In the evening a welcome reception introduced us to the directors of the BLCCJ, FIT and the other coaches and students. The next day was entirely devoted to lectures which were very interesting and helped us to prepare our meetings the next days.

It soon became clear that our group was not as "reserved" as at the business seminars in Belgium, but turned out to be a real 'party' group and after hours of hard work also could be found at the local karaoke places. Soon there was a bond of

Mrs Martine Boonen of Mammae

WWW.MAMMAE.BE



'It's the most beautiful breastfeeding bra I have ever seen'. The presidents of the companies I visited were impressed about our breastfeeding bra. And I was impressed by their hospitality and enthusiasm! In the preparation lessons we were told not to expect Japanese people to immediately show their emotions or ask direct questions. But in my meetings this was different. Due to their directness it became instantly clear which company was a good partner to work with in Japan.

We did a lot of research in Belgium about the breastfeeding market in Japan. Thanks to the students, I knew I had to visit the area where the Suitengu temple was located to get a good image of the maternity shops.

Suitengu Shrine is well-known across the country for safe delivery and pregnancy. Expectant mothers visit the Shrine to pray for the safe delivery of their child. Every day of the week, the shrine is always filled with expecting couples and newly-weds, as well as parents with healthy new-borns giving thanks and asking for blessings.

A lot of maternity shops, which sell breastfeeding bras, have settled themselves near the Temple. Visiting these shops, gave me a good idea about the prices and brands, before the scheduled meetings.

Because our bra is patent pending (it's the only bra in the world which allows discrete nursing), we had a strong base to negotiate.

The connection with the company 'Millenio' was immediately there. They loved our brand and perfectly understood our marketing strategy. Another benefit is that 'Millenio' already distributes another Belgian brand.

Unfortunately it's not easy to export our bra in a short time because the sizes are different in Europe and Asia. Back in Belgium we discussed this with our production department and came up with several solutions. So we are happy to present the new developments at our new meeting with 'Millenio' at the fair in Paris.

To be continued ...

friendship between the participants and we could consistently count on the support of each other.

The first two meetings for me were the smaller players in the market, there was an interest in our products, but a possible cooperation will be for the long term. The two last meetings were important, and to my surprise: both were a success. Meanwhile, we have already sent their first orders and our products are in prime locations in various places in Tokyo. It was the right time as in both cases they were looking for an alternative vendor. I wish to make the remark that the counterparties were well prepared, they knew exactly who was there and what to expect. With the formal nature of the program and of the calls for appointment by the Chambers, it gets more weight, even so much, that in both cases, I personally could speak to the CEO of those companies. I am convinced that this would never have succeeded if the calls were made by ourselves. I can imagine that these high-leveled businessmen have immense demand from people like me. it's a matter of the right way to approach.

Meanwhile, we have a new collection ready for the Japanese market, and during the publication of this article we are al-



ready back in Japan. We will visit our new customers, with the new collection. This time I am also accompanied by the designer so we can customize our products even better. New contacts were made and we hope very much that this story gets a sequel.

Thanks BJA, thanks BLCCJ, thanks colleagues for your nice company.

Mr Paul Dingens of Dingens Barometers & Clocks

WWW.BAROMETERS.COM & WWW.INNOVACELLI-BAROMETER.COM

An introduction

Thanks to the YES Program, Dingens Barometers & Clocks was able to offer their innovative products to the Japanese market. As specialists in the manufacturing of barometers (air pressure devices) we have developed a totally new technique for precision measurements, for which the use of mercury is not necessary any more. The development and production of these instruments is a tradition which has been typical to the region for four centuries, since the invention in the 17th century. These devices are purchased by consumers for its function as a weather forecaster, but also often a status symbol because of the interest in science, history and culture. We focus on the high-end market and differentiate ourselves through the appearance and the exclusive nature of the products. During the World Expo 2010 in Shanghai, China, the new product was exhibited in the Belgian pavilion as an example of a technical ecological innovation, matching perfectly with the theme 'Better city, better life'.



Not only appearance and exclusivity, but also the accuracy is of course of very high importance. The new device is therefore now being tested by the American NIST (National Institute of Standards and Technology). With this approval, the "Innovacelli Barometer" can replace the current mercury barometers in hospitals, used for the research on blood gases. The main reason for hospitals to use the new device, is to have 100% certainty about the accuracy of the reading. This is not the case with the digital devices, as they intend to start "drifting" after some time. The mechanical devices have too much friction to work very accurately. In the US we aim to replace all the mercury barometers in hospitals, labs and schools with the new technique. We hope to be able to do the same in Japan in the near future as well. With the approval Dingens will have the only device on the market of precision measurement devices which could be used for air pressure, as well as for other gasses, which can also work in a large range of different pressures. In the near future we would like to contact the industry to offer these devices which give a 100% certainty on an accurate reading, for their machinery and equipment.

For the next Antarctic Expedition 2011-2012, which will focus on meteorological research on the Antarctic plateau and the katabatic winds, we will build the instruments respecting

very strict requirements. It will be used on very different altitudes, going from sea level up to 3000 meters, under very

extreme conditions. This expedition will give us the benefit of the extended research and will lead to new possibilities.

For the Japanese market, we will focus more and more on the health issue for which the device is interesting for consumer use. Changing air pressure and weather have an influence on, for example: migraines, allergies, rheumatism, etc.. Next to the air pressure, the device will focus on accurate temperature and humidity measurement. These instruments will give the user accurate information about his living environment.

The YES program - in Japan

In Belgium and during our week in Japan, we have been given the chance to listen to people with a lot of experience and insight, who given us information and tips on how Japanese society works. This has given us the chance to experience the particular way Japanese trade is done. Without any doubt, the Japanese market is very difficult to approach for a European SME. Not only the language problem and the distance form a barrier, but also the business culture is quite different compared with Europe.

In Japan, we had the privilege to work with both a superb assisting student, Ms Alla Shevela, as well as a great coach, Claude Strobbe! Both have been extremely helpful and experienced to help me out with all my questions and it was an absolute pleasure to work with them. My student and coach have been able to "translate" me in every way to our Japanese contacts. I believe we have been able to make a great "first step".

Any good business relationship is build upon trust and experience. So we will do our very best to prove ourselves in the years to come. Special designs will be made to suit the Japanese taste. Also packaging, information, etc... will be changed according to the advice of our coach. The next step is to set up a sales-and-service point in Japan to serve our clients. Marketing will also need our full attention.

At the moment we have not yet been able to complete orders, but at least four companies have showed their specific interest in dealing with our products - each in their different sector. This is an ideal situation for a product with so many different applications.

The YES program has given us a fantastic added value, also due to the fact it is being supported by HRH Prince Filip of Belgium. It is a great honor for us to have been chosen for such a prestigious project and this will be beneficial for our company now, but for sure also for many years to come. The BJA and the BLCCJ have succeeded in organising a unique concept, and I would like to congratulate them for this! If not for this, exporting to Japan would be the privilege of only the very large companies, which would mean that some unique products would never make it this far. We hope to be able to continue to work with the BJA, BLCCJ, our contacts and network we have been able to create in Japan, and bring our unique products next to the chocolates and beers, as a Belgian success story in the future.

Mr Bart Bonte of Moderna Products

WWW.MODERNAPRODUCTS.BE

I feel privileged being a “young” executive ... This means I still have a lot in front of me. One of those opportunities/challenges in front of me was to learn more about Japan, the culture and possibly combine this with boosting our Japan business.

I feel also privileged being a “young” executive ... This means we were able to apply for this most attractive YES program. Japan is leading ranks when it comes to the annual budget people spend on their pet.

Moderna exports to 50 countries, except to Japan. This had been frustrating for the last couple of years. Guess the excitement for me and the entire Moderna Team when we were informed about our selection. We were determined to make the mission a success. After going through some literature about Japan, we thought

“Thank god there were briefing sessions!”

Off I went, with my information, passport ;), catalogues and samples. But once in Japan, it is still a very different world opening up!!! You have to have been there to fully grasp the differences.

Besides the business side of my mission, I felt privileged (again). Travelling to new territories makes people grow.

I was amazed by the warm welcome feeling we were given by the Japanese people. I was amazed by their efficiency, punctuality and discipline. Not only by their bullet-train, and their whole lifestyle, but also of their sense of quality, packaging and finishing of products.

The bullet-train is a separate story. I travelled to pretty remote places by train with lots of connections. After 2 connections,



we were well prepared.

Thank god there were briefing sessions! They gave us the necessary reality check. The information supplied by the various speakers at the different briefing sessions was a big help. I suppose the people from BJA know very well how to prepare and organise these missions. Based on listening to their experience, they know what helps European based companies to “mingle” with the Japanese.

This in combination with the support of BLCCJ, my business coach Tsutsui San, and the university student, Mrs Rion gave me the necessary support.

We tried to brief Mrs Rion as good as possible during her visit to our company. I guess the fact that Moderna is active in a “happy” sector helps to create “happy” feelings. Does not everybody want the best for their pet?

Of course the assistance and experience of Tsutsui San was beyond value. He was president of Toyota Europe, during the time Toyota set up their Europe business. His “Euro-Japanese” side made him the perfect spokesman for Moderna. Without him I would not have had the opportunity to meet the VIPs in the pet business. I got access to very interesting market information, which showed me again how different the Japanese Pet Market is.

you end up at stations with only Japanese signs. Thank god you can rely on their punctuality. You just jump on the train, on that platform, at the time that was announced ... imagine this in Belgium ... That’s why I was quite relieved getting to the last station, and finding my translator holding a sign with actually my name on !

It was a journey into the unknown. But I returned home very satisfied. We were able to turn an initial Japanese contact into a reliable Moderna distributor. Next to this we succeeded into building an agreement with another company that will function as some kind of “moderna hub” for the asian market.

I would assume we can summarise the YES program being an attractive opportunity that turned into a successful “mission accomplished”!

Thanks and congrats to the BJA & BLCCJ and their organising Teams;

Thanks to Tsutsui San for his most valuable support;

Thanks to Mrs Rion for her unconditional input, I wish her all the best with her future career.

Regional offices of Belgium in Japan

One year has passed since the Embassy was inaugurated and the 3 Regions moved in the new and modern Embassy premises. The three Regions Economic and Commercial offices share the third floor of the Embassy. Together, we are working for the benefit of Belgian companies' interest and the economic and industrial growth of our country.

This article will introduce you to our offices and our activities.

AWEX | by Claire Ghyselen



Wallonia, Region of Belgium, has two offices in Japan: one in Tokyo and one in Osaka. We represent and promote the economic and commercial interest of the Region, and the interest of the companies that request it. Since 2008, we have emphasized innovation especially in the environment and energy fields. We indeed believe that Japanese companies will be inter-

ested in investing in our country if they find an innovative soil and technologies that are related to global challenges such as energy or medical therapies. In 2010, we organized three seminars and we participated in several fairs, such as Nanotech.

With the Office of Tourism Wallonia-Brussels, we have launched activities designed to promote Belgian lifestyle. Three major events took place in Tokyo: an exhibition of art différencié, a photo contest and the preview of a documentary realized by Laurence Bibot and Marka. Many people participated to our breakfast talks and to our beer blind tasting evening.

We are proud to say that among the 5 laureates of the Wallonia Export Prize 2010, 3 of them are successful in Japan. Besides, several Japanese companies are increasing their investments in our Region.

In 2011, our office will continue to promote our interests in Japan. On a daily basis, we give the priority to the companies that contact us and provide them our full support. We will also participate to several fairs. One seminar and a conference on innovation are also scheduled during the second semester. These events are the visible part of the investment promotion conducted by the office.

The lifestyle events that we co-organized with the Office of Tourism were so successful that we have decided to go on surfing on the wave. When you come to Japan, have a look at our HP and join us!

Our core business consists of re-enforcing the commercial, economic and academic bridge that links Belgium and Japan.

Brussels Capital Region | by Yuko Miyake



The Tokyo office of the Brussels Capital Region provides support to Japanese companies wishing to establish an office in Brussels, and promotes the import and export of products in areas such as food, biotechnology and fashion. At the same time we are also strongly committed to help promote the technology side of Brussels-based companies (i.e. Energy, Information, Environment).

2010 was a year of significant change for both the Embassy of Belgium and the Ministry of the Brussels-Capital Region in Tokyo.

Together with our colleagues from the Embassy and other regions we relocated to the new embassy.

In May 2010, the office of Brussels Capital Region in Tokyo found a new representative in Mrs Yuko Miyake, who was appointed as Economic and Commercial Attaché after having served over 10 years as assistant to the late Mr Yamamoto who suddenly passed away in March 2009.

Thus a new chapter began for the office of Brussels Capital Region here in Tokyo.

Throughout 2010 our office was involved in organizing a range of events such as an event organized by Holemans in April 2010. Holemans, the well-known Belgian Jeweler, presented their range of luxury frames in an exposition here at the embassy.

For 2011 we hit it off well with the opening of the first outlet of "Le Pain Quotidien" in Tokyo. The world famous Brussels bakery-café opened the door of its first Japanese outlet on 5th January. Now Japanese people too can enjoy the wonderful food of this bakery-restaurant which is loved by so many people in Belgium and across the globe. At the press conference Ambassador Mr Maricou, pointed out the coincidence of "Le Pain Quotidien" opening their store near Shiba-Koen, only a few blocks away from where the temporary embassy was located during the construction of the new embassy building.

Also in January 2011, ENHESA, an environmental consulting agency, held a seminar for Japanese companies.

It is a great pleasure for us to see Brussels' companies so actively marketing and promoting themselves in Japan.



Flanders Investment & Trade

ベルギー・フランダース政府

Flanders Investment and Trade (F.I.T.) is an agency of the Government of Flanders. It is helping Flemish companies to develop their foreign markets, and foreign investors to discover Flanders. F.I.T. has 90 offices worldwide, of which one in Tokyo, Japan.

F.I.T. Tokyo is not only helping out with questions from Flemish exporters and Japanese investors. It is also actively developing business relations in certain well-selected sectors : automotive, logistics, biotech, ICT, nanotech, and food. This focus is translated into a yearly marketing plan, containing participations to trade fairs, seminars, press events, buyers & trade missions, etc. Flemish companies are cordially invited to participate to these events. In fact, F.I.T. Tokyo is fortunate to welcome tenths of companies joining our program every year.

In December 2009, F.I.T. Tokyo moved into the new Belgian Embassy building in Tokyo. Apart from F.I.T., the Embassy is hosting the federal services, and the offices of AWEX (Wallonia), and the Economic Representation of the Brussels Region.

We like to confront Flemish companies with the opportunities of Japan, the world's 3rd largest market. We cordially invite them to take part in our 2011 marketing program, which can be consulted on our website. Flemish companies taking the first steps in the development of their Japanese market, are also eligible to subsidies from F.I.T. The most important tool of F.I.T. Tokyo, however, is its experienced staff and its business network in Japan.

Flanders hosts more than 200 Japanese daughter companies. They are more than welcome to discuss their future plans and their questions in full confidentiality with F.I.T. Japanese companies interested to set up in Flanders will be gladly helped in Japanese by our staff in Tokyo.

We hope to meet you in the Belgian Embassy in Tokyo or at one of our events in 2011 !

The introduction of our offices would not be complete without mentioning that from time to time we also share a beer after work.

Our offices in Japan are dedicated to you. We like to welcome as many visitors as possible to our events. Please contact us whenever you visit Japan or require more information on how we can help you and your business.

websites

AWEX www.belgium-wallonia.jp

Brussels Capital Region www.bruxelles.irisnet.be

Flanders Investment & Trade www.investinlanders.com



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EDITORIAL

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It has a network of economic contacts in Belgium. It is an efficient organizer of cultural, social, economic and business events which bring Belgians and Japanese together in a harmonious way. For all these reasons, as Honorary Consul-

General of Japan in the Flanders, I hope very much to become an active member of the BJA.

Thank you for your warm support.

Piet Steel

A Japanese View of Belgium - Masatsugu Minaka, President Daikin Europe

By Mr Kris Sierens, Managing Partner of BeforeTheHype, BJA Editorial Committee Member

When someone has been living in Belgium for more than fifteen years, you can easily imagine that this individual has an accurate view of both the lifestyle and the future. Masatsugu Minaka's point of view is very simple: Belgium is one of the very best countries in which to live. Moreover, he has the experience to be able to make an accurate comparison. He has a clear vision of the new perspectives and opportunities that await his company and the personal standard of living of his staff and himself.



In 1992, Mr Minaka came to Belgium for the first time. Ostend was the place to be and at that time, it was certainly a more rural area than the crowded Japanese cities he was used to. He remained until 2000 and then worked in Spain for three years. After going back to Japan for one year, he returned in 2004, where he enjoys his professional life in Brussels a great deal. He sees it as a city that is not too big and not too small. A city where everything you could want is available and with a good security level. The only negative things that strike him are the many road works and the daily traffic jams, which badly affect economic and social life.

Almost 40 years ago, Daikin choose to put its first European plant in Belgium. The reason was that the UK was the biggest market, but because labour unions were so overwhelmingly powerful, the Japanese management choose a location as close as possible but without the direct impact. It was immediately clear they made the best possible decision. Belgians are very skilled, have an excellent and diversified background, and they speak English. And of course, there was the all-important incentive of the Flanders government.

Until fairly recently, Belgium has remained an important European commercial hub. However, in recent years, total labour cost has risen and the power of the unions increased dramatically. Now the business climate has become more challenging. Up until recently, this was offset by a very high efficiency level. However, costs are still increasing while efficiency remains at the same level. While production in Belgium has generated

certain problems, Mr Minaka continues to see a bright future for his company and himself in Belgium. He has therefore decided to create a European R&D Centre in Ostend. This will take several years, but it brings many new opportunities. Previously, all initial development was carried out in Japan, but now Ostend will have that same level of expertise.

According to Mr Minaka, one of the major advantages that Belgian people bring to the task is a great deal of autonomy, even when individuals are young and relatively inexperienced. They tend to find a good working solution themselves, which is not always the case in Japan. In addition, skilled labour is on a very high level here and that is certainly one of the primary reasons for Daikin's success in Europe. Today the management is mostly Belgian. Of its 1,600 people, only thirty-two employees are Japanese, of which ten are managers. In the past, it was not the case. In the future Mr Minaka is sure that management will become more global, with even greater local involvement. Maintaining clear communication is therefore very important to achieving an excellent workplace atmosphere. In the Brussels head office, more than nineteen nationalities work together, although he has discovered that there is a big difference between European countries and their work ethic mentalities.

During all of his years, Mr Minaka has travelled extensively throughout Europe and he has visited many cities and villages in Belgium. He has found the gastronomy to be uniformly excellent, with many outstanding restaurants. It does not have to be expensive, because you can find delicious seafood restaurants as well as superb spareribs. During his initial years in Belgium, he lived close to Bruges, where there was only a very small Japanese community. Now he is living close to Brussels, where you can find a large and growing Japanese and international society. If there is some free time, then Mr Minaka likes to play golf in Louvain-La-Neuve. Visiting home in Japan is of course also very important, because his family lives in Japan. He notes that it is a pity that there is no direct flight from Brussels to Japan. When asked what he would miss most when returning to Japan, Mr Minaka immediately knew the answer. In 2003, he returned for one year and even after one week, he missed Belgium. The professional rhythm is completely different with more work freedom, but with the same outstanding result.

When questioning about how Belgian companies can be successful in Japan Mr Minaka unequivocally referred to the very high Japanese service expectation, which we are not used to here. Although the biggest problem in Japan is high prices because of the high quality expectations, people are so used to demanding outstanding service as well. Customers want the highest quality with the best prices along with and with the best service. Something else to keep in mind is also the power of the strongly established distribution system. However, he notes with considerable conviction, when you want to succeed, you can succeed.

Hinamatsuri: Peach blossoms, dolls and girl power!

By Mrs Tiene Vertriest, Business Development Manager of Yamagata Europe and BJA Editorial Committee member



I well remember the first time that I encountered the Hina Matsuri (Doll Festival) during my stay in Japan years ago. It was when the supermarkets turned their 'red heart' displays filled with Valentine chocolates, into platforms for precious and precisely arranged dolls, wearing traditional clothes and adorned with peach blossoms. It was explained to me that Japan was preparing for Girl's day, a day when young girls are celebrated and the people pray for their health and happiness.

The Hina Matsuri or Momo no sekku festival (the peach blossom festival) occurs on the 3rd of March, when the peach trees are in bloom. The peach trees are the first trees to bloom as winter turns into spring. In ancient China, the trees were regarded as a spiritual tree, symbolising longevity and good luck. The peach blossom festival was celebrated to receive the blessing of a long and happy marriage.



During the modern festival, families with daughters display ceremonial dolls in traditional Heian (794-1185) court dress, on a five or seven-tiered stand, covered in red carpet and adorned with peach blossoms. The dolls are really one of the most interesting aspects of the festival, and the displays look wonderful! At the pinnacle sits the Imperial couple. The lower levels hold three court ladies, five musicians, two ministers and three servants. In many cases, the dolls are a family heirloom, handed down from generation to generation. Several days before the festival starts, they are displayed in the best

room of the house, but immediately after the festival, the platform is taken down and the dolls are carefully put away until the next year. Superstition has it that leaving the dolls out past March the 4th will result in a late marriage for the daughter.

In old Japan, the festival involved the floating of straw or paper dolls down a river to wash away illness and bad luck for one year. People used to believe that dolls possessed the power to control bad spirits, and that sins and misfortune could be transferred to the dolls. The start of Spring was the appropriate time for a ritual dispelling of the illnesses and the darkness of winter. By setting the dolls afloat on the river or the sea, these troubles and bad spirits were supposedly taken with them... In some regions of Japan, this custom is still alive, for example the Shimogamo shrine in Kyoto still hosts a festival where dolls are sent out to sea to pray for the safety of children.

Some very specific foods are associated with the festival of the dolls: tricolored rice cakes cut into the imperial diamond shape, hina are, chirashi zushi, clam soup and shirozake. Hishimochi are diamond-shaped rice cakes made in three colours: pink, white and green. The colours symbolise the scenery in early spring when green grass starts to grow through the snow, and peach trees come into bloom. Hina are is popped rice coated with sugar, and is also coloured pink, white and green. Chirashi-zushi is a bowl of rice covered with colourful ingredients such as raw fish, seaweed, eggs, vegetables... Clams were added as a seasonal consideration, but a link to the festival can nevertheless be made: Clam shells are deemed the symbol of a united and peaceful couple, because a pair of clam shells fits together perfectly, and no pair but the original pair will do so.



Girl's day is really a charming festival, an elegant way of celebrating girl power!

EU-Japan news

JAPAN, EU ENCOURAGED TO SHARE CONSUMER SAFETY INFO, KNOWHOW

By Alex Martin

Protecting the safety and interests of consumers is essential in an age of rapid globalization, and both Japan and the European Union could benefit from exchanging practical information and experiences, journalists and experts agreed during a recent conference.

Consumer safety experts from the EU and journalists from Japan recently gathered for the 22nd EU-Japan Journalists' Conference from Nov. 27-28 at Kobe Portopia Hotel.

Attendees said the EU and Japan share many similar concerns regarding consumer protection, and agreed the media play an important role in ensuring safety is promoted.

"The EU has a desire to play a more active role on the global stage, and Japan is an important strategic partner," said Rudie Filon, head of the press, public and cultural affairs section of the Delegation of the European Union to Japan.

Filon explained that decades after its formation, the EU is "still a work in progress," and stressed that the bloc, now consisting of 27 nations and totaling nearly 500 million people, shares many challenges faced by Japan, including an aging society and health care-related issues.

This year's conference featured three sessions covering topics ranging from food and product safety to public health, with presentations by experts in each of the fields followed by questions and comments by Japanese journalists.

Despina Spanou, principal adviser to the European Commission's Directorate-General for Health and Consumers, gave a comprehensive account of the EU's efforts toward realizing effective health and consumer policies.

Spanou said that over 9 percent of the EU's GDP, or more than 1 trillion euro (\$1.3 trillion), was spent on health, making it the third-biggest economic sector in the EU after real estate and wholesale and retail trade.

Spanou also outlined measures the EU has been implementing to prevent various health threats, including policies aimed at promoting cancer screening and reducing diseases caused by smoking, alcohol and obesity.

And with the EU being the biggest exporter and importer of foodstuffs in the world, Spanou said it is crucial that the bloc

implement effective food safety principles and guidelines to ensure the well-being of its consumers.

Annelise Fenger, deputy director general of the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration, gave specific examples of how Denmark is dealing with such issues, explaining that many of the measures taken were in line with EU policies.



Sharing caring: Experts and journalists discuss consumer protection issues at the Nov. 27-28 22nd EU-Japan Journalists' Conference held in Kobe Portopia Hotel.

Courtesy of the Delegation of the European Union to Japan.

Fenger said food safety is a priority in Denmark, and explained that all establishments selling or serving food products are assessed and classified in one of six risk groups. Such establishments are then obliged to post the results of the inspection somewhere prominent on the premises.

The results are represented graphically, with the highest mark being a satisfactory smiley face. The best of the best are awarded an "Elite Smiley" mark, which can only be obtained if an establishment is granted four smiley marks during a 12-month span.

Fenger said that while the system initially faced strong resistance from shop owners and restaurateurs, it proved to be enormously effective in improving the overall level of food safety.

Fenger also pointed out that the media were partly responsible for maintaining a high level of food safety in her country. "The media keep us on our toes," she said, explaining that media attention and coverage of food safety-related issues help maintain consumer safety.

Ichiro Fujita, from the health ministry's food safety department, described the screening process employed when Japan imports food. He added that in May, Tokyo signed a special initiative with Beijing aimed at improving product safety through annual meetings between Japanese and Chinese officials, as well as increased exchanges of information related to food safety.

China, a key trade partner for Japan, unfortunately has a rather poor track record when it comes to product safety, he said. In response, Jan Deconinck, chairman of the Product Safety Enforcement Forum of Europe, explained the product screening process the EU employs.

Deconinck, who is a "market surveillance officer" in Belgium, gave specific examples of products that had to be withdrawn or recalled from the market, including faulty eclipse sunglasses that lacked sufficient protection from ultraviolet light and »

THE EU GATEWAY PROGRAMME OPENS NEW BUSINESS HORIZONS FOR YOUR COMPANY IN JAPAN AND KOREA

Sector	Application Deadline	Business Mission Week
Construction and Building Technologies	22 April 2011	12-16 September 2011
Interior Design	3 June 2011	24-28 October 2011
Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)	15 July 2011	5-9 December 2011

Eligible EU Companies are invited to submit an application to participate in Business Missions. Applications will be checked on their economic, financial and strategic merits. To optimise their chances on the Japanese or Korean markets, EU companies can participate in up to three Business Missions. Each Business Mission accommodates up to 40 EU companies in Japan and 30 EU companies in Korea.

Eligibility and Conditions for Participating in the Programme

You can apply for participation in an EU Gateway Business Mission if your company fulfils the following criteria:

- › Exist for at least 5 years
- › Fully or majority-owned by European Union capital
- › Being located and having its main activities in the European Union
- › Active in one of the economic sectors covered by the EU Gateway Programme,
- › Have proven track records of international business cooperation,
- › Have a solid business strategy for entering the Japanese and/or Korean markets,
- › Have a sufficient turnover and number of people employed to guarantee a market entry to Japan and/or Korea,

Note that business consultants are not eligible.

Selected EU companies have the opportunity to participate in up to three Business Missions in Japan and Korea for a total of six business missions.

Support and Services provided by the Programme

The Programme provides financial and logistical support, strategic preparation and a tailored search for business contacts whom the participating EU companies will meet in Japan and/or Korea.

Financial support for the business mission:

- › Up to 1,000 EUR co-financing the cost of one room per company in the programme hotel
- › 80% of the total cost for customized services with a maximum of 1600 EUR per company

Standard services provided before, during, and after a business mission:

- › Tailored preparation and a briefing on the target market prior to departure
- › Individual stand-by coaching
- › Advice on how to follow-up on business contacts in accordance with local business customs after return to Europe

Customised services that can be requested in addition to standard services:

- › Information about local products
- › Interpretation at individual meetings
- › Translation of company documentation into Japanese and Korean
- › Design and printing of company documentation, products manuals, brochures and business cards
- › Business assistance during business meetings
- › Information on certification procedures

The customized services are optional. The Programme will however co-finance 80% of the cost of these services with a maximum of 1.600 EUR. Selected companies will be able to request customized services during the Pre-Departure Meeting.

Source: www.eu-gateway.eu

» small jack-o'-lantern candle holders that caused house fires. Deconinck also gave an overview of RAPEX, a rapid alert system for dangerous food products. He said RAPEX is used to circulate information on dangerous products identified in one EU state to all other members of the bloc, as well as to the European Commission.

On medical health, Tit Albrecht, adviser to the director of the Republic of Slovenia's Institute of Public Health, gave an overview of health care regulations in the EU, and explained how all its citizens have free access to emergency care anywhere in the bloc.

Source: *The Japan Times Online*

EU-Japan news

EU-JAPAN BUSINESS ROUND TABLE CO-CHAIRS MEET WITH PM KAN

EU-Japan Business Round Table co-Chairmen Jean-Yves Le Gall and Hiromasa Yonekura met on January 19th with Japan's Prime Minister Naoto Kan to push for the strengthening of EU-Japan trade and economic relations.

During their meeting with Japan's Prime Minister Kan, the EU-Japan Business Round Table (BRT) co-Chairmen Messrs. Le Gall (Chairman & CEO of Arianespace) and Yonekura (Chairman of Sumitomo Chemical Co., Ltd.) stressed the importance and the growth potential of the trade and economic relations between the EU and Japan, two major world economies.

They pointed out that the EU and Japanese businesses face increasingly similar challenges and also emphasised the need to significantly promote R&D and business cooperation between the EU and Japanese enterprises.

The EU-Japan BRT recommends that both authorities start negotiations on a balanced and mutually beneficial bilateral trade agreement, as soon as the EU and Japanese authorities agree that the right conditions are met, in order to promote an ambitious expansion of trade and investment between the EU and Japan.

With the current 10-year EU-Japan Ac-

tion Plan to elapse in 2011, Messrs. Le Gall and Yonekura urged Prime Minister Kan to take action to make the Japanese side prepared for starting the negotiation of a new framework to replace the EU-Japan Action Plan.

On the occasion of their next meeting in Rome on 28-29 April 2011, European and Japanese members of the EU-Japan BRT will set out their recommendations to the EU and Japanese authorities to further strengthen EU-Japan trade and economic relations. Mr Le Gall said: "Prime Minister Kan's personal involvement in Japanese efforts to enable the development of EU-Japan trade and investment relations is welcome, since the Prime Minister's leadership is crucial to secure the removal of Non Tariff Barriers falling in the fields of competence of various Ministries." Mr Yonekura said: "The Japanese business community welcomes Prime Minister Kan's commitment to 'opening the country' and 'creating a new future' and will continue to support the government in implementing new policies to achieve the vision."

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Background

The EU-Japan Business Round Table (BRT) was created in 1995 to foster communications between Japanese and European industries. Its Members are senior executives from around 50 leading European and Japanese companies. Its main objective is to submit recommendations to Japanese and European Authorities in order to develop trade and investment between the EU and Japan, and to encourage industrial cooperation on issues of common interest, such as innovation, climate change, or industrial standards.

EU-Japan Business Round Table

www.eu-japan-brt.eu

Source: Delegation of the European Union to Japan
www.deljpn.ec.europa.eu/modules/media/news/2011/110119c.html

13TH JAPAN-EU CONFERENCE

Organised by Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (KUL), l'Université Libre de Bruxelles, the EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation and GEM PhD School and co-organised by the Mission of Japan to the EU.

The 13th Japan-EU Conference entitled 'Japan-Europe: Preparing the Third Decade of Intensified Cooperation converging through Values' took place in Brussels on 30th November and gathered a large number of policy makers and academics from Europe, Japan and the US.

At the opening session of the conference, the Ambassador of Japan to the EU, Mr Nobutake Odano made a speech and stressed that Japan, the EU and the U.S. need to remain a

major driving force towards a peaceful and prosperous international community, engaging all the emerging countries. Further to this, he also articulated that shared commitments to fundamental values and principles unite and enable those like-minded partners to work closely to take a lead in this volatile world. The view on the importance of the trilateral cooperation was shared by the U.S. Ambassador to the EU, Mr William Kennard and a Director of the European Commission, Mr Alan Seatter as well.

(The summary of Ambassador Odano's speech is available at www.eu-emb-japan.go.jp)

Source: EU-Japan Center for Industrial Cooperation Newsletter - December 2010

Rush to review your vertical agreements!

By Mr Eric Resler, Partner of Altra Law, BJA EU Committee Member

On 20 April 2010, the European Commission has adopted (1) a new Vertical Restraints Block Exemption Regulation, Regulation 330/2010 on the application of Article 101(3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to categories of vertical agreements and concerted practices ("VBER"), and (2) accompanying Guidelines ("Guidelines"). They replaced Regulation 2790/1999 and related guidelines from 1 June 2010.

In summary, the new antitrust framework for vertical agreements applies a double market share threshold (one to buyers, one to sellers) and provides improved clarity on online sales and other important issues, but leaves unchanged the set of hard cores restrictions. The VBER and its accompanying Guidelines are believed to constitute a sufficiently flexible framework to last until they expire in 2022.

The VBER provides for a one year transitional period for existing agreements which, as of 31 May 2010, satisfy the previous conditions for exemption provided for in Regulation 2790/1999. In practice, this means that **parties to a vertical distribution or supply agreement should, by 31 May 2011, review their agreement and verify its compliance with the VBER and compatibility with the Guidelines.**

The most notable changes introduced on 1 June 2010 relate to **market share thresholds used to assess whether the block exemption will apply** and **online sales**.

1. Double market share threshold

The previous block exemption Regulation introduced a safe harbour of a 30% market share, generally only applied to the supplier, creating the presumption that an agreement below this threshold benefits from the block exemption provided the other conditions are also met (in particular the absence of any hard-core restriction), on the basis that there is no market power. Above the 30% market share there is no presumption of illegality but companies lose the automatic benefit of the block exemption and need to make their own assessment of the validity of their agreement.

Considering the increase in the number of large distributors and retailers with market power, with potentially negative effects on competition, the VBER now holds that an agreement will benefit from the safe harbour if both the supplier and the buyer individually hold market shares of 30% or less. The relevant market for the supplier is the market on which it sells the contract goods or services, and the relevant market for the buyer is the market on which it purchases the contract goods or services.

As a result, fewer agreements are now likely to receive the benefit of the block exemption, and this change is beneficial for SME's, whether suppliers or retailers.

The block exemption will apply only for as long as the market share threshold continues to be met. Ongoing monitoring will therefore be necessary to ensure that the 30% threshold is not exceeded, particularly in cases where the original market share of either the supplier or the buyer is close to the 30% threshold. The VBER does specify certain situations where a temporary increase in market share above the relevant threshold will not remove the benefit of the block exemption, but such circumstances are limited.

2. Online sales

The Guidelines provide detailed guidance regarding restrictions on online sales and start from the premise that in principle every distributor must be allowed to use the internet to sell its products and that restrictions on online sales are prohibited, subject to some restrictions.

The Guidelines state that, in general, having a website is considered a form of passive selling. The following restrictions, which attempt to limit a distributor's ability to use or make internet sales, are now considered hard-core restrictions:

- › Preventing customers from another exclusive/reserved territory viewing an exclusive distributor's website or automatically re-routing customers to the manufacturer's or other exclusive distributors' websites.
- › Terminating customer transactions made via the Internet once their credit card data reveals an address outside the distributor's exclusive territory.
- › Limiting the proportion of overall sales that can be made via the Internet.
- › Setting higher prices for products intended to be resold via the Internet.

However, where a distributor is required to have a physical ("bricks and mortar") presence (as a condition for becoming a member of the distribution system), a supplier will have the ability to shape how Internet sales are made. For example, under the Guidelines, it is now possible to:

- › Impose quality standards that are equivalent to those required for bricks and mortar sales to Internet sales. This is particularly relevant to products sold via a selective distribution system.
- › Require a distributor to make a minimum number of bricks and mortar sales.
- › Agree a fixed fee to be paid by the supplier to the distributor, to support either online or offline sales efforts.
- › Restrict the use of the Internet where it would directly lead to active selling in reserved territories, for example, territory based banners on third party websites.

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KAN'S PERSONAL WEBSITE NOW AVAILABLE IN ENGLISH

An English version of Prime Minister Naoto Kan's personal website, called "**Kan-Full Blog**," was launched in January as he hopes to promote his key policies also to a non-Japanese audience. The Internet site, launched in mid-November in Japanese, features video clips and texts mainly related to Kan's official duties.

The content will be translated from the Japanese original, a Cabinet Secretariat official said, adding that the two-month-old website has had around 10,000 views per day.

<http://kansblog.kantei.go.jp>

Source: www.japantoday.com

BELGIAN ILLUSTRATORS EXHIBIT IN JAPAN

An exhibition on 14 Belgian illustrators was held in the Hokkaido Obihiro Museum of Art, in Northern Japan. From 1 November 2010 to 19 January 2011 visitors could admire more than 200 originals from the Flemings Sabien Clement, Carll Cneut, Gerda Dendooven, Guido van Genechten, Ingrid Godon, Tom Schamp and Klaas Verplancke. The exhibition also introduces Japan to the work of major French-speaking illustrators, such as Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award winner Kitty Crowther, Anne Herbauts and Mario Ramos.

All over the worlds, critics are amazed that a country as small as Belgium has produced so many talented authors and illustrators. In Flanders, they are continuing the rich tradition of Memling, Ensor and Permeke, each with his or her own signature. Numerous cultures come together in Wallonia and Brussels and the illustrators draw inspiration from the most diverse sources.

The international recognition of Belgian illustrators is reflected in the many prestigious prizes they have been awarded, with the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award for Kitty Crowther, Golden Plaques at the Biennial in Bratislava for Carll Cneut and prizes and honourable mentions in the Bologna Ragazzi Award for Gregie de Maeyer, Josse Goffin, Rascal, Gabrielle Vincent, Anne Herbauts and Klaas Verplancke.

After the first stop in the Hokkaido Obihiro Museum of Art the exhibition will be touring Japan.

- › From 5 February to 27 March in the Sakura City Museum of Art in Chiba.
- › From 19 April to 29 May in the Kure Municipal Museum of Art in Hiroshima.
- › From 2 July to 24 August in the Sakura City Museum of Art in Chiba.

Source: <http://buitenland.vfl.be>

2ND EDITION JAPAN-SQUARE FILM FESTIVAL 30 March - 03 April 2011, Studio Skoop Gent



After a very successful first edition in 2010, Japan-Square Film festival is back with another five days of Japanese film delight in the centre of Gent.

From social documentary over sweet love story to no-nonsense cult, from black-and-white classic to brand new material: through a diverse and surprising film line-up, the Japan-Square Film festival shows Japan and Japanese cinema in all its glory, leaving its clichés far behind.

Place to be is again Studio Skoop, renowned art-house cinema complex in the heart of Gent.

For more details please check the website **www.japan-square.be** and/or subscribe to the newsletter to receive the latest film festival news in your inbox.

Source: Japan Square asbl/vzw



Klaas Verplancke



Carll Cneut

SOLVAY ADVANCED POLYMERS JOINS FORCES WITH MITSUBISHI GAS CHEMICAL ON BIO-BASED POLYAMIDES

Solvay Advanced Polymers, LLC, is collaborating with Mitsubishi Gas Chemical Co. Inc. (MGC), Tokyo, on the development of a unique line of renewably-sourced specialty polymers; as unveiled on the 25th of October 2010. The joint work is initially focused on the introduction of high-temperature bio-based polyamides for high-performance durable applications. With a heat deflection temperature of approximately 270°C for glass-filled compounds, the new polymer will have greater thermal performance than many current bio-based polyamides and polyesters.

Under the collaboration, the two companies plan to build upon MGC's development of a new monomer which will be used to co-develop a new line of specialty polymers. These high-performance polyamides, based on bio-based Sebacic acid derived from castor oil, are expected to be among the highest temperature bio-based polyamides in the industry and will nicely complement Solvay's high-temperature Amodel® polyphthalamide (PPA) product line.

MGC has worked closely with Solvay Advanced Polymers over the last 25 years as a supplier of MXDA monomer used to produce Solvay's Ixef® polyarylamide (PARA).

"This unique collaboration brings together two world-class companies who seek to extend the performance profile of bio-based polyamides," said George Corbin, president of Solvay Advanced Polymers. "This is driven by environmentally-conscious manufacturers who are continually striving for new sustainable alternatives."

Corbin added that Solvay's expertise in polymerizing and compounding high-heat polyamides, being the first company to commercialize this class of polymer in the late 1980's under

the Amodel tradename, and its extensive knowledge and global reach in high-performance plastics bring significant value to the relationship.

"We're very positive about the valuable synergies resulting from this joint development work," said Chikara Morishima, general manager, Aromatic Chemicals Division 1, Aromatic Chemicals Co. for MGC. "The expertise of MGC and its affiliates in aminated monomers and polymers and Solvay's leading global marketing activity in high-temperature polymers make this a strong team capable of opening up new doors in bio-based polyamides."

The new material boasts low moisture retention, a high crystallization rate, excellent wear resistance, and good toughness. Key potential uses include reflow soldering applications, high-temperature automotive parts, and sliding applications (gears).

Solvay and MGC are currently working together to develop an optimized manufacturing process for the new polymer. Meanwhile, MGC has filed numerous patents to cover its extensive development work in resin composition, production, and applications.

The multi-year development project will examine market viability, commercial scale-up, and capital planning.

About Mitsubishi Gas Chemical Co.

Mitsubishi Gas Chemical (MGC), based in Tokyo, is a global supplier of a wide range of materials from methanol, xylene, hydrogen peroxide, and other basic chemicals through to life-science products, metaxylene derivatives, electronic chemicals, and other fine chemicals. The company is divided into four business segments: Natural Gas Chemicals, Aromatic Chemicals, Speciality Chemicals, and Information and Advanced Materials.

About Solvay Advanced Polymers

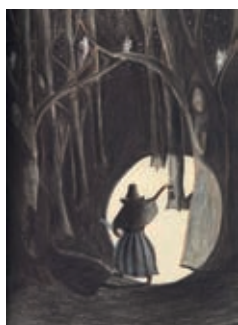
Solvay Advanced Polymers, LLC produces more plastics with more performance than any other company in the world. This gives design engineers worldwide more ways to solve top design challenges in automotive, medical, electronics, aerospace and other demanding industries.

Solvay is an international industrial Group active in Chemistry. It offers a broad range of products and solutions that contribute to improving quality of life. The Group is headquartered in Brussels and employs 17,000 people in over 40 countries. In 2009, its consolidated sales amounted to EUR 8.5 billion. Solvay is listed on the NYSE Euronext stock exchange in Brussels.

Source : Solvay Advanced Polymers



Josse Goffin



Kitty Crowther

news from the members



NOTIFICATION CONCERNING DRIVING LICENSES

The Belgium-Japan Association & Chamber of Commerce informs its members that, since December 2010, the municipalities in Belgium have been informed by the Federal Public Service for Mobility that an agreement on the safe keeping of driving licenses has been made with the Embassy of Japan in Brussels. Japanese driving licenses, that have been exchanged for Belgian driving licenses, may be transferred to the Federal Public Service for Mobility, provided that the person concerned has formally given his approval through a “declaration of consent”. Subsequently, a regular courier service forwards these Japanese driving licenses to the consular section of the Japanese Embassy for safe deposit. Whenever a Japanese citizen, who has opted for this new procedure, needs to retrieve his Japanese driving license on the occasion of a

temporary trip to Japan, he will have to revert to the Japanese embassy that will in turn keep the Belgian driving license for the duration of his visit to Japan.

The Federal Public Service for Mobility therefore wishes to stress again that the new facilitation measure is optional. A Japanese citizen living in or nearby Brussels could consider this personally very helpful, while another person living elsewhere in the country could as well consider that staying with the previous settlement (the municipality as depository of his Japanese driving license) remains more practical for him or her after all. In any case, it is advisable always to have photocopies of both driving licenses, as well as from other essential car documents, at hand.

DAIHATSU TO CEASE SALES OF NEW VEHICLES IN EUROPE

Daihatsu Motor Co., Ltd. (Daihatsu) announces that it has decided to cease sales of new vehicles in Europe as of January 31, 2013. However, Daihatsu will continue after-sales services, including supply of spare parts, for its vehicles beyond that date.

Daihatsu currently sells new vehicles in approximately 10 countries. The decision to discontinue sales of new vehicles in Europe is the result of increasing development costs to comply with regulations in Europe, such as those related to CO₂ emissions, and the appreciation of the yen against the Euro, which have had a negative impact on business results and made selling vehicles manufactured in Japan by Daihatsu no longer

viable. It was made from the perspective of streamlining operations and focusing on specific areas of business.

Notification to distributors and dealers in Europe regarding Daihatsu’s decision to cease sales of new vehicles there began on January 13, 2011.

Reference

- › No. of Daihatsu distributors in Europe: 10
- › No. of Daihatsu dealers in Europe: Approx.1,000 (including 400 exclusive dealers)
- › Sales of Daihatsu vehicles in Europe

Unit: thousand units

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Sales of Daihatsu	(11.9%)	(15.0%)	(16.3%)	(14.8%)	(11.0%)
Vehicles in Europe	34.5	46.6	58.6	57.7	36.6

*Daihatsu survey; figures in parentheses indicate sales of Daihatsu vehicles in Europe as a percentage of total overseas sales

Source: www.daihatsu.com/news



JCO'S 2011 PUBLIC SEMINARS

Join **Japan Consulting Office (JCO)** for a one-day seminar designed to strengthen cultural understanding, communications and interactions in the workplace.

You will learn:

- › The fundamentals of European or Japanese culture and their influence on business
- › To develop your communication skills
- › To better fulfill Japanese expectations and to negotiate and influence decision-making (for Europeans)
- › The basics of managing and motivating local staff (for Japanese)

news from the members

IMEC MEETS JAPANESE EXECUTIVES TO DISCUSS NANO-ELECTRONICS ADVANCES FOR A CONNECTED SUSTAINABLE WORLD

The Belgian nanoelectronics research institute imec organized for the 11th time its annual executive seminar on November 16 in Tokyo. Imec welcomed more than 260 participants from over 85 companies and institutes. Japanese and imec executives discussed advances in nanotechnology for innovations targeting a better life in a sustainable society.

The whole world is talking about the grand challenges of the 21st century. How are we going to develop a prosperous and sustainable world, where we cleverly consume renewable energy, and where the modern diseases can be treated at a very early stage or even prevented, where healthcare is affordable to anyone, and where there are no borders in connecting with family and friends. These are huge challenges, and the nanoelectronics industry is worldwide joining forces to provide solutions.

Nanoelectronics will play an essential role in tackling the climate change and the depletion of the earth's sources (renewable energy), the challenges of an ageing population (increasing cost of healthcare), a sustainable mobility, efficient communication etc.

To create a sustainable earth, there is an urgent need for renewable energy sources such as solar energy. Photovoltaics is rapidly becoming the fastest growing semiconductor industry consuming half of the world's silicon production today. Also energy harvesters, converting vibrational or thermal energy from the environment in electricity to power electronic devices, and reducing the power consumption of electronics are essential in tackling global warming.

Communication is evolving towards cheap person-centric nomadic communication which will ultimately enable that virtual communities will be experienced as real life.

The globalization of unhealthy lifestyles, rapid unplanned urbanization, and the ageing of populations contribute to a rise in chronic diseases. The merging of nano, bio and ICT will play an important role to tackle these challenges and the related rising healthcare costs by developing remote health monitor-



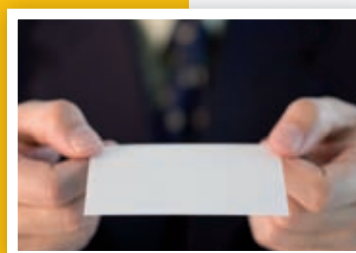
ing systems, improved diagnostics and personalized medicines.

All these fantastic applications will certainly need chips with teraflop and terabit compute and storage capabilities. Further scaling of chip technology will be indispensable to realize this. Innovative use of new materials, device architectures and processing techniques are indispensable to continue scaling and thus increasing the functionality and compute power of chips.

As a leading player in nanoelectronics research and development, imec aims at playing a role model to realize this vision of a sustainable future/society. Imec gives the worldwide industry a cost-effective vehicle to accelerate the development of a sustainable world by setting up joint research programs. Imec's research programs are based on a sharing of cost, risk, talent and IP between the partners and imec's research teams. As part of the agreement, residents from your company or institute may come and join imec's research teams. In this way, research is accelerated and companies get an in-depth understanding of the new technologies. Several Japanese companies including Panasonic, Renesas, TEL, JSR, Kaneka... collaborate already with imec. With its annual executive seminar in Tokyo, imec gave its partners and potential partners an update on its strategy and research results. The seminar was concluded with a reception at the new Embassy in Tokyo.

Source: Imec

Our seminars are practical, relevant and interactive. You will leave the day with tools to be more efficient in your daily work and communications with your Japanese or European colleagues. BJA members can enjoy a reduction on the seminar fee. Ask for your BJA members' discount! For dates, locations and seminar content, visit: www.JapanConsultingOffice.com/seminar



news from the members

INTRODUCTION TO THE TEAM DIAGNOSTIC™ ASSESSMENT

We often hear from our clients , ” We have excellent professionals in our company. Only if we could communicate better and work more effectively as team”.

It is not easy to build effective teams in today’s business reality. Workplace is a maze of nested teams: intact, cross-functional, project, virtual, cross-cultural, and the pressure is on teams to form, perform and reform at an astonishing rate.

We have found Team Diagnostic™ Assessment (TDA) (www.teamdiagnosticassessment.com) as an effective tool to support our clients in creating effective cross-cultural teams and have become an Authorized Facilitator of TDA. This is a very unique tool to reveal the strengths and challenges of teams in achieving their goals.

The results of TDA will give us the concrete starting points and help us set measurable targets for the team development. After the team development process, we can use TDA again to see where and how much the development targets are met.

For more information about Team Diagnostic™ Assessment, **please contact Masako Kato** of Many Truths (www.manytruths.nl) at info@manytruths.nl or +31 (0) 6 13310089.

BELL CEREMONY

On 23 December 2010, Mr YO-KOTA, Japanese Ambassador to Belgium rang the Opening Bell at NYSE Euronext Brussels to celebrate the Emperor of Japan’s birthday.

Source: Embassy of Japan in Belgium

The BJA would like to extend a warm welcome to its newest members:

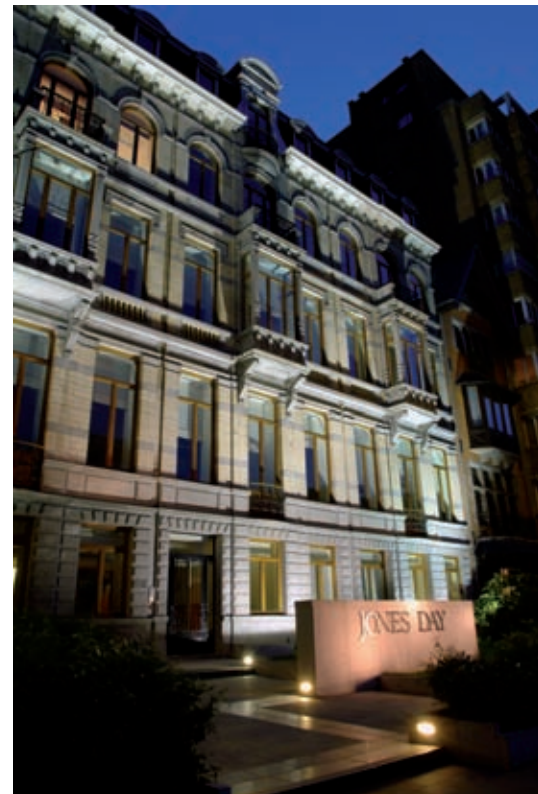
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Jones Day

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Jones Day is a global law firm with more than 2,500 lawyers, including over 400 in Europe and 200 in Asia, located in 37 centers of business and finance throughout the world. Ranked among the world’s best and most integrated law firms, and perennially ranked among the best in client service, Jones Day acts as principal outside counsel to, or provides significant legal representation for, more than half of the Fortune Global 500.

The Jones Day network provides seamless service to our Japanese clients. In particular, our Brussels office has been representing Japanese corporations for over twenty years, mainly in the areas of mergers & acquisitions, competition law and commercial contracts. Several of Japan’s largest corporations are longstanding clients of the office. Jones Day’s Tokyo office, with over 60 attorneys, is amongst the largest of the global firms in the Japanese market, providing strong local law capabilities. With our broad-based expertise in Europe, Japan and across the globe and our continued commitment to the Japan practice, Jones Day is ideally placed to advise Japanese companies with operations in Belgium, across Europe and beyond.



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Partner-in-charge / Brussels Office and
Mr Thomas De Muyck, Partner



We also welcome the upgrade of a past corporate member to sponsor member

ING

ING Japan focus



It takes more than a Tokyo branch to be a truly Japan focused bank.

At ING Belgium, a dedicated team of relationship managers tends to the business with Japanese companies.

The Japan desk was set up in the late seventies when many new Japanese investors set up operations in Belgium, often their first footprints in Europe. At the time it was a language issue and also the quality of service that needed special attention.

Since then many Japanese companies have set up a wide European network of sales and manufacturing entities. The Japan team of ING Belgium adapted to the trend by extending its mandate to cover all of Europe.

Japanese companies also broadened their requirements to highly specialised services, in particular European cash pooling, but also leasing, corporate advisory, supply chain finance, etc.

Still the basic services continue to get the special attention. That includes the assistance to Japanese expatriates in Belgium for their private banking services.

ING's Japan team:

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TRANSLATING KNOWLEDGE

Yamagata Europe was founded in 1998 as a subsidiary of the Japanese Yamagata Corporation to serve Yamagata's multinational clients in Europe. We offer a variety of team-based services for handling technical documentation and marketing communication projects from A to Z: desktop publishing, translation and localisation, terminology management, printing and logistics.

Yamagata firmly believes in the customer-oriented approach: years of experience gained in serving the documentation divisions of our Japanese customers and striving for ever-higher levels of quality have resulted in our automation of the "human processes" wherever possible. Our drive to satisfy customers has accelerated the development of multiple tools that have proven to improve the workflow and reduce costs. These have now been assimilated into our integrated Total Quality Approach. This is what allows us to be successful in providing thorough and efficient services to a highly demanding market.

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