



Belgium-Japan Association
Chamber of Commerce
日白協会兼商工会議所



TRADE FLOWS & CULTURAL NEWS

Number 140 - September 2023



4

INCREASED TRAVEL
REQUIREMENTS

6

INVESTMENT
OPPORTUNITIES
IN OFFSHORE
ENERGY

8

HIGHLIGHTS IN THE
LAST 60 YEARS OF
BELGIUM-JAPAN
RELATIONS

14

The Belgian Pavilion

FOR EXPO 2025
OSAKA

16

TRANSPARENCY
AND TRACEABILITY

BJA | 287, avenue Louise bte 7 | 1050 Brussels | T +32 (0)2 644 14 05 | E info@bja.be | BJA quarterly newsletter
Belgium-Japan Association & Chamber of Commerce | Royal Association | Founded in 1963
Registration n° 408.948.139 | RPR Court of Commerce Brussels

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EDITORIAL

By Yoshihiro Nakata, President
and CEO of Toyota Motor Europe NV/SA,
and Vice-President BJA



It is my honor and pleasure to be nominated as the Vice-President of the Belgium-Japan Association & Chamber of Commerce. I am looking forward to working with my fellow board members to contribute to BJA's activities and further enhance business and cultural relations between our two countries.

I am currently on my first assignment in Europe and have been living in Belgium for almost a year and I feel quite at home here. In fact, my brother lived here 4 years ago, and I feel there is a certain destiny in my family to build a strong connection with Belgium.

It's been a fascinating and enjoyable year for me to learn about Belgian and European culture and business conditions. Europe is one of the leading regions of the world in terms of carbon neutrality, driving a once-in-a-century transformation in the industry I work in – automotive – and in many others. During this period of change there is much to be learnt and shared between Belgium and Japan for us all to build a cleaner future for the next generation.

I joined Toyota Motor Corporation in 1991 and have overseen

a number of areas from Sales & Marketing to Product Planning, Business Planning and Human Resources. Personally, I am very excited by my assignment in Europe. During my career I've worked several times abroad, mainly in Asia (Indonesia, Singapore and Thailand) over a period of more than 9 years, and now I have the opportunity to learn about and contribute to another region.

All over the world we face disruption and complexity, but society is always ready and able to adapt, just reflect upon how we used to work a few years ago, and how now, our post-COVID world has become our new normal.

Faced with the significant challenges of global warming and achieving carbon neutrality, I feel confident that we can work together to overcome them, and hand over a sustainable, beautiful earth to our children and grandchildren.

Belgium is one of the leaders in the EU for achieving this ambition, and many Japanese companies come here to collaborate. I believe we can increase this collaboration and I will do my best to contribute to BJA and the relationship between Belgium, Japan and European society.

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In this issue

- 2 Editorial
- 3 Delicious Life of Belgium and Japan
- 4 Increased travel requirements
- 6 Investment opportunities in offshore energy in West Flanders
- 8 Highlights 60 years B-J relations
- 14 The Belgian pavilion for Expo 2025 Osaka
- 16 EU Committee news
- 20 EU-Japan Data Free Flow
- 21 The Belgian Foreign Direct Investment screening regime
- 22 The Contius Bach organ in Leuven
- 24 Personalia

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Delicious Life of Belgium and Japan: Fermentation meets distillation Delicious Life of Belgium and Japan: 醸造と蒸留の世界へ

Friday, 2 June 2023 – Deinze



Mr Muramatsu, Tōji (sake master brewer) of Hokko Masamune, is explaining about Nagano sake.



Many enthusiastic guests joined to discover 'Delicious life of Belgium and Japan - fermentation meets distillation'.



Mr Cnudde, CEO of Filliers Distillery, one of the last family-owned Belgian jenever, gin and whisky distiller, is extending a warm welcome.

On 2 June, the BJA and Kaori Tea & Spices had the pleasure to invite the members and friends to a Nagano sake tasting experience at Filliers Distillery in Deinze. Mr Koh Ichi Masaki, Head of European Affairs of JMA and BJA Cultural Committee Chair and Mr Bart Cnudde, CEO of Filliers Distillery extended a warm welcome to over 30 enthusiastic guests.

Firstly, the participants joined a highly interesting tour of the distillery facility, guided by Mr François Pierson, Export Manager of Filliers Distillery, who gave a thorough look into the unique historical background of the company, one of the last family-owned Belgian jenever, gin and whisky distiller, dating back to 1880.

Following, the exclusive sake tasting session was opened by Mrs Annabelle Maes of Kaori Tea & Spices, welcoming Mr Yuya Muramatsu, Tōji (sake master brewer) of Hokko Masa-

mune and Mrs Azumi Tamaoka, Sake expert from Nagano Prefecture, who came especially to Belgium for their 2 weeks 'Nagano Sake tasting roadshow'.

Upon receiving a brief explanation on what is sake, how sake is brewed and what are the unique characteristics of Nagano sake by Master Muramatsu and Mrs Tamaoka, the participants enjoyed tasting of 4 types of sake including 1 umeshu (plum wine), from this region, accompanied with some light dishes.

It was such a delightful occasion to discover both the world of fermentation and distillation – tasting matured Filliers whisky to premium Nagano sake. Many participants took this exceptional opportunity to purchase the delicious Nagano sake and Filliers Distillery products before returning home.



INCREASED TRAVEL REQUIREMENTS

for Japanese nationals travelling to Belgium or other countries of the Schengen area

By Joke Braam, Director at Vialto Partners and BJA Editorial Committee Member, Silke Van Bauwel, Senior Associate and Fabian Gielis, Associate at Vialto Partners

At this moment, Japanese nationals can easily travel to the Schengen area. They are visa-exempt, meaning that they can travel on the basis of their passport when travelling for less than 90 days within any 180-day period. Also in practice, it might look like overstaying this allowed 90-day period would barely lead to severe consequences since the authorities only occasionally discover and sanction such overstay. However, with the entrance into force of two new border systems in the near future (EES and ETIAS), a.o. Japanese nationals will soon have to adhere to reinforced rules and provide more information before crossing the external borders of the Schengen area.

Since these upcoming changes will have a big impact on Japanese business travellers, we hereby provide you with an overview of the new systems and what the Japanese business travellers will have to keep in mind when travelling to Belgium and the other Schengen countries.

Entry and Exit System (EES)

Is the end of passport stamps near? Passport stamps are usually added to the passport whenever crossing the Schengen external borders. However, in light of the Schengen Smart Borders changes, the current system of manually stamping passports at external border controls will be replaced by the Entry and Exit System (EES). Aiming at a less time-consuming process with more reliable data on border crossings into the European Union, the European Commission and European Parliament adopted the EES regulation on 30 November 2017, which entered into force on 29 December the same year.

The Entry and Exit system will be an automated information technology system for registering third-country nationals that enter the Schengen area, by means of crossing the external borders. This system will apply to both nationals from visa-exempt countries (such as Japan), as well as visa-required nationals.

The EES will register the following information of, amongst others, Japanese business travellers entering the Schengen area:

- › Data listed in someone's travel document;
- › Date of entry into and exit from a Schengen Member State;
- › Biometric data (e.g. fingerprints and facial image);
- › Refusal of entry (if applicable).

Travellers who refuse their data being entered into the EES, will be refused entrance into the Schengen area. Furthermore, they will also be able to verify how many days of the allowed 90 days within any 180-day period they still have left to spend in the Schengen area, by consulting the EES tool. It will be necessary to regularly verify this, as the EES will also generate notifications towards Member States in case it detects overstays from travellers in the Schengen area.

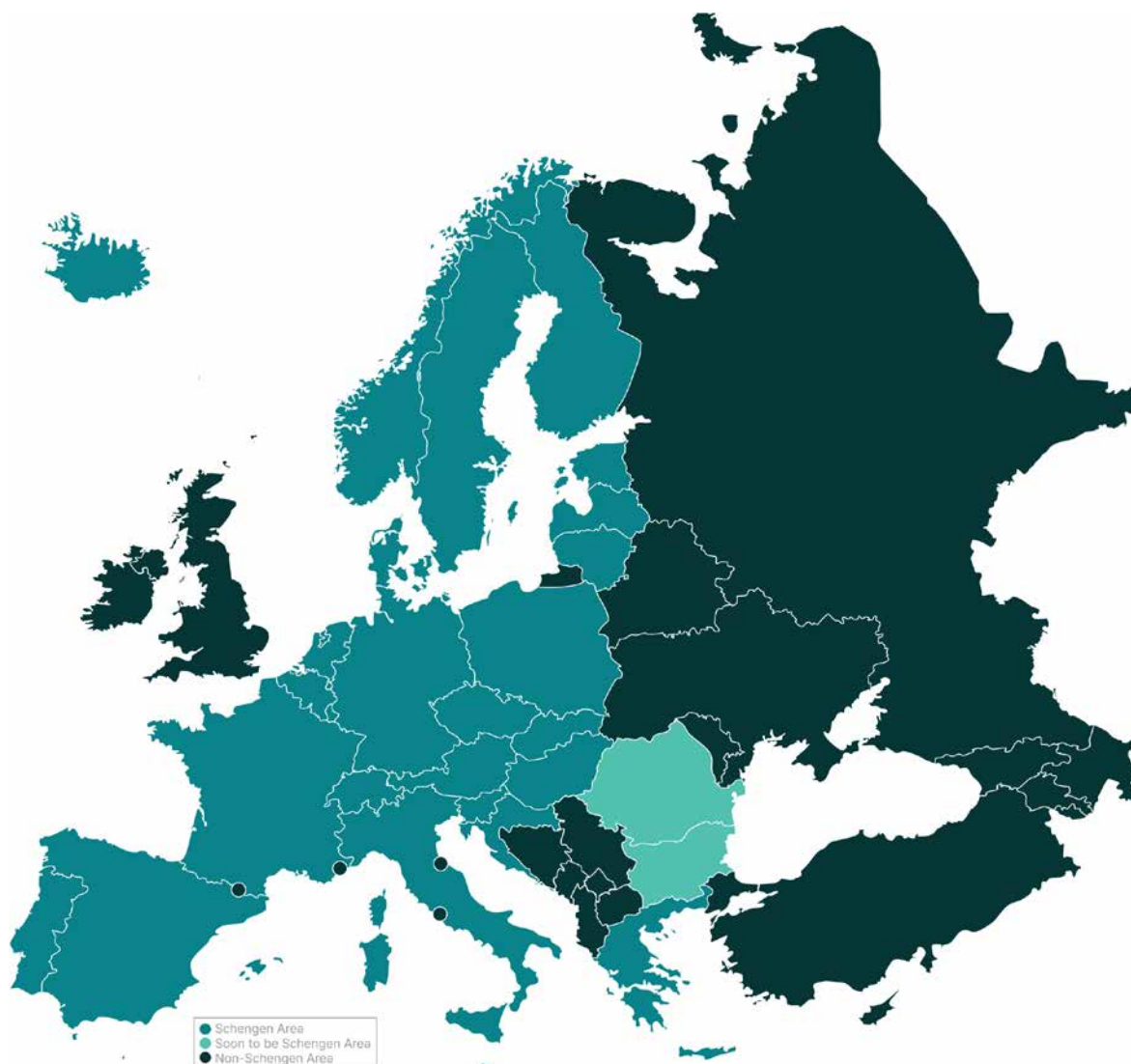
ETIAS

The European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS) was adopted by the European Parliament and the Council on 12 September 2018.

This new system will constitute an entry requirement for visa-exempt nationals, such as Japanese nationals, that travel to the Schengen area for a maximum of 90 days within any 180-day period. It can be compared with the US variant ESTA (Electronic System for Travel Authorization) and will, most likely, become operational in 2024. By then, Japanese nationals travelling to Belgium (and the Schengen area) for short term purposes will not be allowed to enter without the so-called ETIAS authorization.

Thanks to the information requested in the ETIAS form, the system will be able to conduct some checks against other EU borders and security databases. In the vast majority of cases, the system will issue the authorisation within minutes, if no concerns have been found in the system. If the system indicates that further checks will be required, the issuance of the travel authorization can take up to 30 days, in which case someone's planned travel to the Schengen area may have to be delayed.

The ETIAS authorization will be linked to a person's passport and has a validity of three years. In case the passport expires before the end of this three-year period the ETIAS authoriza-



tion will be aligned with the expiry of the passport. In practice, Japanese nationals will need to fill out the online ETIAS form before travelling to the Schengen area. Furthermore, a mobile application will be available as well to fill out the form.

The information requested in the ETIAS form will most likely be the following:

- › Personal information (such as name, nationality, place of birth, phone number, email address, ...);
- › Information about your current occupation and your level of education;
- › Details concerning your criminal convictions;
- › Information about your travel to the ETIAS countries, as well as your stay.

Furthermore, a fee of EUR 7,00 will have to be paid for each application.

Important will be that this ETIAS authorisation can be either requested by the travellers themselves, or by a third party. Thus, employers or external providers can be authorised to apply on behalf of their employees.

On a final note, kindly be informed as well that the United Kingdom is also working on a similar border control system (the so-called ETA), which will have a big impact in the future on Japanese nationals who will be travelling to the United Kingdom.

Conclusion

The days of quick and impulsive travels by Japanese nationals to Belgium (and the Schengen area) will not be over soon, but they will definitely be less impulsive as Japanese business travellers will have to take these new formalities and border control systems into account.

The ETIAS travel authorisation will have to be obtained in advance, whereas the EES will be a system utilised by the border control upon entry, replacing the passport stamps. An overstay in the Schengen area will be immediately noticed, which could also lead to possible travel bans in the future.

Even though the systems are not operational yet, we thus have to conclude that it is strongly advisable for Japanese organisations to prepare their business travellers population for these upcoming new systems.

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN OFFSHORE ENERGY IN WEST FLANDERS

By Ira Lardinois, Clustermanager Blue Energy POM West-Vlaanderen

As an offshore wind pioneer, Belgium has aroused the interest of Japan, which has the ambition to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050. In order to highlight the investment opportunities to (potential) Japanese investors, a delegation from West Flanders made an intense one-week visit to Japan. Seven days filled with vibrant events and bilateral meetings, which will no doubt lead to interesting results.

The offshore energy sector is also called 'blue energy' and is a spearhead cluster in West Flanders, the sole province at the North Sea. The shallow sea combined with stable wind regimes made it an ideal area to start with offshore energy.

Belgium plays a pioneering role in offshore energy at global level. The very first steps in the offshore wind industry worldwide were made in this country more than 15 years ago. In terms of offshore wind per capita, Belgium is second worldwide.

That pioneering spirit – in the industry as well as in the political ambitions – is alive and kicking. The first energy island in the world, the Princess Elizabeth Island, will be installed in the Belgian part of the North Sea. The finalization is foreseen for 2026. The offshore industry players are also pioneering abroad. Several Belgian companies are involved in offshore wind farms all over the world: Taiwan, South-Korea, the United States... Belgian companies are very eager to collaborate with Japanese companies as well!

Jean de Bethune, West Flemish deputy for Economy and External Relations, emphasizes the importance of the collaboration: *"We want to put West Flanders on the map as a gateway to Europe and further expand this position by working together with companies and different partners such as FIT and VLAIO. We are convinced that this will lead to more in-*

vestments in our region and more export opportunities for our entrepreneurs."

Upcoming offshore wind market in Japan

To achieve carbon neutrality by 2050, the Japanese Government launched the Green Growth Strategy in 2020. This includes the goal to increase the offshore wind power generation capacity to 10 GW by 2030 (or 5% of total energy demand) and to 30-45 GW by 2040. With its coastline of more than 29 000 km (sixth in the world) and its (for the most part) deep ocean bottoms, Japan has huge interest in floating wind turbines – instead of fixed-bottom turbines, which are suited for shallow waters like the North Sea.

Several Japanese investors have already been convinced by the wide range of assets of the Belgian offshore energy sector. Flanders Investment & Trade, which has been actively promoting Flanders' offshore wind invest opportunities and the related technologies in Japan, greatly contributed to this. The next step is bringing Flanders' installation and maintenance know-how to Japan.

That is why, mid-April 2023, a delegation of four organizations (the Provincial Development Agency of West Flanders (POM West-Vlaanderen), SIRRIS OWI-Lab, Ostend Science Park and e-BO Enterprises) went to Japan to highlight more investment opportunities in blue energy in West Flanders.



After the seminar

Flanders Investment & Trade prepared an exciting programme consisting of an Invest Seminar 'Powering the Future: West-Flanders Leads the Way in Offshore Wind Energy' at the Belgian Embassy, a Belgian Beer and Food Pairing event (organized by the Belgian-Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce in Japan) and a series of bilateral meetings in Tokyo, Kyoto and Osaka with a range of Japanese organizations interested or active in offshore wind.

"The more than 15 years of experience in offshore wind energy in Belgium means that many countries that want to invest in offshore energy in the upcoming years, such as Japan, could learn a lot from our lessons learned", says Pieter Jan Jordaens of Sirris OWI-Lab, which stands for On- and Offshore Wind Infrastructure Application Lab. "Making the learning curve as steep as possible is very cost-effective in this capital-intensive industry, in order to develop as fast as possible and contribute to climate change mitigation. Corporate venturing in all its varieties, from joint R&D to acquisitions, contributes to this."

Innovation landscape

"In the many exchanges with Japanese companies, cheaper access to funds was mentioned several times, as inflation in Japan is not of the same order as in Western Europe", says Ira Lardinois of POM West-Vlaanderen. "In this respect, the emerging Princess Elizabeth Zone offers an exquisite opportunity for Japanese investors. In addition to that, we have an extremely suitable ecosystem in West

Flanders to develop and test new offshore energy technologies through the available test and research facilities combined with expertise in our province."

Many companies, research institutes and clusters active in blue energy – and more broadly in the blue economy – are concentrated in Ostend. "In Ostend Science Park, the triple helix actors (government, companies and knowledge institutions) find each other in a dynamic innovation landscape where, in addition to offshore wind, for example, multi-use applications are also being developed. An example of this is the combination of offshore wind and aquaculture or floating solar and aquaculture", Pieter Embo of Ostend Science Park explains.

One of the companies in Ostend Science

Park is e-BO Enterprises. Vincent Dehullu, International Business Development Manager: *"Since about 15 years we averagely deploy two wind farms yearly related to digitalization, connectivity, physical protection, and cybersecurity. In the course of those years, the wind farm industry evolved from small wind farms to an important power producer and grid balancing actor. What you see today is an unmanned power plant that is considered mission-critical."*

"Given the changing international geopolitical scene, the interpretation of digitalization is constantly evolving. Digitalization remains an important aspect during the entire life span of a wind turbine, which is a couple of decades. While we are switching to carbon neutral energy, the time to go live is reduced, and experience with the standardization of complex installations is a necessity. We welcome the Japanese offshore wind industry community to partner from early engineering onwards."

To realize the high ambitions in the field of offshore energy in Europe – 450 GW by 2050 – additional manufacturing capacity will also be necessary. Japanese companies like Daikin in Ostend or ICO in Zeebrugge have proven to be very successful in West Flanders. Ira Lardinois: *"Perhaps in the future, collaboration can take place in the field of manufacturing pieces of an offshore wind turbine with Japanese firms?"*



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EUROPALIA 1989: JAPAN IN BELGIUM, PART 3

By W. F. Vande Walle, Professor Emeritus KU Leuven, and BJA Board Member

In the previous contribution, I have mostly dealt with exhibitions of what for convenience's sake we shall call fine arts, both classical and modern. However, what perhaps sets Europalia Japan more apart from any other edition of the Europalia festival was the particular attention it paid to the link between art and everyday life, i.e. to the extent to which traditional arts and 'ways' (shodō, sadō, budō etc.) are part of what the Japanese call *nihonjin no kurashi*, the everyday life of the average Japanese. Champions of *Japonisme* in the nineteenth century had already pointed out that intertwining of arts and everyday life. That this was a flattered perception of reality is hard to deny, but it is not entirely devoid of truth either. Japan's decorative arts have indeed proved to be an inexhaustible source of inspiration even for innovative art movements such as Art Nouveau or Art Deco. This article includes highlights of the traditional arts and applied arts on the one hand and of the performing arts on the other.

Nihonjin no kurashi

In the run-up to the actual festival, an itinerant photo exhibition titled *Japan*

1971-1984 *Man and Life* was presented in several cities throughout the country. Organised by the Japan Foundation, this exhibition aimed to paint a picture of everyday life in modern Japan. It focused on the contrast between tradition and contemporary conceptions and lifestyle. A wide range of topics related to Japanese nature and the Japanese way of life were taken up, but underlying this variety was a unified perspective: the coexistence of change and tradition. It was indeed a widely accepted opinion then, certainly more than would be the case now, that contemporary Japan was characterised by the seemingly peaceful coexistence of far-reaching industrialisation and sweeping urbanisation on the one hand, and the endurance of a pervasive tradition, in which religion, folk festivals, and rural life are firmly rooted, on the other. Although this perspective is the reflection of a good deal of invented tradition, it was a view espoused by most of the Japanese involved in Europalia, and indeed subscribed to by the Belgian side.

Europalia had therefore opted to organise a series of exhibitions and events that would exemplify that perceived coexistence. That meant turning the limelight to the applied arts, traditional arts, decorative arts, and various codified ways (dō) of executing cultural acts or producing aesthetic objects, some of them the realm of specialists or masters, others practised and enjoyed by a sizable portion of the general public. One newspaper headline put it this way: 'Japanse tradities leiden een natuurlijk bestaan' (Japanese traditions lead a natural existence). This involved a wide range of art forms. Seen from that angle, Europalia had to leave the comfort zone of the prevailing Western mainstream concepts of art. In the highly elitist Western vision, art is by definition the realm of the eminently in-

dividual, creative artist, untrammelled by convention and claiming total autonomy, however illusory that in actual practice may be. As a result, there is an a priori bias against contemporary expressions of art forms that are subject to elaborate, pre-set rules and conventions, or practised by large groups of the population.

The Centrum voor Kunst en Cultuur at the Sint-Pietersabdij in Ghent hosted no less than three exhibitions that testified to the vitality of the traditional arts: Arts and crafts from Ishikawa Prefecture, the Kimono, and Calligraphy from the Twentieth Century.

Arts and crafts from Ishikawa Prefecture

Ghent was the obvious choice for this exhibition, given the fact that Kanazawa, the capital of Ishikawa Prefecture, is its sister city.

From the beginning of the Edo period, the *Kaga* clan, the dynasty of feudal lords who ruled over the area of present-day Ishikawa Prefecture, embarked upon a policy of protecting and promoting the arts and crafts. Subsequent generations of daimyō continued this policy, laying the solid foundations for an enduring legacy, which was carried on after the social and political upheaval in the wake of the advent of the Meiji period (1868). Consequently, this region produced more than its fair share of master-craftsmen. One hundred artworks were selected in the exhibition, primarily from the collections of Ishikawa Prefectural Museum. The selection included artworks by both deceased and living artists whose works stood out for the successful way they managed to marry creativeness with traditional techniques. Thirty pieces of ceramic, 26 pieces of lacquerware, 21 dyed fabrics, 10 pieces of metalwork, and 11 pieces of wood and bamboo



Matsuda Gonroku (born in Kanazawa; 1896-1986), decorative box, with pine tree design in maki-e (1966), height: 11,5 cm, width 16 cm, depth 27,5 cm (1966)



Hand-painted furisode Miyako sode, with kachō fūgetsu design
(Sōen Company, Kyoto)

carving and *kirikane* (metallic foil cut into strips or other shapes to form decorative motifs) were on display.

Fine arts and the crafts are remarkably close in Japan. The artist is craftsman, the craftsman an artist. The great masters, weavers, lacquerers, potters, calligraphers, papermakers etc., fostered traditional techniques and trained new generations of artisans. Modernists rediscovered artisanal techniques and the resulting synthesis created a new Japanese art of living. The purity of form and the refined sense of decoration were and are outstanding. In the lacquer ware, the subtle use of gold-inlay and gold powder sprinkled onto the undried lacquer surface, as well as the inlay of mother-of-pearl proved that the area is justly associated with the highest quality in its field.

Kimono

The Japanese kimono exhibition presented this traditional Japanese garment in its full glory. Here again, as the Japanese title *Kimono seikatsu to kimono*: (Lifestyle and the kimono) indicated, the approach was the integration of traditional arts and crafts into the daily life of the Japanese. The exhibition paid ample attention to textiles and clothing. Each Japanese province has its own weaving industry and at the time there were said to be more than one hundred production centres where textiles are woven and dyed. A kimono is made in fifteen stages involving various craftsmen. In a display of around one hundred kimonos, the exhibition provided an overview of nine different regional styles: *nishijin-ori*, *kyō-yūzen*, *niji-zome*, *ai-zome*, *furisode*, all typical of Kyoto, further *kaga-yūzen* typical of

Kanazawa, *shibori-zome* typical of Nagoya, *arimatsu-shibori*, and *tsumugi*. The production process was illustrated with photographic materials, panels and colour slides. In a number of demonstrations models and instructors showed how a kimono is put on properly, and how kimonos are differentiated according to the degree of formality of the occasion.

The exhibition drew on the collection of the Ishikawa Prefectural Museum, to show what that region has to offer in this field, but it also presented contemporary productions from significant workshops in various other places in Japan. Kimono is an elegant and sophisticated garment that represents more than just clothing. The colour symbolism, motifs and design have turned the kimono into a means of communication. The use of precious materials and extremely refined decoration elevate these traditional robes to true works of art. Especially those embroidered with gold thread are gems of exquisite craftsmanship.

The kimono obviously boasts its own history and development in terms of fabrics and design, and therefore it has its own fashion and fashion shows. In that respect, there is a perfect parallel to Western fashion and practices. What perhaps differs markedly from Western fashion is the fact that with kimono great emphasis is also placed on how to wear it, the posture, the way of stepping, the facial expression, the appropriate body language. In Western fashion most attention is focused on the novelty of fabrics and design, and how to wear the clothes is mostly left to intuition.

A big name in the world of kimono fashion was and is Miyake Teruno. Born into a family of weavers in Kyoto, she has dedicated her life to kimono culture, she breathes kimono so to speak. She has given demonstrations, classes, and exhibitions in more than forty countries. At the occasion of Europalia Japan she staged several kimono shows, while at the Hilton Hotel in Brussels she organised a grand kimono dinner-cum-fashion show.

Calligraphy

Journalists reporting on the *Mainichi Shodo Association's* exhibition of calligraphy in Ghent, often saw a similarity with abstract painting. This exhibition included 200 works of modern calligraphy dating from the turn of the Twentieth Century up to the 1950s. Admittedly, these calligraphies are often *avant-garde* or abstract in character, sometimes leaning more towards modern painting than writing. However, the basic principle of calligraphy, namely the search for harmony between ink, brush, and paper, still holds true. Each artist's spiritual vitality is expressed in the spontaneous dynamism of the brushwork. In a sense, calligraphy is the most direct form of expression, reflecting the state of mind and emotion of its creator. That is the way calligraphy has been described since it became a consummate art. The exhibits included both thick brushed characters as well as narrative images or works carved onto a lacquered wooden board. Some journalists pointed out, justly or not, that psychoanalysts were sure to find a rich field of exploration in the exhibition.

Calligraphy or *Shodō* originated in China but through the centuries was gradually adapted by the Japanese and developed into distinct and even idiosyncratic Japanese styles, such as *kanteiryū* and various other styles known as *Edomoji* (Edo period lettering). In the 20th century, if calligraphy was to survive as an art form, it could not remain aloof from what was going on in the art world at large. After the

HIGHLIGHTS IN THE LAST 60 YEARS OF BELGIUM-JAPAN RELATIONS

dark years of the war, it needed a fresh breath of air. Launching its first call for submission of works in 1948, the *Mainichi Shodo Association* organised its first *All Japan Calligraphy Exhibition* in the same year with the backing of the major newspaper *Mainichi shin-bun*. The following year, the initiative was repeated under a new name, *Japan Comprehensive Calligraphy Exhibition*, and from that year on the number of works submitted by the public, as well as by members and friends of the association, has grown steadily into a comprehensive exhibition that brings together all fields of calligraphy, from traditional styles to experimental contemporary expressions. The annual exhibition has become the focal point of a huge number of practitioners and has brought many great masters to the limelight. The 73rd exhibition (2022) attracted more than 29,000 entries from the public, as well as from association members and executives, easily making it the largest calligraphy exhibition in Japan both in terms of content and scale. The 200 works exhibited in Ghent were all works by association members and executives.

The Europalia Japan Centre

For the duration of the festival a *Europalia Japan Centre* was set up on the fourth floor of the Anspach Centre building, not far from the Grand-Place in Brussels. Here a wide range of both officially sponsored and voluntary, self-funded events was presented in fast succession. The venue was arranged in the style of a Japanese garden, and provided space for demonstrations, a stage, a Japanese style room, a gallery and an audio-visual room, in addition to a restaurant where Japanese food could be tasted. A multitude of video's introducing various aspects of Japanese culture were constantly being screened. The centre was freely accessible and offered visitors low-threshold initiations into a variety of cultural expressions, such as garden art and the Japanese sense of space. It further included an exhibition of about 1,000

books in Western languages dedicated to one or other aspect of Japan, along with a selection of deluxe editions dedicated to Japanese culture and arts.

Calligraphy is a living art with ancient roots. At the time of Europalia Japan 1989, it was claimed that around twenty million Japanese were practicing Japanese calligraphy under one form or another. This number is spread over a huge number of schools and artistic orientations. It was hard to give even an hint of the full scope of such a massive production. Since the venue in Ghent had been reserved for the *Mainichi Shodo Association*, the other most representative schools were given a forum at the Europalia Japan Centre, displaying 110 works by as many calligraphers. In addition, the exhibition *Calligraphy and its Mounting Art*, featuring 21 works by Kawakami Keinen (1903-2003) as framed or mounted by Sakuma Hideyoshi, was staged here, after first having been held in Aalst. Kawakami Keinen was a promi-

nent calligrapher who spent his whole life studying the calligraphy of the Chinese Grand Master of the Tang Dynasty: Yan Zhenqing 顏真卿 (709-785). A long-time professor at Tamagawa Gakuen University, he founded of the *Daidōsho gakuin* (Nihon Academy for Calligraphy), where even former prime ministers Miki Takeo and Kaifu Toshiki ranked among his pupils. His academy prides itself on being the heir and successor of orthodox calligraphy, as opposed to experimental calligraphy as practised in the *Mainichi Shodo Association's* exhibition. His works were also highly appreciated in China.

Kabuki Theatre

Two of the famous stars of the Kabuki theatre performed at the Théâtre de la Monnaie/Muntscouwburg: Ichikawa Danjūrō XII, heir to the most illustrious name in Kabuki, and Bandō Tamasaburō V, the celebrated female impersonator. Together with fifty other artists, they evoked the richness of the Kabuki repertoire. They performed ex-



Tamasaburō performing the so-called 'catalogue of umbrellas' in Sagi-musume



Tamasaburō performing the so-called 'hand dance' in Sagi-musume

Ichikawa Danjūrō XII in Kumagaya jin'ya



HIGHLIGHTS IN THE LAST 60 YEARS OF BELGIUM-JAPAN RELATIONS



The so-called 'prawn-shaped pose',
expressing extreme anguish, in *Sagi-musume*

cerpts from three plays: *bō-shibari* (30 minutes), based on a famous *Kyōgen* play, the scene *Kumagaya jin'ya* (70 minutes), and the dance *Sagi-musume* (30 minutes). *Kumagaya jin'ya* deals with the clash between the ethics of *bushido* and the love between a father and son. The drama unfolds against the backdrop of Suma's picturesque nature. The role of the son further heightens the tragic effect of the event depicted. *Sagi-musume* is a dramatic dance about the ghost of a white heron at the edge of a swamp on a snowy night. Suddenly the spirit changes into the guise of a city girl (*machi-musume*) from Edo, who performs a beguiling dance, before finally returning to the guise of the spirit of the heron and vanishing into thin air. The visual impact of the girl dressed in white kimono and wearing an elegant umbrella under a willow tree by the water, performing her dance to express her anguish about her unrequited love, is captivating. In the finale Tamasaburō allegedly took a hint from *Dying Swan* (originally *The Swan*), a solo dance choreographed by Mikhail Fokine to Camille Saint-Saëns's *Le Cygne* from *Le Carnaval des animaux*.

After its premiere in 1978, Tamasaburō, also an accomplished ballet dancer, performed this dance to great acclaim in major cities of the world. With each successive performance he polished his art to perfection and it became one of his signature pieces. However, due to the technicality and the physical strength required to dance with costumes and wigs that add up to a heavy weight, the actor announced in 2009 that henceforth he would no longer dance the entire play.

Nō Plays

Several performances of the Nō theatre were staged. Two companies, *U mewaka Kennō Kai* directed by Umewaka Makio and *U mewaka Kai* directed by Umewaka Rokurō staged performances. Umewaka Makio performed in Lille and Hasselt, Umewaka Rokurō in Brussels and Aalst. The Umewaka Rokurō performances were supported by *Kyōgen* farces performed by the Okura School of Kyōgen, featuring among others Shigeyama Sengorō, a living national treasure.

Puppet Theatre

The *Bunraku* puppet theatre gave a

Commissioner-general
Jacques Grootaert,
introducing the Bunraku
performance at the
Théâtre National de la
Communauté Française
de Belgique



performance of the famous *Double Suicide at Sonezaki*, the 1703 masterpiece which established the reputation of its author, Chikamatsu Monzaemon (1653-1724). Inspired by a real-life story, it is set in a middle-class neighbourhood of Osaka. A servant falls in love with a young courtesan, and they eventually decide to commit double suicide.

Three players for one puppet, with this magic formula *Bunraku* theatre grew into an art form, that is considered by many to be more forceful and more profound than the traditional puppet theatre. Neither wires nor other aids are employed. Puppeteers have direct physical contact with their puppets, allowing them to express a wide range of feelings. The music of the *shamisen* evokes the mood and emotions of the scene performed and delineates the fields of tension. Alternating dialogue,

Explaining to the audience
how the puppets are manipulated



Puppeteers with the puppets
of Ohatsu and Tokubei



The hero Tokubei and heroine Ohatsu of *Double Suicide at Sonezaki* (*Sonezaki shinjū Monogatari*)



HIGHLIGHTS IN THE LAST 60 YEARS OF BELGIUM-JAPAN RELATIONS

singing and recitation, the reciter interprets all the roles of the different characters.

Closely identified with the townspeople culture of Osaka, *Bunraku* is a complex form of dramatic art, which combines the recitative art of *jōruri* with the playing of the stringed instrument *shamisen*, and the performance of puppets. The puppets evolve along with the reciters' emotions and the rhythm of the *shamisen*, to sometimes great dramatic and emotional heights. The most renowned storytellers, *shamisen* players and puppeteers, among them Yoshida Tamao, a living national treasure, regaled the Belgian audience with their consummate art.

Ninagawa Yukio (1935-2016)

Talking of Chikamatsu Monzaemon, his dramatic works were also featured in *Suicides for Love* (original title *Chikamatsu Shinjū Monogatari*, not to be confused with Mizoguchi Kenji's film *Chikamatsu monogatari* of 1954), a dazzling production by Japanese theatre director Ninagawa Yukio, that had created a sensation every time it has been performed since its premiere at the Imperial Theatre in 1979, directed by Ninagawa Yukio. The play was originally written by playwright Akimoto Matsuyo in response to a commission from the Toho Theatre Company to dramatize Chikamatsu Monzaemon's 'double suicide' plays from a new perspective. Akimoto selected three plays by Chikamatsu, but substantially rearranged them, giving full rein to her own narrative style.

Both the playwright and the director decided to adapt the period atmosphere of the original play, written for a puppet theatre, to a contemporary audience. Not only the four main characters, two pairs of star-crossed lovers, but also the sorrow and vitality of the people of the *Genroku* era, resonate in the unfolding drama. It evoked a grand social fresco of the Japanese city and of the entertainment districts during the Edo period.

The core of the plot was taken from the play *Meido no hikyaku* (the courier of the underworld), picturing the tragic love between the courtesan Umekawa and the express messenger Chūbei. In Antwerp the role of Umekawa was played by Tanaka Yūko, whom Belgian spectators were familiar with thanks to the immensely popular NHK Serial TV Novel titled *Oshin*, where Tanaka played the role of the adult Oshin. Incidentally, the serial ran in almost 300 fifteen-minute episodes and captivated European audiences during the 1980's.

Ninagawa's production in Antwerp was breath-taking, with at times over a hundred actors on stage playing out the tragic drama against a backdrop of stunning sets and elegant costumes. Unsurprisingly, it was Europalia Japan's most expensive event. The concluding scene featured a magnificent snowstorm produced with hundreds of kilos of confetti.

Suicides for Love had been a huge success in Japan and had been seen by half a million people. It had been awarded the National Arts Festival Grand Prize in 1981 and had been staged for the first time in Europe in 1983. While clearly dealing with classical material, this production was neither kabuki nor *jōruri*, but rather a modern drama that depicts the conflicts between the social system and the ties that bind people, and yet it had a completely different feel from the *Shingeki* style.

Make-up, a one-woman play

In this poignant melodrama, the spectator is invited into the dressing room of a shabby, small-town playhouse. The actress-manager is getting ready for



The snowstorm marking the finale of Chikamatsu Shinjū Monogatari

Scenes from Chikamatsu Shinjū Monogatari



her next performance. The playhouse will be demolished in ten days' time due to the rapid decline in popularity of its populist form of blue-collar Kabuki. *Make-up*, written by Inoue Hisashi, was performed by the celebrated Watanabe Hisako. It is a one-woman monologue rehearsing off-stage with invisible partners. She is rehearsing a tear-jerker about a mother's near-reunion with the son she had reluctantly abandoned at birth due to economic hardship, leaving her to wonder about his fate for the rest of her life. It turns out that it is the story of her own life: the character of a young yakuza (gangster) progressively emerges from the past, seeking the mother who once abandoned her. The play is an astonishing portrait of the seamier side of Tokyo, and a histrionic parody of Kabuki. *Make-up* was one of the great theatrical successes of the eighties in Japan.

About this play, the author stated, "the creator's only role is to serve as mid-wife to the spectator's imagination". Misako Watanabe's outstanding play had already earned resounding success in France and the US. Since its premiere in 1981, she has performed it 550 times, not only in Japan but also in Europe, North America, and South-East Asia. The Japanese call this sort of contemporary Western-style realism *shingeki*. In Inoue's little melodrama, Watanabe Misako displays her consummate art by riffing through an entire gamut of emotions, from comic to dramatic.

Opera

On a European tour Tokyo Nikikai Opera Theatre (founded 1952) staged *Chan-chiki* (composed by Dan Ikuma) in Belgrade, Budapest, Luxembourg, Dresden. The Luxembourg performance was included in the Europalia programme. The script of *Chan-chiki* was originally written by Mizuki Yōko for Japanese dance, and was based on a folk song, in which the motif of 'chan chan chan-chiki' (an imitation of the sound of a metal gong) is repeated. While writing the music for the dance, Dan Ikuma,

one of Japan's most eminent post-war composers, perceived operatic potential in the theme and decided to turn it into an opera. He was also charmed by the Nagoya dialect of the original folk song because of its interesting intonations. The heroes are a fox and its cub, living in a harsh environment, forced to defend themselves against otters and humans. It also includes a scene in which the fox transforms itself into a beautiful woman, a common theme in ancient Japanese folklore.

The opera is written in the form of a folk tale but features essentially modern human beings. It basically deals with various issues that are part of the human experience. For example, the problem of understanding or misunderstanding between parents and children, or the problem of the community in which human beings live. The opera included Japanese instruments, *shamisen* and *tsuzumi* drums. The composer chose these instruments because of their dry sound, to create a vivid contrast between the sounds of western instruments flowing along, and the Japanese rhythms punctuating them.

Dance

Many varieties of Japanese dance, both traditional and avant-garde were performed, ranging from *bugaku* to *butō* dance. The *bugaku* court dances incorporate a language of gestures imported over a thousand years ago from China, but in many cases these stylistic patterns go back in their origin to Central Asia and the Indian subcontinent. In today's Japan these time-honoured dance styles coexist with avant-garde forms that have developed since the second half of the twentieth century and have given the Japanese dance world a new impulse. Between the two extremes of the ancient and the modern there are many different forms and styles, ranging from the multitude of folk dances to the *mai*, from which the Nō theatre developed its dialectic of movement and immobility, and the *odori*, which lent its energy and spirit

to the Kabuki theatre, and spawned the successful *buyō* schools, still thriving today. We should also mention the sober and refined *jiuta-mai*, the art of the Kansai geishas, as well as the western ballet, which has earned citizen right in Japan.

During the 1970s and 1980s *butō* dance became synonymous with Japanese modernity. There was e.g., the 'dance of darkness' with its shaking, trembling and jolting movements, where every dancer appeared as a creature of flesh and blood who subjects his body to torture. *Butō* is erotic, macabre, thrilling and Dionysian. Baudrillard called it 'the theatre of cruelty, repulsion and revulsion'. Ōno Kazuo, the undisputed father of the genre, 83 years old at the time, made the overseas trip to perform for Europalia. His performances were forceful interpretations of the haunting memories that took hold of his body. In his tortuous movements he invoked his mother, La Argentina (an Argentine dancer of the Twenties), his youth, even his own foetus.

The younger dancers looked even beyond *butō* and searched for novel points of reference. One of them was Teshigawara Saburō, a dancer and choreographer, who had worked in mime and found associations with sculpture. From these sources he created an original style, dynamic and fluid but with the constant threat of a sudden break. He has been particularly acclaimed in France, where he won a prize at the prestigious Bagnolet Competition for Choreographers, and where he successfully appeared at festivals and various well-known locations with his company named Karas (founded in 1985). Other stars who performed were Ikeda Carlotta, leader of Ariadone, Tanaka Min, who performed in Paris, and Yoko Ashikawa, leader of Hakutōbō, who performed in Amsterdam. Most of the *butō* were supported by the Japan Foundation, a testimony to the degree *butō*, this rebellious art had gained official recognition in its country of origin.

To be continued in the next issue.



THE BELGIAN PAVILION FOR EXPO 2025 OSAKA

THE WINNING CONSORTIUM

BelExpo has awarded the public tender for the design and construction of the Belgian Pavilion for Expo 2025 Osaka, to the winning consortium, consisting of Carré 7, Beyond Limits, OneDesigns, Pirnay Engineering and Polytech Engineering with their partners. Details of the Belgian pavilion have been released, illustrating the theme “Saving Lives”. Belgium will be showcasing its industrial and scientific trump cards to attract visitors and foreign investors.

The Belgian company Carré 7 is responsible for the design part. Carré 7 is a La Louvière-based architectural firm with impressive experience. They have been designing different types of buildings and spaces for a long time. Recently, they were responsible for the construction and design of Charleroi’s new football stadium. They are the originators of the concept and took responsibility in terms of layout, floor plans and elevations. They considered issues such as visitor flow and the submission of the design and materials. Carré 7 drew up the specifications in which they dedicated themselves to the landscape design and the interior design of the requested spaces. Throughout the process, Carré 7 oversaw the artistic aspect of the building documents.

To this end, they were supported by several partners: Arter (landscape architects) and A-tech (for acoustic studies). Arter architects is a multidisciplinary architectural firm based in the heart of Brussels. Multidisciplinarity is central to them. They have an extensive portfolio that includes restoration, development, and exhibition projects. On the other hand, Brussels-based A-tech further completes the portfolio with projects in buildings, leisure, air and ground.

In addition, Carré 7 also leans on Belgian partner Pirnay/Po-



ly-Tech for structural engineering matters, particularly structural design, BIM and façade. Pirnay Engineers has worked extensively with Carré 7 on various projects in the past. They too were allowed to stick their name on the Charleroi football stadium. Their portfolio was further complemented by impressive projects such as Hotel Van der Valk in Charleroi and the CHU Tivoli hospital in La Louvière. Carré 7 also gets the support of a Japanese partner JMA Architects who have focused on the AOR services, detailed design and BOQ, sta-



tistical calculations and detailed structural design. They are also looking into various documents such as the permit application, IFC drawings and BIM review. JMA Architects has already built several institutions from scratch, including school buildings, hospitals, religious buildings and government buildings.

The international company Beyond Limits focuses on the operational part of public procurement. They deal with issues

such as project and interfacing management, the design phases and their coordination, programming and cost control and supply chain management. They are also responsible for onboarding and logistical coordination of the project, as well as construction management and on-site supervision of construction and quality control. Upon completion of Expo 2025 Osaka, they will oversee the decommissioning and return of the plot. In short, they ensure a smooth flow of information and communication between the various partners. They oversee the entire project and adjust where necessary. Operationally in the back-of-house, they have partnered with Nihon Housing. They will take care of security, cleaning, garden maintenance and janitorial services. Nihon Housing specializes in social development of buildings and helps build safe and comfortable living spaces.

Finally, One Designs will play the role of construction company in this consortium. This Japanese firm offers a broad service from interior design to full construction and renovation of buildings. They will carry out the civil works on the one hand. Those civil works will include: the infrastructure works (earthworks to installations utilities to technical maintenance); the structure and cladding (from foundations to concrete works to façade construction to glass works); the MEP works (from HVAC/AC to electrical works to plumbing to water supply and lighting); the landscaping (from landscaping to greenery to irrigation); and the decommissioning. On the other hand, they will also handle interior design. More specifically, this includes partition works, ceiling works, flooring, painting, metalwork, insulation works and finishing.

Source: Belexpo, www.belexpo.be, [Belgian Pavilion video](#)

TRANSPARENCY AND TRACEABILITY

ENHANCING EFFICIENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY: WHEN TRANSPARENCY AND TRACEABILITY MEET AT THE CROSSROADS

By Romain Cical, Supply Chain Director, NTT DATA Europe & LATAM

Recent years have shown how globalized and interconnected supply chain made businesses face numerous challenges, including the unpredictability of supplies and demands, heightened complexities, and increasing consumer demands for ethical and sustainable practices. These challenges are taking another dimension in a context where regulators and consumers are requesting from companies more transparency on product origins and sustainable practices. In a VUCA environment (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous), transparency and traceability have emerged as essential factors for organizations seeking to establish trust, ensure accountability, and drive efficiency across company key value chains. By implementing comprehensive visibility measures and technologies from upstream to downstream, companies can address these challenges and unlock a myriad of benefits.

The journey of a product begins at its origin, typically involving multiple suppliers, raw materials, and manufacturing processes. Upstream visibility and traceability enable organizations to gain insights into these initial stages, ensuring the integrity and sustainability of their supply chains. Upstream preparation and organization are essential to succeed. First, anticipating

turbulences through efficient upstream supply risk identification is compulsory to keep focus on critical and vulnerable supply streams. Also, increasing visibility by integrating multiple *Tier n* suppliers helps ensuring updated certifications of manufacturing origins while reducing qualitative and quantitative supply incidents and associated correction costs. Lastly, monitoring on real-time basis upstream transportation operations of critical items using Supply Chain Visibility Platforms is crucial to reduce OTIF infractions and prepare midstream dynamic operations.

Once the raw materials are sourced, they enter the midstream phase, encompassing various operational processes such as manufacturing, processing, and distribution. Keeping the transparency and traceability pace in intralogistics operations tend to be even more critical as it is usually subject to higher volume of blind spots. Managing efficiently upstream to midstream transition enables dynamic, frictionless, optimized resources usage while reducing D&D costs. Here, implementing advanced tracking technologies, such as RFID tags or IoT sensors, allows real-time monitoring of inventory levels, production rates, and transportation schedules. Also, maintaining distribution traceabil-

ity to guarantee parent-child (batch to lot etc.) relationship from bulk origin down to fractionated lots for recall campaign purpose appears to be essential. Finally, avoiding blind spots through fulfillment stages ensure a smooth coordination towards downstream operations and real-time data for customer service & upstream planning.

The downstream phase of the value chain involves the distribution, marketing, and consumption of products. Transparency and traceability in this stage can bolster consumer trust, facilitate product recall processes, and enable targeted marketing strategies. The aggregated level of traceability of transparency reached in previous stages then let companies smoothly close loop to calculate accumulated carbon footprint throughout the whole supply chain process for reporting purpose. At downstream level, managing optimal performance and efficiency of transportation enabling planning, execution & optimization of the movement of goods is fundamental to control on real-time basis operations. As consumer expectations have remained intact although supply chains have been highly disrupted, last-mile transport being part of the product delivered, where order-to-deliver commitment is crucial.

EU Committee news

TRANSPARENCY AND TRACEABILITY FOR JTI

By Kiyoshi Iwai, Japan Affairs Director JTI, BJA EU Committee Member

For JTI, transparency and traceability are important factors in establishing a sustainable value chain which procures stable, quality materials from reliable sources, while respecting human rights and preserving our environment.

JTI strives to improve farming practices and farmer livelihoods by:

- › sourcing tobacco leaf through two supply models, either directly contracted growers (50%) or tobacco leaf merchants (50%),
- › implementing our Agricultural Labor Practices Program - with all our contracted growers now being monitored - to identify potential labor challenges on tobacco farms and develop adequate response measures,
- › implementing our leaf Supply Chain Due Diligence (SCDD) process & carrying out Supply Chain Impact Assessments,
- › co-leading & participating in the Sustainable Tobacco Program,
- › addressing child labor issues with the ARISE (Achieving Reduction of Child Labor in Support of Education) program since 2011,
- › developing solutions and working with our tobacco growers

to reduce emissions associated with tobacco growing and curing, engaging with our suppliers to reduce emissions.

We work toward safety in our manufacturing processes and accelerate our environmental impact reduction initiatives, while manufacturing innovative products by:

- › increasing the use of renewable energy and prioritizing alternative fuels and vehicles,
- › promoting resource recycling and developing and manufacturing sustainable products with high environmental value,
- › ensuring that all locations have their own Health and Safety Policy reflecting the Corporate Safety vision and principles.

JTI establishes and maintains route-to-consumers which delivers genuine products, while reducing GHG emissions, by:

- › engaging in our global Anti Illicit Trade Operation program and working in public-private partnership with law enforcement agencies globally to fight against illegal trade,
- › using Track and Trace technology to enhance control over the legitimate tobacco supply chain,
- › improving energy efficiency, increasing the use of renewable energy, and prioritizing alternative fuels and vehicles.

ENSURING TRANSPARENCY AND TRACEABILITY IN THE BATTERY SUPPLY CHAIN – THE CASE FOR BATTERY PASSPORTS

By Dr Fabrice Stassin, Director Government Affairs Electromobility Projects and Coordinator for Asian Affairs, Umicore, BJA EU Committee Chair

Implementing a battery passport system in the battery supply chain offers several merits for ensuring sustainability. It enhances transparency and traceability, allowing stakeholders to address sustainability issues throughout the battery's lifecycle. Additionally, the passport system promotes a circular economy by facilitating battery reuse and appropriate recycling techniques, reducing waste and environmental impact. Battery passports also empower consumers by providing information about a battery's sustainability, enabling informed choices, and driving demand for sustainable batteries.

Challenges still persist in adopting a battery passport system, including stan-

dardization, data security, and global implementation. Standardized protocols and cooperation are needed to establish unified formats across countries and sectors. Data security measures must protect sensitive information, and regulatory frameworks should ensure privacy. Encouraging participation, securing funding, and raising awareness about battery passports are essential for global implementation.

Collaboration, innovation, and commitment are necessary to address these challenges. International cooperation and regulatory frameworks should develop unified standards. Strong data security measures and privacy regulations must protect sensitive information.

Efforts to engage small-scale producers, secure funding, and raise awareness will contribute to wider adoption.

By promoting the merits of battery passports, the industry can move towards a more sustainable future. Transparency, circular economy practices, and consumer empowerment will reduce environmental impact. Widespread adoption of battery passports can bring significant positive changes, ensuring a more sustainable and ethical battery supply chain, which is very dear to Umicore and its customers.

More on Umicore and its involvement in the battery passport at <https://www.umi-core.com/en/newsroom/battery-pass/>

THE EU'S FOREIGN SUBSIDIES REGULATION

IMPACT ON JAPANESE COMPANIES AND TIMING IMPLICATIONS

By Ina Lunneryd, Counsel, Linklaters LLP & Joost Dibbets, Managing Associate (Knowledge), Linklaters LLP, and BJA EU Committee Member

The European Union's Foreign Subsidies Regulation (FSR) grants the European Commission powers to address distortive effects of non-EU subsidies on the EU market, with the aim of ensuring a level playing field.

Three Enforcement Tools for the European Commission

The FSR introduces three enforcement tools for the European Commission to address distortive effects of foreign subsidies:

- 1. M&A:** Mandatory notification for deals where the EU turnover of the target (for acquisitions), the joint venture, or one of the merging parties (for mergers) is €500m or more, and the companies involved have received at least €50m in combined financial contributions from non-EU countries.
- 2. Public procurement:** Mandatory notification for tenders where the estimated contract value is €250m or more and the bid involves financial contributions of at least €4m per non-EU country.
- 3. A catch-all tool:** A general power for the Commission to investigate all other market situations (including M&A and public tenders falling below the thresholds) where there may have been financial contributions from non-EU countries.

Impact on Japanese Companies

These tools may have a significant impact on Japanese companies as they will need to understand the extent of financial contributions received from non-EU countries and whether these could amount to a “subsidy”.

The FSR affects any company, including EU-based companies, that has received financial contributions from non-EU countries. Identifying and quantifying such contributions in a large organization can be challenging but is necessary to determine whether the notification thresholds are met, and provided the details required, should a notification to the

EU Committee news



European Commission be required. The concept of “financial contribution” is broad and can include capital injections, grants, loans, guarantees, tax exemptions, and the granting of certain rights and public contracts, also where on normal market terms (for more information on what could constitute a high risk financial contributions, see [here](#)).

Identifying and Quantifying Financial Contributions

Companies will need to develop a proportionate strategy to identify relevant financial contributions for inclusion in the notification forms and to respond to European Commission questions to minimize the risk of delay. Most businesses do not have a system that identifies and captures financial contributions, hence establishing an effective data collection exercise is an immediate next step for businesses.

Transaction Planning and Timing Implications

Transaction planning is also crucial to avoid delays in deal timetables. The merger notification obligation applies to transactions that (i) signed on or after 12 July 2023 but have not closed by 12 October 2023; or (ii) that sign on or after 12 October 2023. Importantly for category (i), the European Commission will not accept formal notification prior to 12 October 2023, so the earliest such deals will be able to close will be late November.

Pre-notification Contacts and European Commission Waivers

Japanese companies involved in live deals that are likely to meet the notification thresholds should consider initiating pre-notification contacts with the European Commission as soon as possible, as these contacts may result in a “significant” reduction of the information required thanks to the European Commission’s ability to grant waivers.

Consequences of the European Commission’s Assessment

In addition to the challenges Japanese companies risk facing in identifying and quantifying financial contributions, they must also be prepared for the potential consequences of the European Commission’s assessment under the FSR. Once a notification is made, the Commission will assess whether the financial contributions entail a “subsidy.” It will then assess the negative effects of the subsidy against its positive effects, using a balancing test like the Commission’s compatibility assessment under EU State aid rules.

The catch-all tool gives the Commission broad powers not only to investigate any other market situation in which foreign subsidies may be distortive but also to ‘call-in’ M&A transactions and public procurements that fall below the thresholds and do not require up-front notification. Japanese companies will need to bear in mind this residual enforcement risk.

If the Commission ultimately determines that a foreign subsidy distorts the EU internal market, it has wide-ranging powers to seek repressive measures. These include ordering repayment of subsidies, imposing behavioural commitments (e.g., changes in governance), or in cases with significant concerns, unwinding a transaction.

Conclusion

In summary, the EU’s Foreign Subsidies Regulation will have a significant impact on Japanese companies operating within the EU. It is essential to understand the extent of financial contributions they have received from non-EU countries and whether these could amount to a “subsidy”. By doing so, Japanese companies can better navigate the challenges posed by the FSR, ensuring compliance and minimizing disruptions to their operations.

EU-JAPAN STRONG PARTNERSHIP ON DATA FREE FLOW WITH TRUST

By Yoko Nakata, Director, Brussels Representative Office, Foundation of MultiMedia Communications (FMMC)

Every multi-national company faces the challenge of handling personal data and cross-border data transfers. It is not a simple task; as it is not only a matter of only complying with regulations in one country, but also those of other countries. In today's world, significant efforts are being made to establish a framework that enables safe data transfer between countries, in order to avoid legal uncertainties. For instance, the EU and the US have been working on creating a new framework, called the EU-US Data Privacy Framework, which will foster safe trans-Atlantic data flows. Fortunately, the EU and Japan have a strong and stable framework, known as the EU-Japan mutual adequacy arrangement, which is a framework that allows the safe data transfer for personal data.

The EU and Japan have mutually acknowledged each other's personal data protection systems as equivalent. The EU has approved Japan's adequacy decision of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) under Article 45, while Japan has reciprocated, deeming the EU's system as equivalent with Article 28 of the Act on the Protection of Personal Information (APPI) on 23 January 2019. These mutual adequacy findings have created the world's largest safe data transfer area, facilitating commercial flows between the EU and Japan.

This mutual recognition has enabled personal data to flow freely between the EU and Japan since 2019. However, the recent development of the mutual recognition has been promising as well. On 4 April 2023, the first review of the Japan-EU mutual adequacy arrangement was concluded, demonstrating that a further convergence between

Japan's and the EU's data protection frameworks over the past years. The mutual adequacy arrangement is functioning well, enabling data flows that deliver trust and offer significant benefits to both citizens and businesses.

Legal certainty for business is ensured with this mutual adequacy arrangement put in place, yet further developments in this field are still in progress and are expected as follows:

1. Broadening the scope of the mutual adequacy arrangement

The scope of the mutual adequacy arrangement between EU and Japan is currently limited to the private sector. However, both sides agreed to explore the possibility of broadening the scope to include academia and the public sector, according to the Joint Press Statement issued after the conclusion of the first review of the Japan-EU mutual adequacy arrangement in April, 2023. This expansion may simplify the procedure for cross-border personal data transfers, creating further opportunities for collaboration in research and regulatory field between the EU and Japan.

2. Certification Scheme

While an adequacy decision is an arrangement between two countries/regions, a certification scheme allows individual companies to obtain a certificate. Certification scheme enables trusted data flow between certificate holders, and as more participants join, the more the ecosystem can grow. Various efforts are underway to establish a potential international certification system.

In EU, the first certification mechanism in compliance with GDPR Article

42, called Europrivacy, was approved in October 2022. Europrivacy provides the certification scheme that allows companies to assess the compliance of their data processing activities, select data processors, assess the adequacy of cross-data transfers, and provide assurance to both citizens and clients regarding the adequate processing of their personal data.

However, the certification system based on GDPR is not the only global movement. Japan is a member of the Global Cross-Border Privacy Rules (CBPR) Forum, which aims to promote interoperability and help bridge different regulatory approaches to data protection and privacy. The objectives of the CBPR Forum include establishing an international certification system and promoting interoperability with other data protection and privacy frameworks.

If certification systems converge, a global standardized scheme may be accomplished in the future. During the Roundtable of G7 Data Protection and Privacy Authorities (DPA), held in Japan on 20 and 21 June, the G7 DPA's Communique was adopted. The Communique encouraged dialogue to develop convergent transfer mechanisms that foster interoperability whilst considering transfers within the respective frameworks.

3. Establishment of the Institutional Arrangement for Partnership (IAP)

Multi-national businesses face the challenge of complying with varying rules and regulations in different jurisdictions when it comes to data transfers and handling, as global data rules continue to diverge. During the G7 Digital and Tech Ministers' Meeting, held in Takasa-

ki Gunma, on 29-30 April 2023, the establishment of the Institutional Arrangement for Partnership (IAP) was agreed upon in the Ministerial Declaration.

The IAP aims to bring governments and stakeholders together to develop compatible policies, tools, and practices that enable data flows while ensuring full compliance with existing regulatory requirements. The establishment of the IAP is planned for the upcoming months. It seeks to address the impact of differ-

ing domestic approaches on cross border data flows, which can create uncertainty for governments, businesses, and individuals. The IAP aims to promote the identification of commonalities in regulatory approaches to cross-border data transfers, reducing uncertainty. Additionally, it aims to promote innovation and data sharing via digital credentials and identities by seeking a consensus on approaches to data sharing in priority sectors such as healthcare, green/climate, and mobility.

This multi-national effort is expected to facilitate an environment where cross-border business activities can thrive without the legal uncertainties implicated.

In conclusion, establishing legal certainty is crucial not only for cross-border data transfers, but also for data handling within the nation. With continued efforts, we can anticipate that the business partnership between EU and Japan will grow even stronger.

THE BRAND-NEW BELGIAN FDI SCREENING REGIME

By Vincent Mussche, Partner, FDI, Competition, Liedekerke

The Belgian Foreign Direct investment (FDI) screening regime will enter into force on the 1st of July 2023. The incoming scheme is intended to control investments by non-EU investors by means of direct or indirect acquisitions of, depending on the case, 10% or 25% of the voting rights in entities or undertakings established in Belgium active in certain strategic sectors.

These strategic sectors can pertain to

1. critical infrastructure (physical and virtual) for energy, transport, health, electronic communication and digital infrastructure, media, data processing or storage, aerospace and defense, election infrastructure, financial infrastructure, sensitive installations, land and real estate crucial for the use of such infrastructure including European satellite navigation systems, infrastructure under the Law of 1 July 2011 and critical infrastructure for air transport;

2. technologies or raw materials of essential importance for safety (including food safety), national defense or public order, military equipment subject to the Common Military List and national export control, dual use products or technologies of strategic importance (and related IP rights) for AI, robotics, semi-conductors, cybersecurity, aerospace, defense, energy storage, quantum and nuclear technology and nanotechnology;
3. critical inputs including energy or raw materials and food safety;
4. access to or the ability to control sensitive information or personal data;
5. private security;
6. media freedom and plurality; or
7. technologies of strategic interests in the biotechnology sector provided that the target's turnover exceeded EUR 25 million in the preceding book year.

The Belgian FDI screening regime in-

troduces a mandatory and suspensory ex-ante filing obligation for foreign investments meeting these thresholds. Transactions falling within the scope of the FDI screening regime need to be notified to the Interfederal Screening Commission (ISC), composed of representatives of the Federal State, the Regions, and the Communities.

The review procedure consists of a two-stages review and the legal test is whether the investments may have an impact on public order, national security or the strategic interests of the Belgian Regions and Communities.

The entering into force of the Belgian FDI regime might have a significant impact on transactional timeline and potentially on deal certainty. Therefore, FDI screening will need to be considered from the very start of any contemplated transaction in Belgium involving non-EU investors.

THE CONTIUS BACH ORGAN IN LEUVEN

By Danielle Vermaelen, BJA Board Member



Many prestigious organs were built in the 17th and 18th centuries, not only in the Low Countries, but all over Europe. Superb instruments of the baroque period have survived, great and small, in varying styles, still perfectly playable... but no instrument such as the one built in Liepaja (Latvia) by Heinrich Andreas Contius in 1773-1779. Thanks to scientific research and generous private sponsoring the Contius Foundation (Foundation of public interest) has undertaken the construction of a replica of this historic organ. Now after almost 250 years, it is again possible to enjoy authentic performances of the works of Johann Sebastian Bach, his family and his contemporaries, on an instrument standing on a specially recreated organ-gallery, in the exceptional acoustics of the Saint Michael's Peace Church in Leuven.

The 18th-century organ builder Heinrich Andreas Contius was close to the Bach family and left for Riga in Latvia with a letter of recommendation from Johann Sebastian Bach, in which he is praised as one of the very best organ builders at the time. The Leuven organ was built on the basis of an in-depth scientific and historical research of the original Contius organ, which was largely carried out on site, in Liepaja. The excellent relationship with the Renovation Fund of the Holy Trinity Church in Liepaja, the beautiful church that houses the original Contius organ, played a crucial role in this. The results of this research in Liepaja served as the guideline for the construction of the organ built and tuned in St Michael's Peace Church. The first phase and part of the second phase of the organ were built together by Flentrop Orgelbouw BV from Zaandam in the Netherlands and Joris Potvlieghe, organ and clavichord builder from Tollembeek (Belgium), specialized in the 18th century. The latter completed phases two and three and tuned the organ completely in the style and tuning of the Liepaja organ. The reconstruction of the organ was entirely done with materials and techniques used by Contius. This unique instrument has two manuals, thirty-eight registers and 2021 pipes. It offers a certain gravitas in the tonal foundation, but with a definite rococo flavour. This



is not only due to the alloy used for the pipes, but also to a variety of details in the voicing. In comparison with earlier Silbermann and Wagner organs, this style of instrument is perhaps slightly more elegant and less weighty than its predecessors, yet still remaining firmly rooted in earlier German traditions.

The instrument is a unique element in the layered functions of the church hosting the organ: as a liturgical and concert instrument, obviously, but also as a pedagogical instrument, particularly suitable for recordings, and to support the special project that the Saint Michael's Church promotes as "Church of Peace" in a broad international movement. The Leuven Contius organ is a symbol of the resurrection of the church, which has always had a focus for music until it was devastated in 1944 by misguided allied bombing, also destroying the 1744 Le Picard organ.

The organ is the focal point of the International Contius Bach Festival, comprising daily concerts by highly renowned performers and ensembles, under the artistic directorship of M. Bernard Foccroulle.

Simultaneously a summer academy for young musicians is taking place: in 2023 masterclasses are organised for organists or for organists and vocalists, in cooperation with the Music Chapel Queen Elisabeth. The 10-day Festival is scheduled in the first half of July, the second edition running from 7 through 15 July 2023.

The concert season continues with the monthly Bach concerts on 22 August, 19 September and 17 October 2023 and the weekly lunch concerts every Thursday in September and October 2023. The Bach concerts aim at reproducing over a 3-year period, all J.S. Bach organ works. The detailed programme of the Contius Foundation can be found here: [Contius Foundation](https://www.contiusfoundation.org/). The Contius Foundation warmly welcomes the entire BJA Community!

Bernard Foccroulle, the Artistic Director of the Contius Foundation, is a worldwide renowned organist. His discography as soloist includes more than 40 CDs. Between 1982 and 1997, he recorded the complete organ works by J.S. Bach. For these recordings, he carefully chose the most beautifully preserved historic instruments. Since then, he has devoted most of his time as performer to the Northern German School.

While continuing his career as organist he became director of the Brussels opera house La Monnaie in 1992, holding this position until 2007. He has been director of the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence (France) from 2007 until 2018. In 2017 he received the Leadership Award at the International Opera Awards in London.

In June 2023 he chaired the Jury of the Queen Elisabeth Music Concours for singers.

As composer, Bernard Foccroulle has written several works for singers and orchestra, and chamber music ensemble. He recently composed his first opera, *Cassandra*, featuring a highly topical theme, i.e. environmental activism in the face of social inertia. Thanks to a powerfully evocative score conducted by Kazushi Ono and sets that will transport us in turn to a huge library, a beehive and the heart of a glacier, *Cassandra* will be a powerful and poetic opening to the 2023–24 season of La Monnaie.



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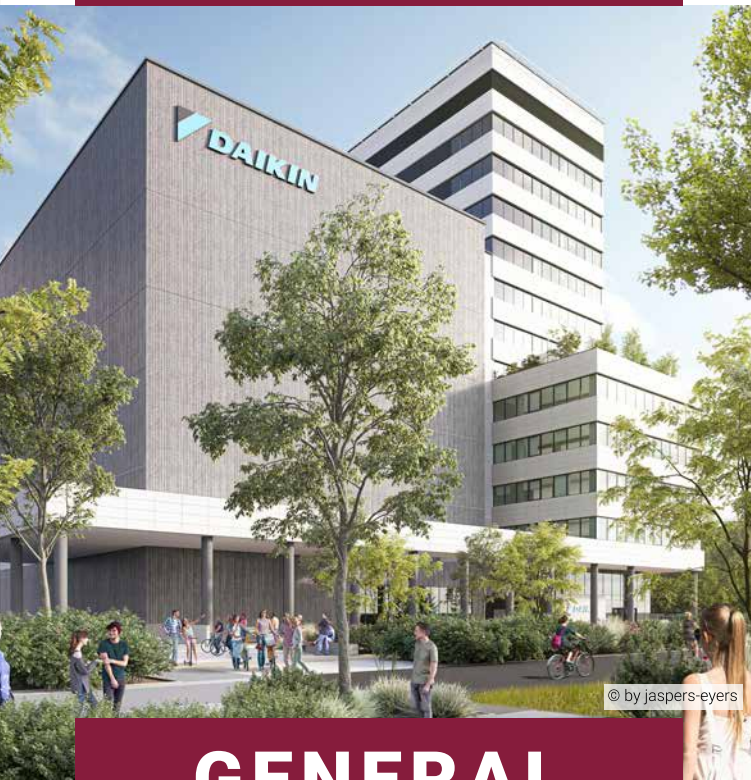
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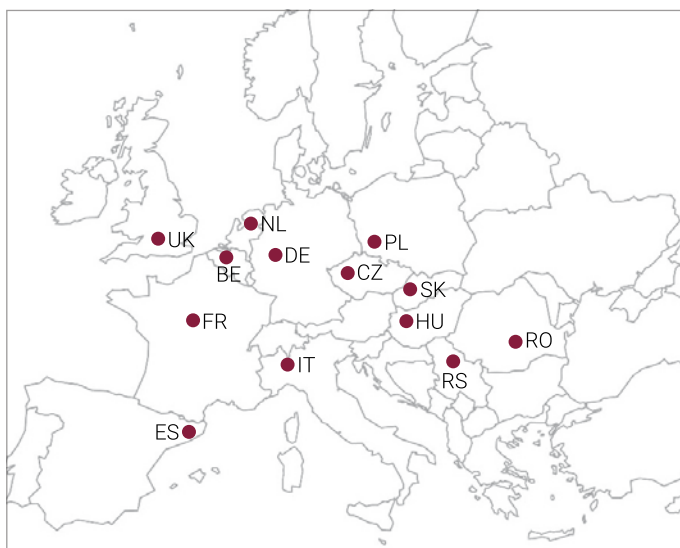
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