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EDITORIAL

By Kurt Leuridan, CEO of Tokai Optecs and BJA Sponsor Member

“When you come out of the storm, you won’t be the same person who walked in. That’s what this storm’s all about.”

This quote is not from me, it is from Haruki Murakami, my favorite Japanese writer. This quote gives me hope in these turbulent times. The COVID-19 storm is still very much alive but I know that it will have changed our organization, Tokai Optecs in Belgium forever.

In March 2020 we lost more than 80% of our turnover in less than one week. Our production of high end lenses came to a complete stop because there was almost no demand anymore. We produce high end lenses for the whole EMEA region, country after country imposed the closure of optical shops.



As a family company the last thing we wanted to do was lay off people or betray our family values to keep the company floating. On the contrary, we decided that it is now, in these turbulent times, that we have to invest in our customers and our staff. All key personnel kept on coming to the factory and kept the distribution going of the remaining demand by our valued customers in Belgium and our distributors all over the EMEA – region. Marketing, finance and HR all worked from home.

We distributed face masks and gloves to hospitals in the region of Leuven when there was a national lack of health care supplies. We also supplied health care material to our customers, national and international, so they could open their shop in complete safety.

These are the small things we could do for our staff and customers. A more impactful decision was putting the R&D – department to work. In this new COVID -19 world Europe was confronted with face masks for the first time. As a lens manufacturer we suddenly got the urgent demand to find a solution for foggy lenses. In light speed my Japanese partner, Mr Furuzawa, came with the solution: Defog lenses. These lenses do not fog up when you wear a face mask. We had an enormous impact in the press with this solution. Again we put family values first and distributed more than 100 frames with Defog lenses to health care staff of different hospitals. These lenses are still in high demand and not only in the health care sector. Everybody all over Europe is wearing a face mask and is confronted with this foggy lens problem.

Not only did we put R&D to work, we also did a close follow up on our competitors.

keep reading on p.10 »



Mr Kurt Leuridan

In this issue

- 2 Remote Work
- 4 BJA Webinar: Belgium and Japan
- 5 New EU intra-corporate transferees scheme in Belgium
- 6 Fragomen: Covid-19
- 8 BJA Webinar: Brexit
- 9 EU-Japan news
- 10 News for the members
- 12 Moonshot & Horizon Europe
- 16 News from the members
- 23 Personalia

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Remote Work

By Koen Beckers, Partner, and Dieter Kuipers, Senior Manager, Deloitte Belgium

Remote work: a trend to stay

The global mobility landscape has been constantly evolving. Gone are the days that traditional long term assignments are the main pillars of global mobility programs. Over the last decades, the long term assignment (which certainly in a cross-continental context was the default assignment structure) was complemented with shorter term assignments and frequent business travel. Together with the rise in technological advancement, we have seen the rise of new working scenarios, like virtual assignments and remote workers.

Enabling the workforce to do more parts of their job virtually has substantially reduced the need for being somewhere physically. Client meetings, team discussions, co-creation sessions, but also feedback and coaching conversation – even up to coffee breaks - can be held virtually. This led to more personally driven work scenario requests as well as situations in which team leads are setting-up their teams scattered around the globe. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated this trend and made it apparent to organizations as well as to their workforce that remote work is no longer something of the future but is here to stay. In the war for talent, a remote work strategy might just make the difference.

Remote work: cultural aspects

Lacking of (adaptation of) digital tools, skepticism about working from home as well as concerns regarding data security have long time hindered the shift to truly working remotely. But also culture plays an important part.

As with many things, the COVID-19 pandemic changed the landscape. In Europe, part of the workforce started working from home (many for the first time due to the COVID-19 pandemic), also in countries where this traditionally was not the case. But also in Japan, where working a substantial number of hours in the office, socializing with colleagues (after work) to create strong re-

lationships are even more embedded in the working culture, remote work offers opportunities. During the pandemic, an important part of the Japanese workforce worked remotely – and prefers to continue to do so - but for many it is still not an option (some for practical reasons like a lack of home work infrastructure, others due to peer pressure or other cultural reservations).

Remote work: exposure and long-term challenges

As more individuals will work remotely, and more organizations will be faced herewith, it warrants to look at the exposures and challenges.

Can one individual disrupt the landscape? Assume an assignee from the Japanese HQ to a Belgian group entity gets stuck in his home country due to COVID-19. He continues to work for the benefit of the Belgian company, but from his home in Tokyo. This disconnect between where the employee normally should work and where he's actually working could create an international tax exposure.

Since the physical presence of the employee is the starting point in determining tax and social security obligations, this prolonged stay could create compliance obligations. Does the assignee become taxable in Japan? Does he trigger corporate tax exposure for his Belgian employer in Japan? Should he be paying social security contributions in Belgium and/or Japan? Does he have the necessary documents to work? One individual, working remotely, can trigger a range of issues. With the changing landscape, organizations are potentially faced with a multitude of individuals in such a situation.

Next to the initial challenges that organizations are faced with, as they cope with the exposure triggered by the remote working individuals, they need to focus on the long-term impact. As it becomes apparent that many jobs can be execut-

ed from anywhere, organizations need to think about creating a framework to govern this. This is a complex exercise, as this impacts virtually all aspects of the organization.

How do we foster culture and a sense of belonging when part of the teams are virtual? How do we create high performing teams and provide impactful trainings? How do we map which function can be exercised remotely and which not? How can we protect our data? How do we manage all the regulatory aspects? There is no one-size-fits-all approach. This is an interlinked exercise that needs to be addressed by all stakeholders.

Remote work: strategy in practice

In practice, three types of approaches can be distinguished within organizations today, when it comes to managing remote worker compliance:

- › “Acknowledge it” organizations are mainly concerned with the safety and security of their employees in view of the pandemic. They tackle the individual issues on an ad-hoc basis and are for now, not worrying about the bigger picture.
- › “Track it” organizations are already conducting a preliminary analysis to assess the magnitude of the risks by collecting data to understand the population size, the different remote working locations, the timeline etc.
- › “Manage it” organizations are conducting a thorough analysis to assess the risk exposure and impact on both the business and the employees across locations as well as tracking regulatory updates applicable on the remote working population.

Whilst many organizations have already moved from the “Acknowledge it” phase (dealing with the pandemic in the best way possible) to the “Track it” phase (getting a grasp of the overall situation), the real challenge for the months ahead is to move the needle further.

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The future of work trends will require organizations who are heavily leveraging digital platforms to allow their workforce to work anywhere at any time. It will be important for organizations to take action now and adopt a Future of Work mindset in order to be more resilient to cope with uncertain times and therefore being able to adapt and thrive.



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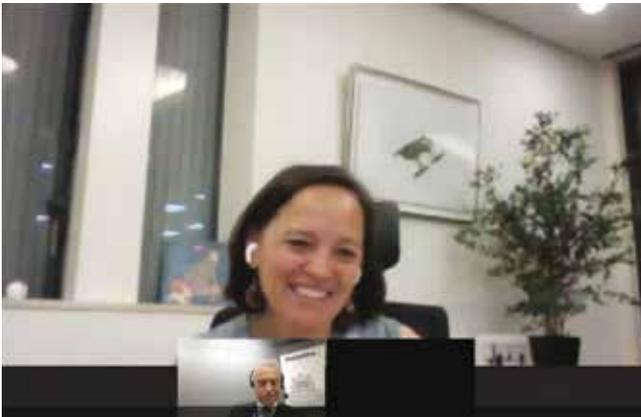
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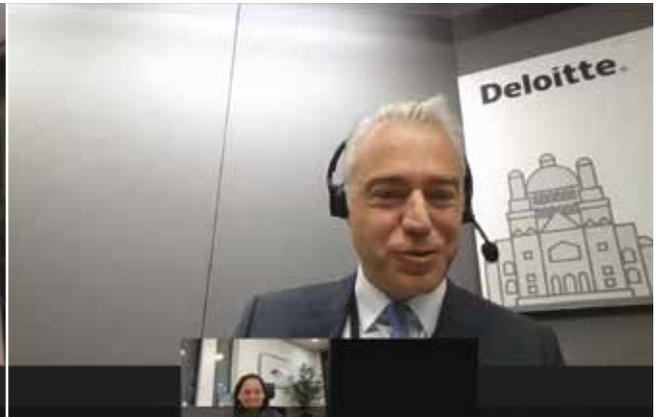
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Belgium and Japan – An Ongoing Friendship 日本・ベルギー両国の長年にわたる友好関係

Wednesday, 16 September 2020



HE Ambassador Roxane de Bilderling, Belgian Ambassador to Japan



Wim Eynatten, BJA Legal & Tax Committee Chair and Partner, Deloitte

In cooperation with Deloitte Academy, the Belgium-Japan Association & Chamber of Commerce was honored to invite all to attend an exclusive dialogue between HE Ambassador Roxane de Bilderling, Belgian Ambassador to Japan and Wim Eynatten, BJA Legal & Tax Committee Chair and Partner, Deloitte.

During this webinar, HE Ambassador de Bilderling and Mr Eynatten addressed the situation of the Belgian companies and individuals in Japan, the support the Embassy offers, and the current Belgium-Japan relations in these challenging times. Additionally they exchanged viewpoints on the trade flows between our two countries, the governmental measures to support exporters and investors in Japan and Belgium, the ‘new way’ of working on the post COVID-19, Brexit, and Tokyo Olympics, etc.

After this exchange of views, questions from the audience on topics such as travel restrictions in Belgium and Japan, varying approaches to the current crisis and tax issues were addressed by HE. Ambassador de Bilderling and Mr Eynatten.

Ambassador De Bilderling closed the event on an optimistic note, highlighting the durable, friendly and all-encompassing nature of Belgium-Japan relations and the huge potential for people and businesses alike.

The BJA would like to express its gratitude to Deloitte Academy for hosting and sponsoring this event, offering now the opportunity for you to listen to this recorded webinar on demand: <https://event.on24.com/eventRegistration/EventLobbyServlet?target=reg20.jsp&referrer=&eventid=2587700&sessionId=1&key=3BB5682F6557D3CCFA228948135147Fo®Tag=&sourcepage=register#>



The new EU intra-corporate transferees scheme in Belgium: what to expect and how to benefit from it?

By Andreia Ghimis – Senior Immigration Consultant and Jo Antoons – Managing Partner, Fragomen

A new and improved immigration route has become available for assignments to Belgium, the EU Intra-Corporate Transferees (EU ICT) scheme. While there remain uncertainties linked to the issuance of this new EU ICT permit, Belgium is finally in a position to compete with neighbouring countries to attract foreign talent and investments. Let's delve deeper into the particulars of this new EU ICT permit and why it is important for Belgian business.

The EU ICT permit in brief

Although it is similar to the EU Blue Card, this new permit's innovative nature rests in the intra-EU mobility rights attached to it. On a practical level, this means that an EU ICT permit obtained in a European country opens work rights for its holder in another European country.

The EU ICT permit applies to qualified foreign managers, specialists and trainees who are sent for more than 90 days from a company outside the European Union to a company belonging to the same group located in Belgium. As its name makes clear, this new immigration scheme originates from EU legislation and, consequently, is available in all EU countries (except Denmark and Ireland).

The type of mobility this permit allows is two-fold: short-term mobility (less than 90 days in any 180-day period per country) and long-term mobility (more than 90 days in any 180-day period per country; but less than the time spent in the country which issued the main EU ICT permit). Although some administrative steps (notifications or permit applications) do have to be taken to ensure the work is conducted in a compliant manner in the 'mobility' countries, they are less burdensome than obtaining an additional work permit.

Let's take a look at a practical example: the case of Joe, a Canadian national who is an IT project manager locally hired by his employer in Canada. Consider that

Joe is transferred on a two-year assignment to Belgium to a company entity of the Canadian employer. During his assignment, he has to travel to Italy and Germany to help with the development and implementation of a new software at company entities located in these two countries. His trips last between one and two months on average. With an EU ICT permit issued by Belgian authorities, Joe can travel and work in Italy and Germany by means of a simple notification. No approval is required from Italian and German authorities. Thus, there are no government fees, no additional document requirements, and most importantly, no waiting time before the work can start.

This is a major improvement, especially if these trips go beyond what is permitted under the business visitor status. The EU ICT permit ensures full compliance while having speed on the ground, driving cost efficiency and administrative simplification for foreign nationals who have work responsibilities in various EU Member States either simultaneously or who must perform consecutive assignments in different countries.

Working in several EU countries with one permit: a smooth process?

Despite the innovative nature of the mobility rights, challenges exist for full effective use of the EU ICT permit. As such, a common and consistent approach by all EU Member States on the social security liability of the transferees who make use of intra-EU mobility rights is required. In addition, some EU countries also require Posted Worker notifications to be submitted next to mobility notifications creating an additional burden for employers. Moreover, in some countries there are restrictions on the work at client site. Fragomen has already flagged these issues to European and national policy makers. We are closely monitoring developments and continue to push for the improvement of this high potential immigration scheme.

Can employers already start applying for EU ICT permits in Belgium?

While the Belgian EU ICT permits cannot be issued yet as further legislation is required, it will not be possible for Belgian EU ICT permit holders to work in other EU Member States (until they receive the actual EU ICT permit). Nevertheless, we advise employers to start applying for EU ICT permits as soon as the application process opens in October 2020.

Initially, another type of single permit will be granted, which will need to be exchanged for an EU ICT permit once available. However, if companies still opt for the standard single permit instead (for example, a Single Permit of Highly Skilled employees), the non-EU nationals will have to leave Belgium and apply for an EU ICT permit from outside the EU should they desire to obtain one with the objective of benefiting from intra-EU mobility rights (EU ICT permit application can only be filed whilst the non-EU national is outside of the EU).

Belgium: a resource pool country

The EU ICT permit brings significant advantages, however, its implementation in Belgium remains incomplete. It is important for employers to know that there is no "one size fits all" solution for their mobility needs within the EU. Strategic workforce planning is required to overcome obstacles and minimize compliance risks. Nevertheless, with this new immigration scheme in combination with a steep decrease in government lead times over the course of the last months, Belgium becomes a serious candidate amongst EU countries where resource pools can be created in view of deployment to other EU jurisdictions. This is even more relevant in contexts such as the current COVID-19 mobility landscape where mobility amongst EU countries is privileged over that originating from non-EU states.

ARTICLE

COVID-19: Belgium Removes Border Restrictions and Quarantine for Travellers From “White Listed” Countries

By Alexander De Nys – Manager and Jo Antoons – Managing Partner, Fragomen, Members of the BJA Legal & Tax Committee

Throughout the course of the past months, Belgium has kept a conservative position on the EU recommendations for border reopening. Additionally, travel from outside the EU was highly restricted. Despite a continued increase of COVID-19 infection in Belgium through early October and, more broadly, Europe, several measures have been taken over the last weeks to gradually allow more travellers to enter Belgium coming from outside the EU.

Since 20 August 2020, the Belgian government continued to seek further alignment with the EU recommendations and announced new guidelines that would formalise the broadening of the scope of workers considered highly skilled essential workers, exempt from the travel ban. Updated guidelines published applicable as of 11 September, further make official solutions for both short- and long-term travellers (being less or more than 90 days in any 180-day period).

From 23 September onward, Belgium has foreseen a removal of border restrictions and quarantine requirement for all travellers coming from so-called “White Listed” countries. Travellers coming from these “safe” countries are permitted to travel to Belgium regardless of the travel purpose, provided they comply with standard visa and entry criteria.

These countries originate from the listing originally issued under the Council Recommendation of June 30. Countries currently included are: Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Rwanda, South Korea, Thailand or Uruguay (NOTE: this list subject to change – check <https://diplomatie.belgium.be/nl> for a most updated version).

Finally – as applicable from October 1 – a shorter quarantine of 7 days, compared to 14 days for those still subject to.

Long-term travellers from countries that are not “White Listed”

All foreign nationals who qualify for a single permit, based on a work authorization category exempt from labour market testing, are automatically included in the category of essential workers. These include specialised technicians and shortage occupations in the Flanders and Walloon regions of Belgium. All foreign nationals who have been issued an Annex 46 in the procedure toward obtaining a Single Permit will qualify for the VISA D and entry into Belgium. The same continues to apply to EU Blue Card applicants.

Short-term travel from countries that are not “White Listed”

Belgium has also included an important exception on the



Jo Antoons

Alexander De Nys

travel ban for short-term travellers who can demonstrate the essential character of their activities in Belgium. In order to meet these criteria, travellers must obtain an “Attestation of Essential Travel” (a template is available on the website of the Immigration Office) from the relevant Diplomatic Post. To obtain the attestation, one must submit the documents that prove the essential nature of the activities, such as a work permit B, documents supporting the work authorisation exemption and statement(s) from the employer. We recommend that all travellers obtain this attestation to avoid queries by airline companies or Belgian border inspection services.

Finally, it is also important to mention that self-employed workers will no longer be subject to the travel ban if they can carry the relevant VISA D and/or “Attestation of Essential Travel.”

It remains important that all travellers into Belgium complete the Public Health Passenger Locator Form (PLF), with an included self-assessment test, 48 hours prior to arriving in Belgium. Proof that the PLF has been completed will need to be given to the airline when boarding the plane. Upon arrival in Belgium, travellers with a high score on the self-assessment test are required to quarantine for seven days and get a test on the fifth day. Note that the quarantine can only be lifted to fulfil the essential purpose of the trip and to the extent that this activity cannot be postponed to a later date.

After months of highly restricted access options to Belgium, these adjusted guidelines bring a wind of change and enable companies to reconsider the remobilisation of foreign national staff, which is crucial for business recovery and economic growth.

Opportunities for workforce planning – what companies should do:

1. Keep up to date with government measures. These measures are constantly changing and windows of opportunity for enhanced mobility can appear. It is crucial to develop a broad awareness of the restrictions, as well as a deep understanding of business solutions.
2. Develop creative remobilisation strategies. As there are variances among EU countries with respect to border openings, employers can use the more “relaxed” countries, such as Belgium, as entry points into the EU.
3. Explore EU-wide permits/facilitated immigration routes. European legislation and European Court of Justice case law provide facilitated routes for non-EU nationals to work in more than one EU country. This enables companies to explore

the full potential of their EU-based workforce. However, it remains challenging to bring employees from outside the EU.

4. It is essential to remain compliant. The work and travel patterns of a company’s employees may adjust substantially to the current circumstances: working from home and/or client site, furlough schemes and more frequent business travel inside the EU. Employers must remain vigilant to the employment, immigration and social security legislation requirements with which they may have to comply in this new landscape.

For further information and advice on navigating the immigration landscape and impacts of COVID-19, please contact Jo Antoons (<https://www.fragomen.com/people/jo-antoons>) or Alexander De Nys (<https://www.fragomen.com/people/alexander-de-nys>).

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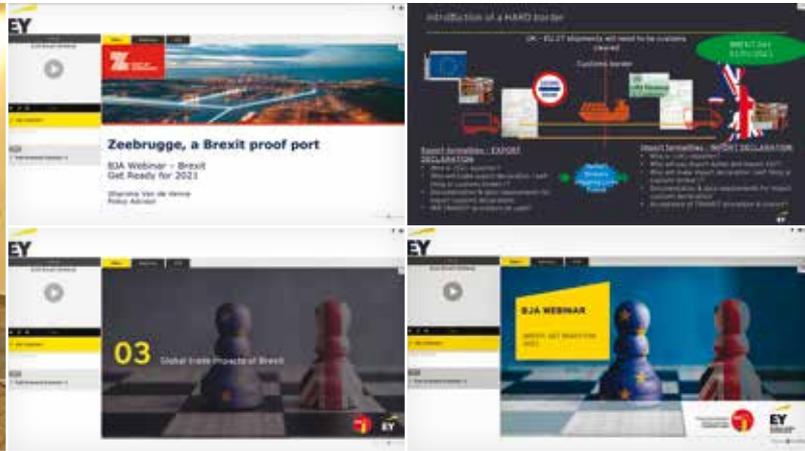


Brexit: Get Ready for 2021

Thursday, 8 October 2020



Behind the scene at EY Brussels



On 1 January 2021, the United Kingdom will officially cut ties with the European Union. With Brexit negotiations in an impasse it remains uncertain how the future trading relationship between the EU and the UK will look like. A hard border Brexit is now becoming more realistic than ever. This of course will have an enormous impact on international companies for whom trade between the EU and UK and Northern Ireland will become more restrictive, cumbersome and above all more costly.

Thanks to the generous support of EY, the BJA EU Committee invited the members to attend a comprehensive webinar on Brexit, providing them with the latest state of play from the Brexit negotiations and with global trade insights both from an EU and UK perspective.

After some opening words by Danielle Vermaelen, BJA EU Committee Chair and Partner Assurance, EY Belgium, George Riddell,

Director of Trade Strategy, EY UK gave the latest development regarding the Brexit negotiations. Following, Joffrey Decock, Senior Manager Global Trade, EY Belgium explained in detail the trade and custom implications of the various Brexit scenarios.

The second part of the seminar allowed two representatives from the industry, Ghanima Van de Venne, Policy Advisor at the Port of Zeebrugge and Frank Cals, Trade Compliance Manager at Bridgestone Europe NV/SA to provide testimonials on how their respective companies prepared for Brexit at all levels. The event was closed by a Q&A session moderated by Mrs Vermaelen.

This event was kindly sponsored and hosted by EY, offering now the opportunity for you to listen to this recorded webinar on demand: https://globalmeet.webcasts.com/starthere.jsp?ei=1353204&tp_key=cd909cc2e8



JAPAN-EU LEADERS TELEPHONE TALK

On 6 October, commencing at around 6:10 p.m. for approximately 20 minutes, H.E. Mr SUGA Yoshihide, Prime Minister of Japan, held a telephone talk with H.E. Dr Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission. The overview of the talk is as follows.

1. At the outset, Prime Minister Suga stated that the EU is Japan's important partner, sharing fundamental values, and that the Japan-EU relationship has become stronger than ever under the Japan-EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) and Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA). In response, President von der Leyen extended her congratulations on Prime Minister Suga's appointment to the office and expressed her willingness to work with Prime Minister Suga on further enhancing the bilateral relationship between Japan and the EU.
2. Both leaders affirmed their intention to closely cooperate on international affairs, including East Asia, toward the realization of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" so as to ensure stability and prosperity of the international community and shared their view to cooperate in addressing issues related to North Korea, including the abductions issue.
3. The two leaders further shared the view to collaborate to play leading roles on various issues such as measures against COVID-19 including development and distribution of vaccines, digital transformation, environment and climate change.

Source:
www.mofa.go.jp/erp/ep/page6e_000217.html

EU-JAPAN JOINT NAVAL EXERCISE

On 5-6 October, the European Union and Japan carried out a joint naval exercise in the Gulf of Aden off the coast of Somalia. The exercise involved a warship supporting maritime patrol aircraft of EU NAVFOR Somalia Operation Atalanta and a vessel of the Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force patrolling the region against piracy. The exercise confirmed the commitment of the EU and Japan and the coordination between their respective forces in the fight against piracy.

The EU and Japan are committed to upholding the rules-based international order through practical maritime cooperation, including cooperation on freedom of navigation and overflight, to secure sea-lanes of communication and to protect the global maritime domain against all types of threat, traditional and

non-traditional. In this context, the EU and Japan reaffirm the universal and unified character of the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, which sets out the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out. The EU and Japan are determined to pursue and enhance their cooperation on freedom of navigation and maritime security through future training initiatives and operational activities at sea. Furthermore, they stand ready to extend their lasting cooperation in this area so as to include also other partners in the Indian Ocean and in the Pacific region.

Source: https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/86483/eu-japan-joint-naval-exercise_en

NEW EU-JAPAN TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER INITIATIVE TO START FROM OCTOBER 2020

The EU-Japan Technology Transfer Helpdesk (the "Helpdesk"), one of the services of the EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation which aims at supporting EU and Japanese companies, organisations, and individuals to search for partners as well as to help better understand and facilitate tech transfer transactions, is launching a new initiative by collaborating with SHIGA International Patent Office ("Shiga") starting October 2020. Shiga is one of the largest Japanese intellectual property firms covering a wide

range of technical fields across various industries and well-versed in diverse IP practices of many countries. The Helpdesk and Shiga will work together on a new endeavour to facilitate partnerships among universities and startups/SMEs from the EU, and large corporates from Japan. The initiative aims at filling the gap between technology creators from the EU and technology developers based in Japan. The program will allow technology transfer managers, researchers, and entrepreneurs from the EU to pitch on-

line in front of an audience of IP and R&D managers (based in Japan), to promote licensing and R&D collaboration opportunities between the EU and Japan. Technologies will be selected by the Helpdesk and Shiga and presented to the audience by geography, institution, or industry. Further details on how to participate in this initiative will be released in the following weeks on the websites of the organisations.

Source: <https://www.eu-japan.eu/news/new-eu-japan-technology-transfer-initiative-start-october-2020?e-news=2904>

news for the members

UNIQLO STORE AT PORTE DE NAMUR IN BRUSSELS

Japanese global apparel retailer UNIQLO officially opened the doors of its fourth store in Belgium on the 4-10 Chaussée d'Ixelles in Brussels after a brief ribbon cutting ceremony on Wednesday September 2 at 10am in line with the safety measures as communicated by the Belgian government. With a total sales area of approximately 1,300 square meters, the UNIQLO Porte de Namur store offers apparel for women, men, kids, babies and the full line-up of the 20FW Ines de la Fressange collection. In the newly built store you will also find a colorful mural on the staircase

wall, designed and painted by the Brussels-based artist duo Hell'o Collective. Margaux Baert, the paper artist and craft designer from Ixelles, made the decoration for the store's sustainability corner. With the opening of the new store, an even wider range of customers will be able to shop the UNIQLO LifeWear concept of simple, high-quality clothing made for everyone's style. In addition, the company has teamed up with several local partners with the aim to support the local community. Kaman Leung, Chief Operating Officer of UNIQLO Belgium, commented on the

announcement: *“As a global brand it is important to value and respect the local people and places that we touch as a company, now even more with the challenges that our society is facing. We are all connected and we need to cherish these connections and strengthen them. By engaging local stakeholders and partnering with inspirational people from the neighborhood, we want to make our contribution and give something back to the community.”*

Source: Uniqlo Belgium



>> keep reading from p.1

What did they do, how did they react to this fast changing world? Some competitors reacted very hard. They closed down factory plants and laid off staff. They did this in the very beginning of the crisis. This gave us the opportunity to talk to people who have a long history in our industry and who have valuable contacts in our market. These people were helpless in the middle of a worldwide pandemic, sometimes stuck in a foreign country or locked up in their home without a job but with a family to take care of and bills still floating in. When these people reached out to us, we were not afraid to invest in them, to trust them and to start building a relationship. One of these contacts

resulted in what we have now called Tokai Optical MEA: our new sales office in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates. In the middle of this worldwide pandemic, Tokai started a new sales office. We found people who believe in our brand, technology and company values. From this office we will coordinate our sales in Middle East and Africa.

You can see that Mr Murakami is right, we will come out of this storm differently than we entered it.

By Kurt Leuridan, CEO of Tokai Optecs and BJA Sponsor Member

DISCOVERY OF EUROGENTEC'S FACILITIES BY MINISTER WILLY BORSUS AND AWEX MEMBERS

Eurogentec welcomed Minister Borsus and AWEX representatives to visit the new facilities and learn more about the COVID-19 current activity and future development plan.

Lieven Janssens (CEO) introduced Eurogentec's activities, technologies and future development plan. They also had an interesting discussion about how we help the life science and pharma community to get rid of the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

Beside producing a lot of qPCR reagents for COVID-19 testing, they participate actively in the development and manufacturing of new vaccine generation for clinical trials and commercialization: DNA vaccines and RNA vaccines.

The participants visited the new GMP production facilities equipped with a 2200 L fermentor for large scale biomanufacturing of therapeutic molecules. It was a good opportunity to let all know how much Eurogentec appreciates the collaborative support of the Walloon region and AWEX.

Source: https://www.eurogentec.com/en/news/37_discovery-of-our-facilities-by-minister-willy-borsus-and-awex-members?fbclid=IwAR3PVvgo8ZB7Sxu7FZz_0-VtnfCuZiXucEy8uE8FNppgZ6o1YfRmfpIlg

ECOVADIS GRANTS NITTO BELGIUM A GOLD STATUS FOR SUSTAINABILITY



Genk - Nitto Belgium has received a Gold status from EcoVadis, a sustainability tool fostering transparency and sustainability in global supply chains (www.ecovadis.com). This result puts Nitto Belgium among the top-5% performers of more than 60,000 companies enrolled in this program.

EcoVadis assesses the sustainability performance in four dimensions "Environment", "Labor and Human Rights", "Ethics" and "Sustainable Procurement". It concerns a self-assessment

which is subsequently audited based upon submitted documentation.

Based upon the scorecard issued by EcoVadis, Nitto Belgium is scoring well in all 4 domains with a strong performance in terms of Environmental Governance and Ethics.

Stefan Maussen, Managing Director of Nitto Belgium: "I'm proud that we have achieved the Gold status from EcoVadis. Job well done by all our colleagues. Sustainability has become an imperative for all companies. Next to making profits also social, compliancy and ecological issues must be addressed in strategy and daily operations. Pioneers in sustainability will be the companies being

able to attract the brightest talents and team-up in the most innovative partnerships."

Sam Strijckmans, President & CEO of Nitto EMEA: "For the region this is only a first milestone in terms of CSR governance improvement. As a next step Nitto EMEA aims to achieve a Gold status for all Nitto companies in the region by early 2023."

> EcoVadis website:

<http://www.ecovadis.com>

> The EcoVadis rating system explained:

<https://youtu.be/Zeiz6byhxTU>

Source: <https://www.nitto.com/eu/en/press/2020/0916.jsp>

BELGIAN RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS TREATMENT FROM BELGIUM APPROVED IN JAPAN

Galapagos NV, a biopharma company based in Mechelen announced on 25 September 2020 that the Japanese authorities have granted regulatory approval of Jyseleca®, a pharmaceutical for the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis (RA). The drug was co-developed by Galapagos and its American partner Gilead, and will be commercialised in Japan by Eisai.

About Galapagos

Galapagos discovers and develops small molecule medicines with novel modes of action, three of which show promising

patient results and are currently in late-stage development in multiple diseases. The company's pipeline comprises Phase 3 through to discovery programs in inflammation, fibrosis, osteoarthritis and other indications. Galapagos' ambition is to become a leading global biopharmaceutical company focused on the discovery, development and commercialization of innovative medicines. More information at www.glp.com.

Source: <https://ml-eu.globenewswire.com/Resource/Download/9646898d-215c-4334-8677-31c635a44724>

Moonshot & Horizon Europe: Common goals / mutually reinforcing research and innovation

By Danielle Vermaelen, Partner at EY and BJA EU Committee Chair

The Moonshot Research and Development Programme

Japan, such as the rest of the world, is faced with many issues, amongst others, an aging and declining population, extreme natural disasters, and global climate change. These issues should be addressed and resolved by science and technology so that we may bring a better future to society. The consideration that outside Japan, the European Union, the United States, and China aimed at introducing disruptive innovation by announcing their ambitions and setting their goals for resolving these social issues by accelerating high-risk/high-impact R&D by a much larger scale of investment than Japan did, led to the launch by the Cabinet Office of the Government of Japan, of the Moonshot Research and Development Programme. The Programme aims to create disruptive innovations from Japan and promotes challenging R&D based on revolutionary concepts that are not simply the extension of existing technologies, i.e. moonshots. The Moonshot Goals and concepts are to attract researchers to bring solutions to issues with a profound impact once resolved.

The National Research and Development Agencies tasked with this challenging R&D initiative are the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST), the New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organization (NEDO), Bio-oriented Technology Research Advancement Institution / National Agriculture and Food Research Organization (BRAIN/NARO), and the Japan Agency for Medical Research and Development (AMED).

The European Framework Programmes

Conducting European research policies and implementing European research programmes is an obligation under the EU Amsterdam Treaty (signed on 2 October 1997), which includes a chapter on research and technological development. The Framework Programmes for Research and Technological Development, also called Framework Programmes or abbreviated FP1 to FP9 with “FP8” being named “Horizon 2020” and “FP9” being named “Horizon Europe”, are funding programmes created by the European Union/European Commission to support and foster research in the European Research Area (ERA).

The specific objectives and actions vary between funding periods. In FP6 and FP7 focus was still in technological research; in Horizon 2020 (2014-2020) the focus is on innovation, delivering economic growth faster and delivering solutions to end users that are often governmental agencies.

The new European research programme, “Horizon Europe” (2021-2027), will help Europe remain at the forefront of global research and innovation. Investment in research will allow the Union to compete with other developed and emerging economies, ensure a prosperous future for its citizens, and preserve

Moonshot Goal #1

Realization of a society in which human beings can be free from limitations of body, brain, space, and time by 2050.

Moonshot Goal #2

Realization of ultra-early disease prediction and intervention by 2050.

Moonshot Goal #3

Realization of AI robots that autonomously learn, adapt to their environment, evolve in intelligence and act alongside human beings, by 2050.

Moonshot Goal #4

Realization of sustainable resource circulation to recover the global environment by 2050.

Moonshot Goal #5

Creation of the industry that enables sustainable global food supply by exploiting unused biological resources by 2050.

Moonshot Goal #6

Realization of a fault-tolerant universal quantum computer that will revolutionize economy, industry, and security by 2050.

Moonshot Goal #7

Realization of sustainable care systems to overcome major diseases by 2040, for enjoying one’s life with relief and release from health concerns until 100 years old.

its unique social model. The new programme will continue to promote research excellence and strengthen the focus on innovation, for instance through the development of prototypes, intangible assets, knowledge and technology transfer. As of April 2019 the Commission proposed €94.1 billion for Horizon Europe up from €77 billion for the current Horizon 2020.

keep reading on p.15 >>

Letter of Intent

on Strengthening Cooperation in Science, Technology and Innovation between the European Commission and the Cabinet Office of the Government of Japan

The European Commission and the Cabinet Office of the Government of Japan (CAO), on behalf of relevant Ministries which promote EU-Japan science, technology and innovation (hereinafter referred to as ‘STI’) cooperation (hereinafter collectively referred to as the ‘Sides’) recognise the importance of the existing framework of cooperation in STI under the ‘Agreement between the European Community and the Government of Japan on Cooperation in Science and Technology’.

The Sides acknowledge that cooperation in STI is one of the key areas in the context of the overall cooperation under the ‘Agreement between the European Union and Japan for an Economic Partnership’, the ‘Strategic Partnership Agreement between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and Japan, of the other part’, and the ‘Partnership on Sustainable Connectivity and Quality Infrastructure between the European Union and Japan’.

1. Further Deepening of STI Cooperation between the European Union (EU) and Japan

The Sides acknowledge that they are facing important global challenges such as pandemics, climate change, digital transition and ageing societies, which call for enhanced cooperation in STI. In relation to the COVID-19 outbreak, the Sides acknowledge the importance of enhanced cooperation in research and innovation to overcome pandemics, as well as open access to research data and results.

The Sides also acknowledge that collaborations between both governments, funding agencies and research organisations have been implemented in strategic areas such as Climate Change, Smart Cities, AI (Artificial Intelligence), Quantum Technology, Open Science to solve common societal challenges.

To this end, the Sides intend to exchange views on the implementation of STI cooperation and on future initiatives on a regular basis through the platforms established under the relevant instruments in place. The Sides also intend to have consultations at a higher level when appropriate.

The Sides intend to enhance their STI cooperation in the climate change area, in particular, and to direct STI investments towards realising global climate neutrality. In this context, the Sides aim to disseminate the results of STI cooperation also under broader frameworks such as the Conference of the Parties (COP) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in line with the policy initiatives of the Sides, such as Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement as well as the European Green Deal and Japan’s Long-term Strategy under the Paris Agreement as Growth Strategy.

2. Collaboration between the future Horizon Europe and the Moonshot Program

The Sides acknowledge that the European Commission proposed establishing ‘Horizon Europe – the next European Union Framework Programme for Research and Innovation’ (hereinafter referred to as ‘Horizon Europe’), that is intended to have a pillar on global challenges and cross-cutting missions and that the Government of Japan decided three target areas and six goals for the ‘Moonshot Research and Development Program’ (hereinafter referred to as the ‘Moonshot Program’), aiming at tackling social, environment and economic challenges, which is coordinated by CAO, and also conducted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF).

Therefore, the Sides intend to work together to further intensify their cooperation by exploring synergies between the above mentioned two Programmes with the aim of addressing those challenges and reaching the ambitious goals that the EU and Japan commonly wish to achieve.

For this, the Sides intend to explore appropriate modalities for enhanced STI cooperation such as possible expansion of co-funding mechanisms, joint calls, coordinated calls and twinning, where possible.

3. Further Opportunities for STI Collaboration

The Sides intend to explore the possibility of reciprocal forms of collaboration to promote STI cooperation between the EU and Japan, aiming at facilitating the participation of their STI communities in each other’s respective STI programmes and initiatives.

This Letter of Intent is not intended to create any rights and obligations under international or domestic laws and has no financial implications.

Signed on *26 MAY*, at *BRUSSELS*, and on *26 May*, at *Tokyo*, in duplicate in the English language.

For the European Commission



Mariya Gabriel

Commissioner for Innovation, Research,
Culture, Education and Youth

**For the Cabinet Office of the Government
of Japan**



TAKEMOTO Naokazu

Minister of State for Science and Technology
Policy

» keep reading from p.12

Cooperation between Japan and the EU

Japan is a key strategic partner for research for Europe. The main intention of a cooperation between Japan and the EU is to promote research excellence, and to increase growth and industrial competitiveness for both parties.

Back in March 2011, the Agreement on cooperation in Science and Technology between the European Community and the Government of Japan entered into force and research and innovation relations between the 2 parties have since developed steadily.

On 26 May 2020, this led to the signature by the Government of Japan and the European Union of a Letter of Intent (see enclosed) to further strengthen cooperation in science, technology and innovation, and to enhance the synergies between the upcoming EU research and innovation programme Horizon Europe, and the Japanese Moonshot research and development programme. This cooperation is a key element of the Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) applied since 1 February 2019.

It is both parties' intention to enable European and Japanese researchers and innovators to cooperate more easily on global challenges such as health, climate change, digital transition and ageing societies, and equally to coordinate their efforts in fighting the coronavirus pandemic, including through open access to research data and results.

So far, under Horizon 2020 Japanese entities have participated 183 times in 148 signed grants in strategic areas of cooperation such as climate change, smart cities, artificial intelligence, quantum technology, and open science (data as of 3 August 2020).

EU's and Japan's new research and innovation programmes (future Horizon Europe and Moonshot) present opportunities to further enhance the cooperation. Let's work together and build bridges to successfully drive research and innovation in these both parts of the world.

*** Sources:
<https://www8.cao.go.jp/>
<https://ec.europa.eu/>



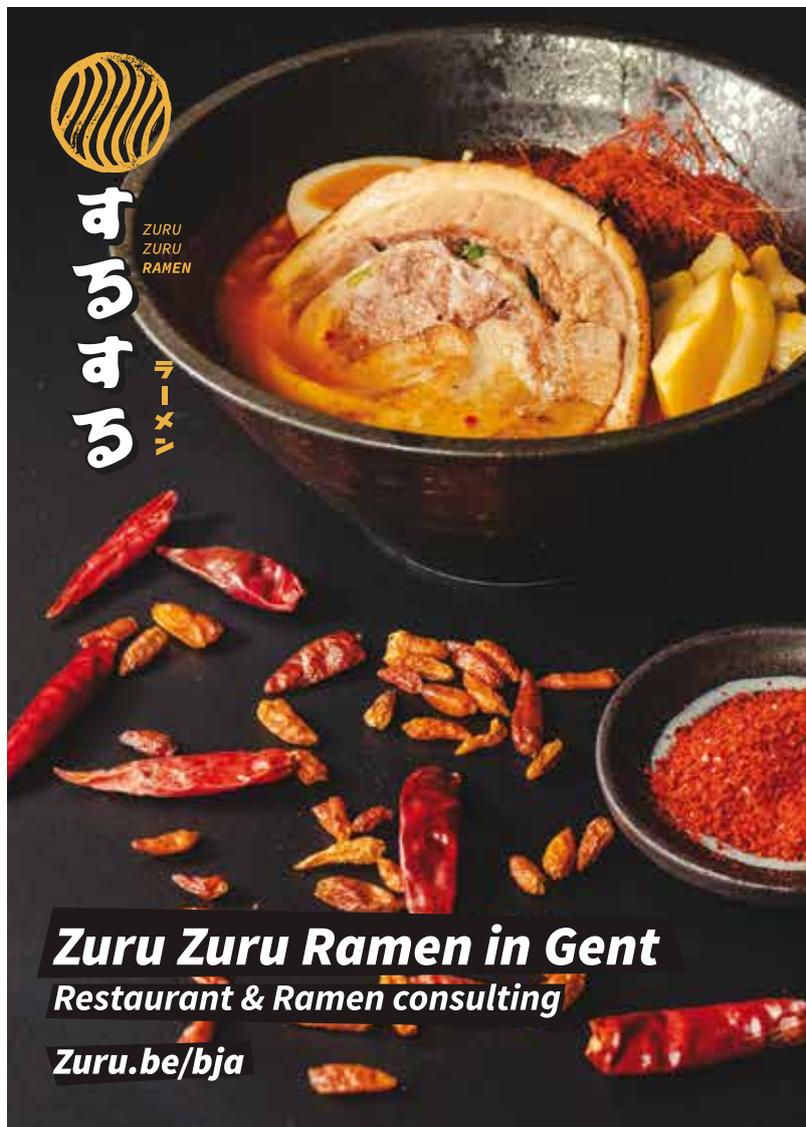
Where I learnt to love learning

Disa, BSB alumna, Cambridge University


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FUJITSU AND TOYOTA SYSTEMS OPTIMIZE LARGE-SCALE SUPPLY CHAIN LOGISTICS USING QUANTUM-INSPIRED TECHNOLOGY

Fujitsu Limited and Toyota Systems Corporation successfully demonstrated optimization of supply chain and logistics network operations essential to support automobile production in a joint trial leveraging Fujitsu’s Quantum-Inspired Digital Annealer computing solution.

The Digital Annealer solves complex combinatorial optimization problems at speeds not possible with current conventional computing technologies, and was used to rapidly calculate variables including the number of transport trucks, total mileage, and package sorting tasks, determining the most cost-effective approach for an automotive parts supply chain optimization problem with more than 3 million possible delivery routes to dozens of factories.

Ultimately, the trial revealed it was possible that within 30 minutes an optimal route was calculated that can potentially reduce logistics costs by approximately 2 to 5% by discovering effective, previously unidentified distribution routes, thereby improving loading efficiency and streamlining transportation related expenses.

In the future, Fujitsu and Toyota Systems will further verify and refine the solution with the aim of commercializing it for real-world supply chain and logistics operations.

Background

While logistics has become an increas-

ingly vital part of the infrastructure supporting society, factors including driver shortages, traffic congestion, and increased CO2 emissions present an urgent and persistent challenge to businesses in the logistics and supply chain industry. The management of manufacturing supply chains represents one area for possible improvements in efficiency and cost reductions, which may also contribute to solving more fundamental logistics and environmental issues. Nevertheless, conventional technologies remain ill-suited to solving these problems due to their scale and complexity, requiring enormous amounts of time for parameter-adjustments and calculations.

Outline of the Field Trial

With these challenges in mind, Fujitsu and Toyota Systems endeavoured to find a solution through joint trials and the development of innovative technologies.

Toyota Systems was first established in January 2019 as an IT solutions company to support Toyota Motor Corporation and its group companies in the development of technology offerings. Since prior to the establishment of the company, Toyota Systems has been conducting research with Fujitsu on the use of quantum computing.

During the trial Toyota Systems and Fujitsu applied Fujitsu’s Digital Annealer quantum-inspired technology to formulate and solve an optimization problem involving a large-scale logistics network

with more than 3 million route candidates. The objective of the trial was to quickly determine the route with the lowest distribution cost from millions of potential candidates for procuring parts from hundreds of suppliers and delivering them through several transit warehouses to dozens of factories. Distribution costs were calculated based on variables including the number of trucks, total travel distance, and the amount of work done in sorting packaged parts.

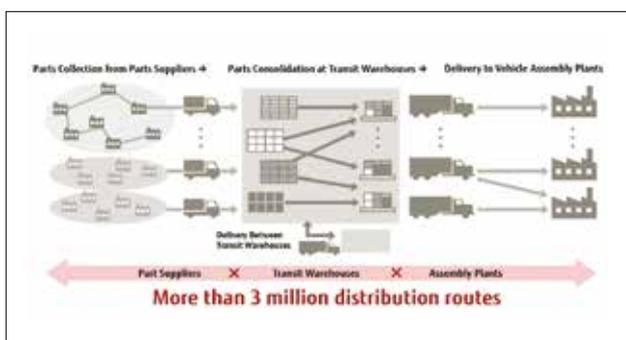
In order to apply this technology to real-world operations, a new system was developed that incorporates a large-scale problem-solving technology (Figure 2, Left)⁽¹⁾ previously developed by Fujitsu Limited and Fujitsu Laboratories, Ltd., and the following two technologies:

- › Global Search Technology: searches a wide range of possible solutions while efficiently escaping from a local solution groups (Figure 2, Center)
- › Dynamic Multipoint Search Technology: dynamically determines search starting points based on the current search status and interim results (Figure 2 Right)

Trial Results

The application of the Digital Annealer and new solving techniques made it possible to calculate a new route within 30 minutes, leading to the potential for significant overall cost reduction.

During the trials, simulations using the newly discovered routes proved that



Increased Scale Large-Scale Problem Solving Technology	High Speed Global Search Technology	Searchability Dynamic Multipoint Search Technology
Quick overall search and problem area extraction for fast solution search	Quickly find the best solutions by efficiently escaping from local solution groups	Dynamically determines starting points according to the current state within a search to reach optimum solutions
Capacity to process large scale problems	Quick solutions for complex problems	With efficient search technology, arrives at optimum solutions for many types of problems

news from the members

this method can reduce costs by approximately 2-5% compared to conventional methods.

Future Plans

Based on these results, the two companies aim to use the Digital Annealer to calculate logistics routes related to automobile manufacturing distribution chains, and they are working to further verify and identify opportunities for additional practical applications.

As the automotive industry progresses toward a new paradigm, CASE (Connectivity, Autonomous, Sharing, Electrifica-

tion) promises to redefine the concept of mobility itself, and a demand for unprecedented technological innovation and the creation of new mobility services has emerged. Based on the technology accumulated during this trial, Toyota Systems will promote the use of quantum inspired computing capabilities in the automobile industry, with the aim of creating new mobility services and contributing to the resolution of societal problems.

Fujitsu will support Toyota Systems in this domain with new solutions based on its Digital Annealer technology and

contribute further to digital innovation in the automotive industry.

Fujitsu additionally plans in 2020 to offer the developed solutions from this trial as part of the existing Fujitsu Digital Annealer Cloud Service, with the aim of expanding application of the solutions to a variety of other industries and business domains.

[1] **a large-scale problem-solving technology**
 “Fujitsu Technology to Solve Combinatorial Optimization Problems for Medium-Sized Drug Discovery”
<https://www.fujitsu.com/global/about/resources/news/press-releases/2018/0918-01.html>

Source:
<https://www.fujitsu.com/global/about/resources/news/press-releases/0910-02.html>

IMEC ANNOUNCES WHOLE GENOME DATA ANALYSIS AVAILABLE IN JUST A FEW HOURS

LEADING RESEARCH AND INNOVATION HUB'S ELPREP5 BIG DATA PLATFORM PERFORMS DNA ANALYSIS UP TO 16 TIMES FASTER THAN PREVIOUS OPTIONS.

On 1 October, 2020 imec, a world-leading research and innovation hub in nano-electronics and digital technologies, announced elPrep5, the newest version of its software platform for DNA analysis. Obtaining identical results, elPrep5 is eight to 16 times faster than the genome analysis toolkit (GATK) — the widely-accepted standard reference. The imec platform encompasses the full analysis pipeline from data preparation to variant calling on a similar hardware infrastructure, opening new opportunities and efficiency gains for hospitals and medical practitioners.

“This is the breakthrough we have been anticipating for years. Finally, we can run the entire DNA analysis pipeline with a single software platform solution, and faster than ever,” said imec researcher Dr. Charlotte Herzeel. “Because variant calling is the most complex step, gathering results up to 16 times faster than the previous method has resulted in a four- to nine-fold reduction in time, all while retaining GATK4-identical results. For the medical sector, this allows massive efficiency gains because the time between sampling and diagnosis dramatically decreases and doctors can run analyses overnight.

Moreover, since many hospitals run their analyses via rented cloud solutions, the reduced throughput times can immediately result in a cost reduction per analysis.” After a DNA sample is sequenced, there are hundreds of gigabytes of data representing the genetic information of the original sample, which, in the sequencing process, was cut into a multitude of smaller fragments. These fragments have to be reconstructed to a representation of the original DNA sample. Afterwards, an analysis is performed to, for example, detect genetic variants in comparison to a known reference model, and elPrep 5 is specifically designed to optimize this variant calling analysis.

Performing this analysis is a computational-heavy challenge. Despite substantial cost reductions for DNA analysis over the past decade, runtimes — up to two to three days for a whole genome — were still prone to improvement. Now, imec’s elPrep5 can perform a whole genome analysis within a few hours without compromising the quality of the output. Extensive validations show completely identical outputs to its industry counterparts in GATK, SAMtools and Picard.

By taking advantage of its parallel execution framework, elPrep5 performs the complete analysis after a single pass through the data. This architecture avoids the intensive read and write processes of fragments of data in and out of the memory. elPrep5 is written in Go, an open-source programming language developed by Google, and can be run on standard servers that most hospitals have locally or in the cloud. ElPrep5 extends and improves the elPrep4 functionality and performance by including variant calling as the final step to encompass the whole DNA analysis pipeline and by realizing additional efficiency gains in the process. ElPrep5 targets users in the pharmaceutical industry, scientific research, medical laboratories, sequencing service providers, sequencing vendors and hospitals. The speedups brought by elPrep5 enable these industries to move from research runs into clinical practice and further scale their operations. Several industrial partners have already expressed interest to integrate elPrep5 into their daily operations.

Source: <https://www.imec-int.com/en/press/imec-announces-whole-genome-data-analysis-available-just-few-hours>

news from the members

WORKING APART TOGETHER: OFFICE AND HOME OFFICE WORK AT YAMAGATA EUROPE

Working from home has been a trending topic on the internet since March 2020, for reasons we all know so well. For Yamagata Europe, home office has been included in our policy for years. But even when we will be allowed to leave our forced COVID-19 home office regime, a few questions will remain. How will we work when everything is safe again? And what will be the role of the office in the future?

Yamagata Europe employees have been able to work from home for more than 10 years already. When we introduced this, people especially appreciated avoiding the long commuting time and being able to be there for their families, for example in the after-school rush. Sure, there was also opposition against the idea of WfH (our acronym for Working from Home) back then. Some people feared that work would intrude into the private sphere. Others thought they needed an office as an environment where they could be productive. And there was the fear of lack of central control over employee performance.

Home office policy

But we implemented a home office policy anyway. We worked out contracts and insurance policies, we made sure our IT could support this policy (security, virtualization & collaboration software, phone system) and we made the necessary internal arrangements.

First, we tried home office for one day a week, on a fixed day and for a limited trial group. Later, that became one day for all, still later two days a week, on a voluntary basis. This proved to work well.

What if...

In recent years, we expanded our WfH possibilities even more. For example, we allowed non-Belgian employees to schedule longer WfH periods, so they could extend their holidays in their home country with WfH days. We also added a number of



freely selectable WfH days on top of the fixed days.

At the beginning of 2020, we already had a substantial work from home policy at Yamagata Europe. But we wanted to look further. In January 2020, we organized a brainstorm around the central theme “WfH”. The idea was to hypothetically stretch the system as far as we could, hopefully discovering the real advantages and disadvantages of the system along the way.

We divided the team into five groups and asked everyone to think about this question: *“What if you had to work from home every day, and never had to return to the office anymore?”* We asked the team to answer in a collage of pictures, quotes and drawings. You can see one of the results below. As you can see, we count words, but dream in images.

On the evening after the brainstorm, we celebrated our annual New Year’s party. During that party, Geert, our Managing Director, was killed in a whodunit role play, also hypothetically of course.

COVID-19: during and after?

That brainstorm was at the end of January 2020. Six weeks later, reality hit harder than we imagined in our collages. From the middle of March onwards, we were all at home due to lockdown measures. MS Teams was going to be our means of communication, all day every day. The office was still there, and the rent had to be paid, but the building was empty.

At the end of June, months into the COVID-19 pandemic, we launched a survey. We wanted to know what the Yamagata Europe team wanted to do from the moment everything would be safe and open again. These are the survey results:

The results are clear. Even after four months of working from home, sometimes with kids and partners around the house, we still liked this way of working. The survey shows that most



news from the members



tense, sometimes even reduced to zero. We were also concerned that we were losing much of the casual, conversational information: the chat at the coffee machine, a quick question here and there... And we asked ourselves how we could effectively onboard new members in and after COVID-19 times.

What about the office?

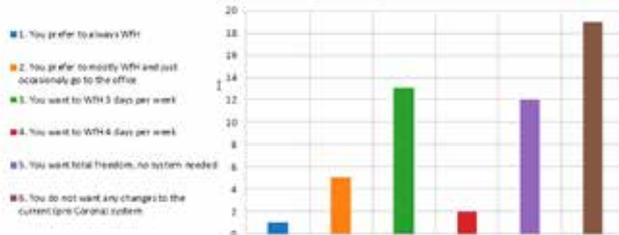
The survey results made it clear that there is still a need for a physical office. We need the office as a platform for working, training, connecting, casual gathering and information sharing.

From September 2020 onwards, we allowed employees to come back to the office two days a week, always in a fixed group and on a purely voluntary basis. Unfortunately, this only lasted for a short period as the latest Covid-19 measures in Belgium advise full-time home office again. Early next year, we hope to implement a new system with more flexibility and more freedom, but we will focus on a clear social and information sharing role for the office.

Shortly before the arrival of COVID-19, the business center where our office is located was renamed from 'Groeninghe' to 'the Platform'. For those who do not know Flemish history, Groeninghe was the name of the battlefield where the Flemish army defeated the French in 1302. Once COVID-19 is defeated, our office will have been converted from a battlefield into a platform. We are social beings and will need this platform to perform!

Source: <https://www.yamagata-europe.com/en-gb/blog/working-apart-together-office-and-home-office-work-at-yamagata-europe>

With the experience and technology we have today ...



team members want to keep things as they are, and some want more freedom and flexibility.

Comments in the survey also revealed that our IT systems worked fine and that contact with close members from the same team were more intense. On the contrary, contact with colleagues we don't share direct projects with were less in-

HUGO BOSS SELECTS TOSHIBA TO ENABLE SEAMLESS CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES

HUGO BOSS is creating new in-store experiences for its shoppers with Toshiba Global Commerce Solutions. Using Toshiba's TCx™ 800 to revitalize its front end and TCx™ 300 to optimize its mobile capabilities, HUGO BOSS is creating personalized shopping experiences and offers an innovative, shopper-focused technology.

Inspired by an art gallery, HUGO BOSS' new 5,000 square foot store in SoHo boasts an inviting and modern atmosphere. With its sleek, versatile design, the TCx 800 complements the store's contemporary, minimalist aesthetic and will help HUGO BOSS create new experiences for its customers. Toshiba's experts worked together with HUGO BOSS' to define the global standard for the brand's point-of-sale hardware and enable in-store mobile technology for convenient, frictionless checkout experiences.

Delivering engaging shopper experiences is a critical part of any specialty retailers' success. Toshiba's TCx 800 is a versatile point-of-sale solution that can be configured over a dozen ways, and its

maneuverability helps store associates improve shopper engagement at checkout. The TCx 300 will serve as a back-office server to help HUGO BOSS amplify its mobile footprint. Additionally, Toshiba's CareFlex maintenance program helps ensure that HUGO BOSS' systems are always up and running to serve their customers — a mission-critical consideration for this specialty retailer.

"HUGO BOSS cares deeply about its customers' in-store experience and their progressive, future-forward thinking brand presence is inspiring. This is a brand that really takes delivering an engaging in-store experience seriously," said Bill Campbell, Toshiba Global Commerce Solutions Senior Vice President, Head of Global Sales. "Toshiba creates point of sale solutions that help premium specialty retailers meet their long- and short-term goals."

Source: https://commerce.toshiba.com/wps/portal/marketing/?urile=wcm:path:/en-us/home/company/news/hugo-boss-selects-toshiba-seamless-customer-experiences&mapping=tgcs_new.portal.company.newsdetails

news from the members

FIRST PATIENT ENROLLED IN NIH PHASE 3 TRIAL TO EVALUATE POTENTIAL COVID-19 HYPERIMMUNE MEDICINE

- › The Alliance’s anti-COVID-19 Hyperimmune Globulin (CoVlg-19) medicine is under evaluation as part of the trial and may become one of the earliest treatments for hospitalized individuals at risk for serious complications of COVID-19
- › Takeda’s manufacturing site at Lessines, Belgium, is contributing to the production of the clinical material for the NIH Phase 3 trial, emphasizing the importance of Belgium as a pharmaceutical hub.

On 16 October 2020, the CoVlg-19 Plasma Alliance, an unprecedented collaboration of leading plasma companies supported by global organizations outside the plasma industry, confirmed that patients are now being enrolled in the Inpatient Treatment with Anti-Coronavirus Immunoglobulin (ITAC) Phase 3 clinical trial sponsored by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The trial will evaluate the safety, tolerability and efficacy of an investigational anti-coronavirus hyperimmune intravenous immunoglobulin (H-Ig) medicine for treating hospitalized adults at risk for serious complications of COVID-19 disease. If successful, the Alliance’s H-Ig may become one of the earliest treatment options for hospitalized COVID-19 patients.

Takeda’s manufacturing site in Lessines is one of several Takeda’s facilities producing this plasma-based Hyperimmune globulin therapy. The Lessines site is overseeing the purification, filling and packaging of Hyperimmune globulin needed to provide clinical materials in support of NIH Phase 3 Trial. This is important progress towards making available a potential plasma-derived medicine, bringing hope in the fight against COVID-19”, says Pierre Dorignaux, Vice-President and Site Head at Lessines. “That our local productions facility is able to contrib-

ute underlines the importance of the Lessines site within Takeda’s global manufacturing network. Moreover, it emphasizes the importance of Belgium as a pharmaceutical hub for the development, production and distribution of highly innovative biotech treatments.”

This global multi-center, double-blind, placebo-controlled, randomized trial will enroll 500 adult patients at up to 58 sites in the United States, Mexico and 16 other countries on five continents (utilizing the NIH’s global INSIGHT Network), who have been hospitalized for COVID-19 and have had symptoms for 12 days or fewer without life-threatening organ dysfunction or end-organ failure. Patients will receive remdesivir as standard of care, allowing the safety and efficacy of H-Ig to be evaluated when given along with rem-

desivir treatment. The investigational H-Ig materials for the trial will be provided by CSL Behring and Takeda on behalf of the CoVlg-19 Plasma Alliance, as well as by two other companies.

“The rapid progress we’ve made since we initiated this program just a few months ago to reach this key milestone of enrolling patients in the trial is a powerful testament to the collaboration, determination and innovation taking place across the biomedical community as we work to fight the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Julie Kim, President of Plasma-Derived Therapies Business Unit, Takeda and co-leader of the CoVlg-19 Alliance. “This study will help us understand how CoVlg-19 could potentially become an important therapeutic option. To support our efforts, we encourage all those people who have recovered from COVID-19 to donate their plasma, which contains vital antibodies that have fought off the disease and could help others do the same.”

“When we created the CoVlg-19 Plasma Alliance in April, the goal was to partner to accelerate our timelines so that we could develop and deliver a reliable and sustainable treatment option for people suffering the impact of COVID-19 and to support countries around





the world in their efforts to fight the current pandemic,” said Bill Mezzanotte, MD, MPH, Executive Vice President, Head of Research and Development and Chief Medical Officer, CSL Behring and co-leader of the CoVlg-19 Alliance. “Thanks to the unprecedented collaboration from the CoVlg-19 Plasma Alliance members, commitment from those who have recovered from the virus and generously chosen to donate their plasma, as well as the strong support from the NIH, we are hopeful that data from the clinical trial will be available before the end of the year. If the trial proves successful, this therapy could bring new hope to those suffering serious health consequences from COVID-19.”

How you can help: Donate plasma

A coalition of world-leading medical and research institutions, blood centers, life science companies, technology companies, philanthropic organizations, and COVID-19 survivor groups has come together to support the rapid development of potential new therapies for patients with COVID-19. Working together under the “The Fight Is In Us” campaign, the coalition is seeking

to mobilize tens of thousands of people in the United States who have recovered from COVID-19 to donate their blood plasma. Donating blood plasma is a generally safe and proven process.

Individuals who have recovered from COVID-19, or know someone who has, can visit TheFightIsInUs.org to understand if they may be eligible to donate and find a nearby blood or plasma donor center using a simple self-screening tool. The coalition offers more than 1,500 locations at which COVID-19 survivors can choose to donate.

About the CoVlg-19 Plasma Alliance

In an effort to help fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, the Alliance was created in April 2020 to help develop a potential plasma-derived therapy for people at risk for serious complications from COVID-19. The CoVlg-19 Plasma Alliance brings together world-leading plasma companies to work on the development of an investigational unbranded polyclonal anti-SARS-CoV-2 hyperimmune globulin medicine with the potential to treat patients who are at risk for serious complications from COVID-19. The hyperimmune globulin

is a high quality pharmaceutical product that contains purified, consistent, and concentrated levels of convalescent antibodies.

The “I” and “g” in CoVlg-19 stand for immune globulin, which the CoVlg-19 Plasma Alliance will use to concentrate the antibodies into a potential medicine. The Alliance, formed by CSL Behring and Takeda, also includes the leading-edge expertise of founding members Biotest, BPL, LFB, and Octapharma, along with additional industry members ADMA Biologics, BioPharma Plasma, GC Pharma, Liminal BioSciences, National Bioproducts Institute and Sanquin. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is providing advisory support. Microsoft is providing technology including the Alliance website and the Plasma Bot for donor recruitment. Organizations including Pall and Uber Health are also making contributions to the CoVlg-19 Plasma Alliance. Experts from the Alliance are collaborating across key aspects such as plasma collection, clinical trial development, and product manufacturing.

Source: Takeda Belgium

news from the members

BSB LISTED AS ONE OF THE BEST SCHOOLS IN THE WORLD

THE BRITISH SCHOOL OF BRUSSELS (BSB) HAS BEEN INDEPENDENTLY RANKED AS ONE OF THE TOP 10 SCHOOLS IN EUROPE* BY THE SPEAR'S SCHOOLS INDEX.

The Spear's Schools Index, created in partnership with Carfax Education, lists the very best private schools in the world. Categorised by region, it covers the world.

This independent organisation has named BSB as one of the top 10 schools in Europe.*

Spear's together with leading private education consultancy Carfax Education, have worked their way through an array of fantastic top performing schools from around the globe, and retained just 100 of the very, very best. The British School of Brussels (BSB) is one of them. As well as formal criteria such as academic results and preparation for university entry, schools are ranked on

their unique ethos, their reputation both locally and internationally, and how adequately they prepare students for life beyond academia.

"Choosing a school is one of the most important decisions a family will make for their child and that's why we wanted to create an index that provides a trusted perspective on the very best schools. The impact of a child's educational experience goes far beyond the academic alone, and for that reason we looked at each school's unique ethos and how they prepare students for the future, when determining schools that made the cut." Reported Carfax on their website.

BSB's Principal Melanie Warnes said *"BSB has a 50-year strong track record of providing a progressive and holistic education with great exam results for stu-*



dents of all abilities; it is absolutely wonderful to have this recognised."

Top schools listed for 2020 providing exceptional education for students, include the well-renowned British boarding schools such as Eton College and Harrow School as well as those further afield, such as Pembroke House in Kenya. Carfax Education are global experts in British independent education. *"This is very exciting for us"*, said John Knight, Vice-Principal & Head of Secondary School at BSB. *"I'm hugely proud as this recognises the wonderful staff and students at the school coming on the back of our extraordinary exam results across all of our three pre-university pathways: A Level, International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma and BTEC vocational courses."*

BSB achieved a 100% pass rate across all Post-16 routes in the recent 2020 examination results.

"Our moto is 'academic excellence without borders' and we're so pleased that we were able to reflect this in being part of the first global ranking of schools – with institutions from almost every continent included. We know that finding the right school can be a daunting experience and we hope that this comprehensive list will assist many families through what can be a confusing time", the Head of Education at Carfax Education, continued.

Source:
<https://www.spearswms.com/best-private-schools-in-world-spears/>



*Europe other than UK & Switzerland

CONGRATULATIONS FROM THE BJA TO LEUVEN MINDGATE!

BJA Member, Leuven MindGate, together with Leuven 2030 and the city of Leuven submitted a dossier to the European Commission for the European Capital of Innovation Award. From now on, Leuven can call itself European Capital of Innovation. The prestigious award from the European Commission rewards the city that makes the best use of innovation to im-

prove the quality of life of its inhabitants. In addition to the title itself, Leuven receives 1 million euros.

Read more:

<https://www.leuvenmindgate.be/news/leuven-has-been-elected-european-capital-of-innovation>

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

Associate Member

Leuven MindGate

Leuven MindGate is one of the world's prime regions for health, high-tech and creativity. A region with a unique ecosystem of companies cooperating with knowledge institutions and the government, creating a perfect breeding ground for companies, entrepreneurs, investors and talent. Simply put, a great place to study, work and live. Leuven MindGate has been created in 2016 to promote the region internationally and to further strengthen the ecosystem. We foster synergies and cross-overs between our partners and pillar industries

and facilitate international talent.



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We would also like to express our appreciation to our BJA Sponsor Members >



The BJA thanks the Walloon and Brussels Regions for financially supporting this newsletter





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