



## TRADE FLOWS & CULTURAL NEWS

Number 128 - September 2020

### EDITORIAL

By Genichiro Higaki, President Sumitomo Benelux, President Nihonjinkai and Vice-President BJA

It is my great pleasure to accept the nomination of Vice-President of the Belgium-Japan Association & Chamber of Commerce. I have been serving BJA as a Member of the Board for more than one year. This time, as a Vice-President, I am looking forward to getting more involved in the various BJA activities.

Since the beginning of this year, we have experienced a unique period due to COVID-19 infection. BJA organized its AGM on Web for the first time in its history. Also, for the period of the last several months, BJA has organized webinars and virtual meetings, which allowed us to stay in touch. Considering the evolution in the communication technology, we will probably need to keep on inventing a new way of networking even after COVID-19. I believe that all together we can work to provide the best solutions to “unknown” challenges. I am very proud to be Vice-President and to contribute to BJA under this unusual situation.

Taking this opportunity, please allow me to introduce myself very briefly. I joined Sumitomo Corporation in Tokyo back in 1982. Since then, I spent approximately 2/3 of my career in Sumitomo as grains and oilseeds trader including nearly 7 years spent in the United States. After returning to Tokyo, I was transferred to the Financial Service Division where I experienced commodity derivatives business, venture investments etc. I had another opportunity to work in the States again, followed by another assignment in Hong Kong. Therefore, this is the fourth time for me to work outside Japan and it was very fortunate that I could come to Belgium this time to become the President of Sumitomo Benelux S.A./N.V. on the very first day of the year 2019.

Looking at the situation in Belgium/EU, things are moving and changing quite rapidly. One year and a half has already passed since the Japan-EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) entered into force. Since then, the relationship between the two regions have surely strengthened from both political and trade flow viewpoint. Thanks to free and open market place, the volume of trading has increased drastically in both ways.

In addition, in September last year, the leaders of EU and Japan signed the document entitled ‘The partnership on sustainable connectivity and quality infrastructure between Japan and the European Union’. I believe both Japan and EU are aiming not only at mutual development but also at global sustainable development.

Considering all above, Belgium as a key member state of EU combined with its important position where core functions are located, enterprises in Belgium will have to play key roles to contribute to further development of our economy. I do hope BJA can support each member’s contribution for both short and long-term perspectives.

Lastly, I would like to emphasize that it may be destiny, or in Japanese ‘EN’ (縁), that has brought us together at the same timing here in Belgium. It is an important and essential value when organizing and managing an association like BJA. I will cherish this good opportunity.

I am looking forward to making many connections with you, and let’s come together to reinforce the cooperation between the Belgo-Japanese Community.



Mr Genichiro Higaki

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**BJA WEBINAR**

**Japan and Belgium – An Ongoing Friendship**

**A dialogue between HE Ambassador Makita Shimokawa, Japanese Ambassador to the Kingdom of Belgium & NATO and Tanguy Van Overstraeten, BJA Vice-President and Partner, Linklaters LLP**

Wednesday, 10 June 2020

In cooperation with Linklaters LLP, the Belgium-Japan Association & Chamber of Commerce was honored to invite all to attend an exclusive dialogue between HE Ambassador Makita Shimokawa, Japanese Ambassador to the Kingdom of Belgium & NATO, and Tanguy Van Overstraeten, BJA Vice-President & Partner, Linklaters LLP.



During this webinar, HE Ambassador Shimokawa and Mr Van Overstraeten discussed the current Japan-Belgium relations during these challenging times, mainly from an economical point of view, adding some political and cultural outlooks, and extending a few perspectives for our future.

After the exchange of views, questions from the audience were addressed by H.E. Ambassador Shimokawa and Mr Van Overstraeten.

The BJA would like to express its gratitude to Linklaters LLP for hosting and sponsoring this event. They are offering now the opportunity for you to listen to this recorded webinar once more here:

<https://linklaters.mediaplatform.com/#!/video/6609/Japan%20and%20Belgium%20-%20An%20Ongoing%20Friendship>

*HE Ambassador Makita Shimokawa, Japanese Ambassador to the Kingdom of Belgium & NATO and Tanguy Van Overstraeten, BJA Vice-President and Partner, Linklaters LLP*

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A few people at the station of Shinjuku in Tokyo, after the "declaration of state of emergency"

## Challenging essential travel between Belgium and Japan during the unprecedented Corona pandemic

By Yuri Kiyoshima, BJA Editorial Committee Member

Listening carefully in front of the TV, while Sophie Wilmès, the Prime Minister explains the measures to avoid the further pandemic of Covid-19 after the National Security Council... welcome to the new world. I am sure most of us could not imagine how this "lockdown" was going to happen from 17 March 2020. It forced an immediate adaptation to this new life of "lockdown", and to the attention we must pay when we are outside for "essential" reasons. It included measures affecting all areas in our daily life, including the restrictions to travel. In this article, as a member of the Editorial Committee and as an immigration consultant handling Japanese expatriates' and their family members' files, I would like to share the stories of their experiences through this "lockdown" from an immigration perspective.

As a measure against Covid-19, Belgium has firmly requested the citizens to stay at home and avoid having contacts with people who are not living under the same roof, except for the essential reasons such as going to the doctor, to a grocery shop, pharmacy, etc. Moreover, the schools were closed until further notice and non-essential travel became forbidden both inside and outside Belgium. In this unprecedented circumstance, it is understandable that many of us felt insecure, though the degree of the anxiety depended on our personal situations. One of the groups of people feeling uneasy about the situation were foreigners and their family members, recently arrived in Belgium. How can they manage this new "lockdown" life while they are not yet accustomed to the life in Belgium in general? How are they supposed to explain to the police when they have to go out for an "essential reason"? When will they be able to see their family and friends in their home country again? How should they communicate with the hospitals and the doctors in one of the Belgian languages if they really do catch corona? How can they understand the daily modifications of the rules related to the measures against Corona? Those are the questions, which came to the mind of some of the expatriates and their family members.

Due to this anxiety, some of the Japanese employees and their family members have decided to leave Belgium until the situation becomes better. For some of them, it was the company's decision to make them go back to their home country in order to protect the health and safety of their employees and their family members. During this period of uncertainty, some of them took the last direct flight back to Japan on 25 March 2020. Due to the travel restriction, which was already applicable then, it seems that the airplane was not packed. On arrival at the Narita Airport, what waited for them was Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test, which had just been implemented to test the travellers at the airport. This PCR test was imposed to all the people arriving to Japan from 73 countries and regions, which included Belgium, regardless of their nationality. Until the result is confirmed, they were requested to stay inside the airport. One of my colleagues and his family members had to wait for the result with his small children for

nearly 10 hours at the airport. Finally, after these long hours at the airport, they were allowed to go to a designated hotel, close to the Airport. There, they were in self-quarantined for 14 days, imposed by the Japanese government, similarly to the other countries such as Belgium.

After the quarantine for 14 days, the temporary returners could finally go out for an essential reason. The Japanese government announced "Declaration of state of emergency" on 7 April, covering the more populated areas in Japan such as Saitama, Chiba, Tokyo, Kanagawa, Osaka, Hyogo and Fukuoka. This declaration further covered the rest of the areas in Japan on 16 April 2020. The citizens were requested to stay at home unless for an essential reason. However, the public transportation was not obliged to limit their services and people were allowed to commute to his/her workplace during this period, although teleworking was encouraged and that it was requested to reduce to 40 % of employees in an office. However, compared to the "lockdown" in Belgium, it has been observed that many people still used the public transportation to go to their workplace. Moreover, there was no "penalty" in case of non-respect of this request and some restaurants remained open even with this request from the government.

During this particular period in Japan, how did the expats and their families stay in Japan? Japanese people are known for "Jishuku", which means self-control. Although there was no penalty in case of non-essential reasons, most of them did stick to the rule. Especially, those temporary returners closely adhered to the rule of their home country. One of the reasons for this strict adherence to the rule is the fear of "social penalty". Since they could be recognized as "outsiders" from foreign countries, by fear of infecting the other Japanese population, and the fear of other residents' negative perception, most of them stayed without having close contacts with the other population. However, it was a great relief for them to stay in their home country during this unprecedented time.

Once the exit from lockdown started in Belgium, more precisely after 8 June when the primary schools in Belgium started to re-open little by little, we have started to receive more questions with regards to the seconded employees' and their family members' return to Belgium. Even though the direct flight was not operating anymore, some of them could return to Belgium through transit from other EU countries. My colleague and his family members also took the flight to Frankfurt in order to return to Belgium. However, on arrival in Frankfurt, what waited for them was the news that Swissport was no longer operating due to the crisis which severely hit the company. Without being able to fly with their luggage, they were obliged to find another way to reach Belgium. After having researched on the possible ways, they have decided to take a taxi, going back to Belgium. After almost 10 hours flight in the plane from Tokyo to Frankfurt, they had to improvise the remaining of their journey to their Belgian home with their small children.

*keep reading on p.4 >>*

## BJA Digital Friendship Café

Saturday, 27 June 2020

More than ever, the BJA Friendship Committee believes in the power of friendship. Therefore they decided to organise a digital café meeting to celebrate the bonds of Belgium-Japan friendship – together apart.

The Friendship Committee Team warmly welcomed young and old to connect and share a wonderful ‘digital’ time together via GoogleMeet, one of the many tools to connect on-line. An hour of chatting on countless topics, exchanging some language tips (did you know that “wani” is referred to “sharks” in the mountains of Hiroshima and not the “crocodiles”?), getting to know the deeper meaning of people’s names, feeling and sharing stories on the loneliness of not being together with loved ones for a long time (long distance relationships are even harder in times of



corona...), and much more.

It was a fun way to see familiar faces and meet new friends – all safely in our own

bubble. Now we just wait for the time to break out of the bubble safely and to be able to gather face-to-face again! I am looking forward to that!

*A review by a participant to the digital event*

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*>> keep reading from p.3*

After having arrived in Belgium, they have respected the 14 days quarantine and the children were just in time to enjoy the last week of the school year. This overall round trip between Japan and Belgium was a challenging mission for them in this very particular time.

Some of the Japanese families have gone through a similar experience going back and forth between the two countries, trying to see their families. Looking back at the uncertain “lock-down” period, I have reconfirmed how important it is to be able to see families, colleagues and friends, which was just an ordinary habitude before all of this started.

*By Yuri Kiyoshima, BJA Editorial Committee Member*

## Tokyo 1964: The Games of the XVIII Olympiad

By Marc Popelier, Managing Director, MPF Management Consulting,  
Author of "Sights and Scenes of Japan" and BJA EU Committee Member

### Introduction: the 1964 Olympics in Tokyo - an astonishing success

The Olympic summer games of 1964 were held in Tokyo from 10 to 24 October in that year and were in many aspects remarkable.

They took place against the fascinating, yet geo-politically turbulent background of the sixties of the previous century and were the first summer games to be held in an Asian country. Ever since superlatives have not been spared to describe how these games symbolized the re-emergence of Japan on the world stage, less than two decades after its defeat in WW II. However one should not forget that these summer games were in the first place a great sports event with outstanding sportive achievements, the first ever to be broadcasted via satellite.

Without further ado let us immerse ourselves in The Games of the XVIII Olympiad as they are officially named. Games that were an astonishing success.

### Prelude: the difficult road to the first games in Asia

When the Tokyo Olympics 2020, now scheduled in 2021, will take place younger generations may not know that the Olympic summer games in 1964 were also held in Tokyo, the first games in Asia.

Actually the idea to hold the games in Tokyo started many decades earlier. Only the oldest readers will remember that in July 1936 Tokyo was selected to hold the 1940 Olympic Games. A summer Olympiad which would coincide with the 2,600th anniversary of the establishment of the Japanese empire by the legendary Emperor Jimmu. However the Games were cancelled by the host country in the spring of 1938, largely due to the intensifying battles that took place during the Second Sino-Japanese war that started the year before.

Following suspension of the Olympics during World War II, the 14<sup>th</sup> Olympic Games were staged in London in 1948, although Japan was not invited at this time.

In May 1952, shortly after the end of the Allied Occupation of Japan, the governor of Tokyo submitted the candidacy of his city for the 1960 summer games. But Rome, which had competed with Tokyo for the 1940 Olympics in the past, won. After hosting the Asian games in 1958, Tokyo's candidacy was submitted again for the 1964 Olympics and this time it won. The bid was supported by the IOC president, Avery Brundage, who had succeeded the Belgian Baillet-Latour and who had been, like him, an enthusiastic supporter of the 1940 Tokyo games.

### Idaten: relive the road to 1964 with this dramatised series

Idaten is a television drama that began broadcasting in 2019 in Japan as part of the lead up to the 2020 Summer Olympics in which NHK is a principal co-host broadcaster. For the international audience NHK world has made an abbreviated series of six episodes in English. In Japanese Idaten is a Buddhist deity but also a nickname for people who love to run.

The series starts in 1912, follows the rise and fall of the 1940 Olympiad project and the difficult road towards the 1964. Idaten features Shiso Kanakuri, a marathon runner who became the first Japanese to compete in the Olympics by participating in the 1912 Stockholm games, and Masaji Tabata, the swimming instructor who played a key role in Japan winning the right to host the 1964 Tokyo Olympics.

As the story develops, we see how the main characters become entangled in the web of national, organisational, and personal interests at times unable to influence important decisions and not always sure of ensuring good result.

Overall the series of 6 episodes of 45 minutes brings the contexts of the Olympic movement and the political developments in Japan at that time, the international relations in East Asia, the press and public opinion in Japan and abroad, and the Japanese and Western personalities that played a role in winning the Olympic bid of 1940 and subsequently 1964.



Opening ceremony © Kyodo and Japan Times



Yoyogi national stadium © P. Popelier



### Legacy of Tokyo 1964

In an effort to win the bid for organising the games, the Olympics are often associated with giving a boost to the economy whereby all too often infrastructural benefits and employment are overestimated and negative side effects not calculated or minimised.

In the case of Tokyo the 1964 Games are frequently described as being at the start of the Japanese economic miracle in the years that would follow.

As an economist I tend to disagree with this vision. Mainly because it would not do justice to the Japanese workforce and management as by that time they had already laid the groundwork for the economic power house that Japan would become. One should recall that by the start of the Olympics Japan was already the biggest ship builder in the world, Toyota was producing cars in the most technologically advanced plant in the world, and Sony's co-founder Akio Morita, who embraced the ideas of Deming's total quality control, cracked open the US market of transistor radios, thereby launching the market of consumer microelectronics – to cite only a few of Japan's spear point industries.

Having said that it is undeniably true that the 1964 games served as a catalyst for the urban development of Tokyo (shinkansen and highways), accelerated the use of technology (Seiko's time measurement, satellite TV broadcast), and gave way to great stadium architecture, like the Yoyogi National Gymnasium designed by Kenzo Tange, still an iconic landmark of Tokyo decades later.

However in my humble opinion probably the true legacy of these games lays in the fact that the people of Japan found back their pride and more importantly that Japan was embraced by the entire world as the newly emerged modern, well organised, and peaceful democracy that overcame defeat in record time.

### The athletes: competing for the first

### time in front of a world audience watching live via satellite

The games had memorable champions and especially for Japan it was a great sporting success. The Japanese delegation counted 437 officials and athletes who won sixteen gold medals, five silver and eight bronze, coming in third in the medal total behind the United States and the Soviet Union.

It is impossible to pay tribute to all sports let alone individual athletes. Yet some achievements are even by today's standards remarkable and I have hand-picked a few.

Between 1962 and 1964 Bob Hayes (USA) was already unbeatable on the 100 meter. Before the games he already clocked 9.91 seconds, a record that was not homologated because of the wind. The entire world watched if for the first time ever an athlete would dive under the 10 seconds. Wearing a pair of borrowed spikes (source IOC) Bob Hayes won the 100 metre title in a time of 10.06 seconds, equalling the world record.

The most successful athlete was Don Schollander (USA) who won four gold medals in swimming and thereby breaking three world records.

In gymnastics Yukio Endo from Japan won impressively three gold medals and one silver. However the star who won the hearts of the gymnastics fans was Czechoslovakian Věra Čáslavská who won three gold medals, including the individual all-around competition by beating the legendary reigning champion Larisa Latynina from Russia.

Abebe Bikila from Ethiopia who already won the marathon running barefoot at the Rome Olympic in 1960 delivered yet an epic performance in Tokyo. With his victory in Japan he became the first person to win the Olympic marathon back to back.

In team sports the highlight was without doubt the commanding gold medal

win of the Japanese women's volleyball team after beating the Soviets in the final. Throughout the entire tournament the Soviet ladies did not concede one single set. Yet in the final, playing for a home audience and watched by 80% of the nation in front of TV, Japan's women's volleyball team was dominant from the beginning to the end.

Noteworthy is that Joe Frazier, who would go on becoming one of the boxing sports greatest legends and future heavyweight champion of the world, won a gold medal despite boxing with a broken thumb.

In 1964 Judo, the martial art created by Jigoro Kano in 1882, made its debut as an official sport in the summer Olympics. As the Japanese dominated this sport during the decades before, it was with no surprise that the entire nation expected a win in the open category. However some insiders knew that it would be difficult since in the years before a young, very strong, and tall Dutch Judoka, Anton Geesink had already become world champion. The Japanese champion Akio Kaminaga and Geesink fought hard and after 9 minutes in the tense final, Kaminaga launched an attack which was immediately countered by Geesink. After seconds of silence that seemed like minutes, the referee gave Ippon. Gold for the Dutchman on the home ground of Judo.

Last but not least I want to pay tribute to the world class performance of our fellow countryman Gaston Roelants. In the early sixties he dominated the world stage in the 3000 meter steeple bringing the world record in 1963 for the first time below 8:30 and then again in 1965 to 8:26.4. Starting as favourite in Tokyo he delivered a stunning race leaving other competitors no chance. Gold for Belgium.

### Trivia

› Yoshinori Sakai, who lit the Olympic flame, was born in Hiroshima on 6 August 1945, the day an atomic bomb



Bob Hayes © Getty Images

was dropped on that city.

- › Tokyo 1964 were the last Summer Olympics to use a cinder running track for athletic events, and the first to use fiberglass poles for pole vaulting.
- › The start of operations for the Tōkaidō Shinkansen, the first high speed train in the world, was scheduled to coincide with the Olympic games. The first regularly scheduled train ran on 1 October 1964, just nine days before the opening of the games, transporting passengers 515 kilometres or 320 miles in about four hours, and connecting the three major metropolitan areas of Tokyo, Nagoya, and Osaka.
- › Zambia declared its independence on the day of the closing ceremony of the 1964 Summer Olympics, thereby becoming the first country ever to have entered an Olympic games as one country, and left it as another.
- › Prime Minister Abe also has a personal connection to the '64 games. The prime minister at the time was his grandfather, Nobusuke Kishi.

### The Official movie: seeing is believing

Otherwise said a picture says more than thousand words. Therefore to conclude this article I am very pleased in being able to provide a link to the official movie of the Tokyo 1964 Olympics (see at the end).

Tokyo Olympiad (Original title: 東京オリンピック) is the 1965 Japanese documentary film directed by Kon Ichikawa which documents the 1964 Summer Olympics in Tokyo. The film won two Bafta awards, is one of the highest-grossing films in Japan in terms of box office admissions and is one of the few documentaries included in the book 1001 Movies You Must See Before You Die.

The film in theatrical 35 mm became one of the greatest sports documentaries ever made but this did not come without a fight.

Since the first modern games in 1896

the IOC has produced in one way or the other an “official” film. Needless to repeat that the 1964 Summer Olympics were extremely important to the Japanese government. It was a rare chance to re-introduce Japan to the world as a peaceful democracy that was capable of holding extremely well organised games in a modern country that had left behind the wounds of war. The official film should carve that image in stone and would allow to pass that image to future generations. Therefore the Japanese government decided to produce their own film and initially hired none other than world famous director Akira Kurosawa. However, Kurosawa demanded to direct not only the film but also the opening and closing ceremonies. This eventually led to his dismissal. He was replaced by another great director, Kon Ichikawa.

However Ichikawa’s vision of the Tokyo Olympics was also not without controversy as he presented a film which was much more of a cinematic and artistic recording of the events than the TV style journalistic sports broadcast as often seen in these documentaries. Therefore the Japanese Olympic Committee forced Ichikawa to re-edit the film to better suit their requirements and, as a result, the final version was reduced to 93 minutes from the original version of 170 minutes (Source Wikipedia).

I am very pleased that a magnificent 125-minute cut of the film has recently been made available on YouTube provided by the official Olympics channel. Despite being shorter than the original release the film is still a masterpiece.

This is what Pieter-Jan Van Haecke, a critic of the Japanese film and living near Kanazawa (JP), has to say about this movie.

*“Even though Kon Ichikawa touches upon the grand spectacle of the games with his poetic cinematographic eloquence, his lens is more concerned with revealing the intimate heroism of*

*humanity. Tokyo Olympiad does not idealise the athletic body or glorifies the triumph of winning, like Riefens-tahl’s Olympia (1938) so artistically did, but explores with a daring human-istic sensibility the diverse dramatic effects competition has on the body (pain, fatigue, injury, ...) and the soul (fear, feelings of isolation, ...). Kon Ichikawa’s Tokyo Olympiad is a monumental achievement and remains until this date one of the best - if not the best - sports documentaries of all time.”*

### Short reading list

- › The 1940 Tokyo Games: The Missing Olympics: Japan, the Asian Olympics and the Olympic Movement - Sandra Collins - ISBN: 9780415373173; 212pp.
- › 1964 The Greatest Year in the History of Japan: How the Tokyo Olympics Symbolized Japan’s Miraculous Rise from the Ashes - Roy Tomizawa - ISBN: 9781544503691; 280 pp.
- › A miraculous revitalization of Japan? A comparative analysis of the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games, the failed 2016 host city bid and the successful 2020 bid - Shuying Yuan - Asia Pacific Journal of Sport and Social Science 2(3):198-213 · December 2013

### Must see movies archive

For the BJA readers, a dedicated Tokyo 1964 movie archive has been created on YouTube.

It features the long cut version of the stunningly beautiful Olympiad movie by Kon Ichikawa, unique and probably the only footage of Gaston Roelants winning gold as well as a number of rare to find movies and clips that evoke Tokyo and the Tokyo Olympics at that time.

- › <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WHtoeAdCCns&feature=youtu.be> (for the film)
- › [bit.ly/Tokyo1964archive](http://bit.ly/Tokyo1964archive)

### Idaten: the road to the 1964 Olympics

The 6 episode NHK world series can be watched here [bit.ly/Idaten](http://bit.ly/Idaten)

## EU-Japan news

**COMMISSION SIGNS AVIATION AGREEMENT WITH JAPAN**

The European Commission and Japan signed on 22 June an agreement on civil aviation safety, which will further boost the EU's already strong cooperation with Japan and reinforce the competitiveness of the EU's aviation industry.

One and a half years after the EU and Japan's Economic Partnership Agreement entered into force and the implementation of the Strategic Partnership Agreement started, this signature shows the mutual trust and commitment to deepen our strategic partnership. Common rules will facilitate cooperation of European and Japanese companies and decrease the administrative burden for authorities, creating better opportunities for investment and strengthening economic prosperity and growth.

This bilateral civil aviation safety agreement (BASA) will support EU manufacturers of aeronautical products to increase their trade and market share in the Japanese market. It will therefore play an important role in the recovery of the sector from the current crisis.

Commissioner for Transport Adina Vălean said: "This agreement will facilitate our aviation industry's access to the Japanese aeronautical products market, helping this hard-hit sector recover from the crisis. We are also stepping up cooperation between the EU and Japanese aviation authorities, towards an even higher level of civil aviation safety and environmental compatibility."

The main objective of the BASA is to ease trade in aircraft and related products. The BASA will remove unnecessary duplications of evaluation and testing activities for aeronautical products, decrease costs for authorities and the aviation industry and promote cooperation between the Civil Aviation Authorities of the EU and Japan.

The BASA will significantly reduce the time required for manufacturers of aeronautical products to achieve the approvals for exports to Japan. At the same time it will provide a stronger level of legal certainty, including on intellectual property rights (IPR) leading to greater

cooperation between companies in the EU and in Japan.

Less than a year after the signature of the EU-Japan Partnership on Sustainable Connectivity and Quality Infrastructure, the BASA will also strengthen transport connectivity in line with the EU's Connecting Europe and Asia Strategy.

**Background**

The BASA between the EU and Japan marks another key deliverable under the Commission's Aviation Strategy for Europe - designed to generate growth for European business, foster innovation and let passengers profit from safer, cleaner and cheaper flights.

**Next steps**

Both the European Union and Japan will now proceed with their respective internal procedures to conclude the agreement. Pending its entry into force, the agreement will be provisionally applied from signature.

*Source: [ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP\\_20\\_1127](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_20_1127)*

**JAPAN TO SHIFT FROM COAL TO RENEWABLE ENERGY**

Japan's industry minister says his ministry plans to study drawing up a roadmap to reduce coal-fired power generation, while aiming to accelerate a shift toward renewable energy.

Kajiyama Hiroshi was speaking to reporters on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July about the ministry's drastic review of energy generation. Kajiyama said the government hopes to phase out inefficient coal-fired power plants to achieve a carbon-free society. He said he instructed ministry officials to start discussions to come up with a more feasible system.

The ministry plans to set up an expert panel on the matter this month. The panel would discuss ways to cut power generation at outdated coal-fired plants by about 90 percent by fiscal 2030. This would mean closing down about 100 old generators. The panel would also discuss how to avoid massive power outages in the event of natural disasters.

To accelerate the shift to renewable energy use, the panel is to review current rules to give priority to plants using renewable fuel over fossil fuels in using power transmission lines.

The ministry hopes to compile a roadmap this year. Coal-fired power generation accounted for 31 percent of Japan's electricity output in fiscal 2018. The government aims to reduce dependence on coal to 26 percent by fiscal 2030.

Kajiyama stressed the government's resolve to cut carbon dioxide emissions. He said Japan is a resource-poor island country with no power line networks linked to the continent, but is ready to do what it can, without excuses.

*Source: [www.newsonjapan.com/html/newsdesk/article/127684.php](https://www.newsonjapan.com/html/newsdesk/article/127684.php)*

## EU-JAPAN LEADERS' VIDEO CONFERENCING MEETING ON 26 MAY

On 26 May 2020 the EU-Japan leaders' meeting took place via video conference. The President of the European Council, Charles Michel, and the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, represented the EU. Japan was represented by Prime Minister Shinzō Abe.

### COVID-19

The leaders recognised that global solidarity, cooperation and effective multilateralism are required more than ever to defeat the virus as well as to ensure economic recovery. They also stressed the importance of:

- › protecting lives
- › mitigating the social and economic consequences
- › promoting global coordination in various international fora such as the G7, G20, and the United Nations system
- › assisting vulnerable countries and communities in need

### Resilience

The leaders emphasised the importance of strengthening preparedness and of improving the international response including through relevant international organisations while reaffirming the role of the WHO in coordinating the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

Leaders reaffirmed their commitment to global collaboration and sustained funding for the development of effective antiviral medicines, diagnostics, treatments and vaccines in order to make them available to all at an affordable price. They called for the future COVID-19 vaccine to become a global common good.

### Recovery strategy

The EU and Japan leaders stressed their determination to ensure a robust recovery and rebuild more sustainable, inclusive and resilient economies.

They emphasised that the green transition and the digital transformation will be part of the recovery strategy.

Leaders also committed to adjust their economic responses, using all relevant policy tools, including digital tools to prevent the spread of infections while ensuring privacy and security.

They underlined the importance of keeping the trading system open and committed to cooperate to facilitate the flow of medical supplies, agricultural products, raw materials and other goods and services. They agreed that any necessary emergency measures designed to tackle COVID-19 should not create unnecessary barriers to trade or disruption to global supply chains.

The EU and Japan agreed to assist developing countries, including in Africa and other vulnerable regions, in facing the impact of the crisis and strengthening their healthcare systems.

### Japan-EU strategic partnership

The leaders also discussed the geopolitical situation in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic. They agreed to intensify cooperation to:

- › strengthen practical cooperation in areas such as cybersecurity, countering hybrid threats and counter-terrorism
- › facilitate access to transparent, timely, reliable and fact-based information
- › counter disinformation, in accordance with shared principles such as freedom of expression and the rule of law

The leaders reaffirmed their commitment to the Japan-EU strategic partnership in tackling the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and other common challenges. They also expressed their determination to continue implementing the Japan-EU Strategic Partnership Agreement and the Economic Partnership Agreement.

### Future steps

Leaders look forward to holding a summit meeting when conditions allow in order to take cooperation between Japan and the EU further in areas such as:

- › connectivity, transport and energy
- › global environmental issues and challenges
- › climate change
- › digital transformation
- › health
- › free, fair and rules-based trade
- › security and defence

Source: [www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/international-summit/2020/05/26](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/international-summit/2020/05/26)

## EU-Japan news

**EPA HELPDESK: MAKING THE EPA WORK FOR BUSINESSES**

The EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) marked the start of a new era for the European Union and Japan. From the start, the priority for us at the EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation has been implementing the EPA. We should ensure that businesses, in particular SMEs, reap the maximum benefits from the agreement. This means raising awareness with promotion campaigns, making information accessible, providing guidance, and reaching out to SMEs throughout Europe. It is the objective of the EPA Helpdesk which was actually put in place at the end of 2018, anticipating the entry into force of the EPA on 1 February 2019.

The EPA Helpdesk provides fact sheets, practical guides and organises a series of webinars on key aspects of the EPA such as rules of origin, public procurement, geographical indications, as well as sectors, wine, cheese, etc. In order to spread the message and help European SMEs take advantage of the EPA, the Helpdesk is mobilising important relays in Europe, in particular existing pan-European networks, such as the Enterprise Europe Network, the European network of industrial clusters, regions and European industry sectors. After 18 months of operation, below you can find some figures illustrating the EPA Helpdesk-related activities.

**EPA factsheets**

More than 32 factsheets were published on our websites, which generated a total of 21000+ visits. Factsheets covering topics, such as GIs, dairy, meat, spirits and wines were the most read. [www.eubusinessinjapan.eu/tags/factsheet](http://www.eubusinessinjapan.eu/tags/factsheet)

**EPA webinars**

More than 20 webinars were organised, gathering 1300+ registrants. The webinar on Rules of Origin received the most of our viewers' interest. As a result, the Helpdesk will keep organising webinars on this topic: [www.eubusinessinjapan.eu/library/past-events](http://www.eubusinessinjapan.eu/library/past-events)

**EPA infodesk**

382 EPA-related inquiries were received and answered. Majority

of the inquiries focused on the rules of origin 23.4% (still difficult to understand) and tariffs 22.7%. In addition, 11% of queries on 'how to use the EPA' were received from companies, which recently discovered opportunities provided by the EPA. For the most relevant Q&As, please check the following link: [www.eubusinessinjapan.eu/library/question-answer?field\\_category\\_value=EU-Japan+EPA](http://www.eubusinessinjapan.eu/library/question-answer?field_category_value=EU-Japan+EPA)

**EPA workshops in the EU**

Complementary to the EPA webinars and the Infodesk, several workshops were co-organised all over the EU, in cooperation with member organisations of Enterprise Europe Network (EEN), during which the EPA was promoted.

**EPA promotion**

The EPA and its opportunities were also presented during the Annual Conference of Enterprise Europe Network in October 2019 in Helsinki, which gathered more than 700 representatives from EU regional organisations, Member States and the European Commission: [www.b2fair.com/eenconf2019](http://www.b2fair.com/eenconf2019)

Interview on the EPA Helpdesk was also broadcasted on Euronews "Business Planet" TV Programme: [www.eu-japan.eu/news/eu-japan-trade-deal-interviews-eu-japan-centre-general-manager](http://www.eu-japan.eu/news/eu-japan-trade-deal-interviews-eu-japan-centre-general-manager)

In the coming months, the EPA Helpdesk will keep providing information sessions either through webinars or through workshops across the EU (if the current COVID-19 outbreak is tamed), co-organised with member organisations of Enterprise Europe Network (EEN). Starting early September, 16 online training sessions will be organised to present (in a practical manner) key points EU companies should know when exporting to Japan. Each session will tackle a different topic and will be related to business rules, regulations, standards, various conformance assessment practices and other. [www.eu-japan.eu/epa-helpdesk](http://www.eu-japan.eu/epa-helpdesk)

source: [www.eu-japan.eu/sites/default/files/publications/docs/june20.pdf](http://www.eu-japan.eu/sites/default/files/publications/docs/june20.pdf)

**BJA MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES**

- › banners on our upcoming new website
- › digital magazine advertisements (also printed)
- › advertorials
- › directory advertisements
- › bespoke tailor-made package deals
- › & more

Contact  
the BJA Office  
& ask for the  
BJA Media Kit!

## COVID-19 reshaping Japanese retail

By Dirk De Ruyver, Representative for FIT Japan

After China, Japan was one of the first countries where Covid-19 was observed in late January 2020. The number of infections peaked in mid-April 2020. On April 7, 2020, the Japanese government declared a state of emergency in seven prefectures. On April 16, it was extended to the entire country. The state of emergency had far-reaching consequences for social life in Japan. Recent figures from the Japanese Ministry of Economy (METI) show the impact on retail.

Table 1 shows how the total turnover of the Japanese retail trade in April and May 2020 was 9.5% and 7.7% lower than in the same months in 2019. This is partly due to the closure of shops with non-essential products.

The negative impact was particularly significant for the department store chains. Already in March, their sales were nearly 1/3 lower than a year earlier, and this decline worsened in April (-71.5%) and May 2020 (-64.1%). Numerous department stores temporarily closed their doors or limited their supply to essential products.

Nor was Covid-19 a positive story for the convenience stores, which are open 24/24 and 7/7. They recorded a loss of sales of around -10% in April and May compared to the same period in 2019. These stores are mainly located in urban areas. An important market segment for these city shops are the office workers who come to buy their packed lunches every day. Covid-19 chased these workers away from the office districts and office work was replaced by home work. Ready-to-eat lunches were replaced by family meals, and the ingredients for these do not come from the convenience stores, but mainly from the supermarkets. The supermarket chains therefore saw their turnover rise sharply during the corona crisis. In May 2020, their sales were 18.8% higher than a year earlier. This growth was spurred by higher sales of food and beverage (see Table 2).

Another winner are the drugstore chains. While the Japanese consumers desper-

**Table 1: Retail sales in Japan in March-May 2020**

| Month                   | March 2020  |           | April 2020  |           | May 2020    |           |
|-------------------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|
|                         | Billion yen | % growth* | Billion yen | % growth* | Billion yen | % growth* |
| Department Stores       | 379         | -32,6%    | 140         | -71,5%    | 174         | -64,1%    |
| Supermarkets            | 1243        | 14,0%     | 1205        | 15,2%     | 1281        | 18,8%     |
| Convenience Stores      | 958         | -5,4%     | 891         | -10,7%    | 927         | -9,6%     |
| Home Electric Appliance | 389         | -9,1%     | 307         | -8,7%     | 379         | 9,0%      |
| Drugs Stores            | 610         | 7,6%      | 618         | 10,8%     | 607         | 6,4%      |
| Home Centers            | 272         | 3,5%      | 299         | 4,1%      | 338         | 11,2%     |
| Others                  | 8978        | 1,2%      | 7436        | -10,6%    | 7358        | -10,0%    |
| Total                   | 12828       | 0,2%      | 10897       | -9,5%     | 11065       | -7,7%     |

\* % growth compared with the same month in 2019

ately searched for scarce mouth masks and hand sanitisers in these stores, they also found that these chains offer other essential products, such as food. Because of working from home and distance learning, families now spent more time in their own homes. The need to make this as pleasant as possible sent the Japanese consumer to the do-it-yourself chains or home centers, as they are called in Japan. This category saw its turnover gradually increase. In May 2020, sales were 11% higher than in May 2019 (see Table 1).

Covid-19 was initially a negative story for the home electric appliances chain stores. Due to the economic uncertainty, the consumer was not immediately inclined to invest in additional electronics. However, as cocooning in the own family, home work and distance learning persisted, the need grew to modernise home informatics. As a result, the electric appliances chain stores were able to

record a turnover in May 2020 that was 9% higher than a year earlier.

The “Other Retail” category saw a sales decline of -10.6% and -10.0% in April and May 2020 respectively. This category includes independent or family businesses, mail order companies and companies that are exclusively active in e-commerce. It seems unlikely that e-commerce is responsible for these negative figures. Rakuten, the largest e-commerce provider in Japan, saw its revenue increase by 57.5% in April 2020 compared to April 2019. And the Japanese e-commerce platform aishopR, which hosts approximately a thousand online stores, reported that in late April 2020 the number of online orders on its platform had more than doubled compared to the same time in 2019. Therefore, it looks like local small-scale retail has been hit hard by covid-19 while e-commerce has seen strong growth.

**Table 2: Retail Sales of Food & Beverage in Japan in March-May 2020**

| Month              | March 2020  |           | April 2020  |           | May 2020    |           |
|--------------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|
|                    | Billion yen | % growth* | Billion yen | % growth* | Billion yen | % growth* |
| Department Stores  | 110         | -23,2%    | 60          | -50,6     | 69          | -43,1%    |
| Supermarkets       | 982         | 21,2      | 991         | 26,4      | 1023        | 26,7%     |
| Convenience Stores | 618         | -5,2%     | 569         | -11,1%    | 593         | -10,4%    |
| Drugs Stores       | 618         | 18,2%     | 202         | 27,2%     | 196         | 20,7%     |
| Others             | 1862        | -11,3%    | 1839        | -9,2%     | 1923        | -6,2%     |
| Total              | 3759        | -2,7%     | 3661        | -1,8%     | 3804        | 0,0%      |

\* % growth compared with the same month in 2019

## EUROPEAN INNOVATION SCOREBOARD 2020: EU'S INNOVATION IS INCREASING

The Commission released on 23 June 2020 the European Innovation Scoreboard 2020, which shows that Europe's innovation performance continues to improve across the EU, surpassing for the second year the United States. However, more needs to be done to catch up with global innovation leaders like South Korea, Australia and Japan. The results, which cover data from 2019, highlight the opportunities to better coordinate EU innovation policies, help Europe improve its global competitiveness and strengthen the key role innovation plays in overcoming the coronavirus pandemic.

Thierry Breton, Commissioner for Internal Market, said: *"This year's scoreboard shows that the EU is already a good place to do innovation, but we need to further step up efforts across the EU to find global solutions to contain the virus, and at the same time, help Europe's recovery from the crisis. More than ever, innovation is important since it lies at the heart of our efforts to beat the Coronavirus pandemic."*

Mariya Gabriel, Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, said: *"The EU is leading the way out of the coronavirus crisis by intensifying its support to research efforts and bringing together diverse players of the innovation ecosystems, from both the*

*public and private sector, that can transform new ideas into reality and improve the life of citizens. Post-covid EU will be stronger and more united than ever before leveraging its creativity and innovation performance as this year's Scoreboard highlights"*.

### Key findings

Within the EU, innovation performance continues to increase at a steady pace. Since a few years, the performance among Member States has been converging, a trend that is growing.

- › This year's Scoreboard is marked by the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the EU. This has had a small impact on the EU's average innovation performance, but has not affected the relative performance of Member States in relation to EU's global performance.
- › Sweden continues to be the EU Innovation Leader, followed by Finland, Denmark and the Netherlands. This year Luxembourg (previously a Strong Innovator) joins the group of Innovation Leaders, while Portugal (previously a Moderate Innovator) joins the group of Strong Innovators.
- › On average, the innovation performance of the EU has increased by 8.9% since 2012. Since 2012, innovation performance increased in 24 EU countries. Performance has increased the most in Lithuania, Malta, Latvia, Portugal and Greece.

- › At the global level, the EU has for the second year surpassed the United States. The EU continues to have a performance lead over the United States, China, Brazil, Russia, South Africa, and India. Since 2012, the EU's performance gap with South Korea, Australia and Japan has increased,

while the EU's performance lead over the United States, China, Brazil, Russia and South Africa has decreased. China has had the largest innovation performance growth rate amongst the EU's main competitors since 2012, growing at more than five times that of the EU.

- › In selected areas of innovation, the EU leaders are: Sweden – human resources; Luxembourg – attractive research systems; intellectual assets; Denmark – innovation-friendly environment; finance and support; Germany – firm investment; Portugal – innovation in small and medium-sized enterprises; Austria – linkages and collaboration; Ireland – employment impacts and sales impacts.

### Background

The coronavirus pandemic has shaken the world in an unprecedented manner testing the resilience of our societies, economies, healthcare and welfare systems. The EU has done its utmost to use the tools at hand to protect lives whilst preserving the single market, and supporting Europe's economy. Research and innovation have proven to be an essential part of the coordinated EU response to the crisis and they will be vital to support Europe's sustainable and inclusive recovery. Measuring innovation performance is a key element in achieving this goal.

The European Innovation Scoreboard demonstrates the EU's and Member States commitment towards research and innovation. It also supports the development of policies to enhance innovation in Europe and inform policy makers in a rapidly changing evolving global context.

About two-thirds of Europe's economic growth over the last decades has been driven by innovation. Research and innovation boost the resilience of our production sectors, the competitiveness of our economies and the digital and eco-

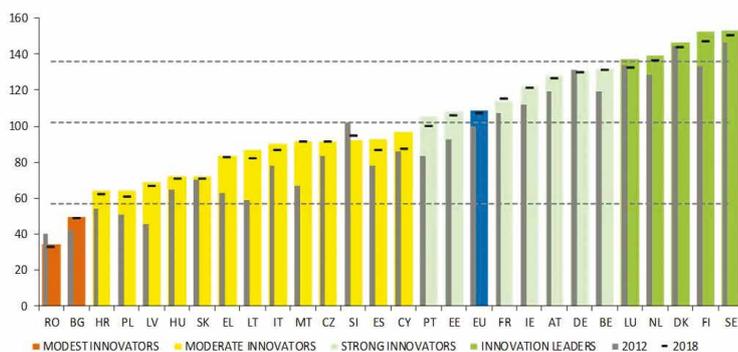
### EUROPEAN INNOVATION SCOREBOARD 2020

#### Innovation performance groups

- Innovation Leader
- Strong Innovator
- Moderate Innovator
- Modest Innovator



## news for the members



European Innovation Scoreboard country ranking. Coloured columns show innovation performance in 2018, horizontal hyphens show performance in 2012, and grey columns show performance in 2012, all relative to the EU average in 2012.

logical transformation of our societies. They also ensure preparedness for the future and are critical to deliver on the European Green Deal. Horizon Europe,

the EU's research and innovation programme for the years 2021-27 with a proposed budget of € 94.4 billion, will help accelerate Europe's environmental and

digital transformation, as also highlighted in the EU's new Industrial Strategy.

Source: [ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_20\\_1158](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_1158)

## NEPHROFLOW AND NIPRO PARTNER UP IN DIALYSIS DIGITIZATION

In early 2020, NephroFlow – an expert in medical software packages for dialysis centers – partnered up with the Flanders branch of Nipro. This Japanese group specializes in medical devices and pharma products – including medical needles, syringes and artificial kidneys – and has been present in Flanders since the 1990s. In 2019, Nipro completed a EUR 24 million investment in a new EMEA HQ and training center in Mechelen, earning it a nomination for the 2019 Foreign Investment of the Year Trophy. By partnering up with Nipro, NephroFlow can achieve rapid international growth.

### Corporate venturing

"In Europe, Nipro currently operates production bases in Germany, Spain and France," says Tom Alexander, VP of Marketing and BD at Nipro Medical Europe, which is headquartered in Flanders. "We see NephroFlow as one of our production units, and NephroFlow's office will remain in Bruges, West Flanders." The acquisition is a great example of corporate venturing, i.e. structural cooperation between an established firm and a young tech company.

### Digitizing kidney treatments

NephroFlow focuses on digitizing the processes that come with the treatment of kidney patients. Until recently, many kidney specialists printed instructions on paper, while nurses usually wrote reports at the end of treatment: a way of working that's prone to error and could lead to information loss. With its software, NephroFlow replaces all this paperwork with a

digital system. Nurses document treatments using a tablet, and kidney specialists can follow upon patients' progress via their PC or tablet.

"A study by the AZ Sint-Lucas hospital in Ghent shows that the use of NephroFlow can lead to time savings of up to 45 minutes per day per nurse," says product manager Arne Wauters. "This precious time can now be used to achieve nursing's main mission: taking care of patients. What's more, fewer mistakes are being made." But it doesn't end there. "Digitization creates new opportunities," explains Tom Alexander. "In the near future, the real profit will come from data processing. Big data can inform medical professionals on which kinds of treatments work best for different types of patients."

### International growth

NephroFlow originated from a structural collaboration with the AZ Sint-Lucas hospital in Ghent (Flanders). IT specialists Simon Dusauchoit, Arne Wauters and Wouter Willaert set up the IT company Typework in 2013. One of their assignments came from the Ghent hospital. They wanted to develop a software application for kidney dialysis treatments in 2015. This project led to NephroFlow, which – unlike existing software on the market at the time – was cloud-based and allowed for greater patient interaction.

After AZ Sint-Lucas, other local hospitals soon switched to NephroFlow, which was supported by accelerator programs imec,

istart, Bluehealth and Netwerk Ondernemen from 2016 onwards. Everything seemed to be ready for international growth, but the founders knew that it wouldn't be easy. In Flanders, kidney dialysis centers are part of hospitals, but this is often not the case abroad, where private dialysis centers are more common. So, while NephroFlow was still refining its software for the local market, it had to start working on an international version at the same time.

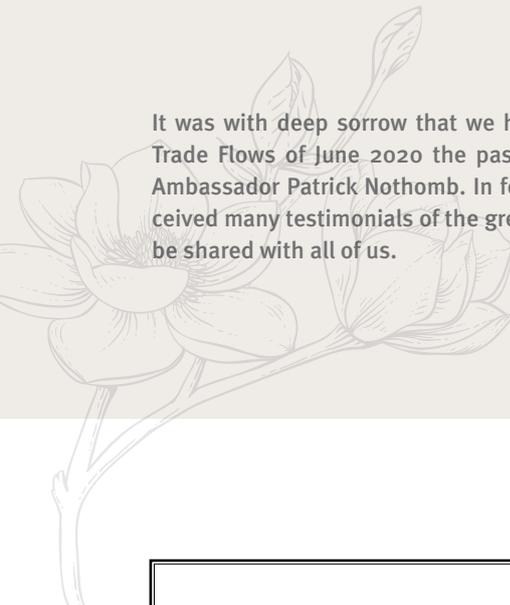
### Two versions

"We are working on two versions of our product," says CEO Simon Dusauchoit. "One with basic functions and a lot of integration options for hospitals, and one with more administrative functionalities and fewer integration options for private dialysis centers. Our challenge is to grow in a way that doesn't make our product too complex."

For its growth trajectory, NephroFlow first targets the Middle East and Southern Europe, as these markets are more similar to the local market. "From the start, our goal was to internationalize, but our sales cycle is long and complex. In this respect, Nipro's support is crucial. It is one of the largest companies in the dialysis industry and present in almost every country around the globe. Meanwhile, NephroFlow will become Nipro's R&D company for software applications," Dusauchoit concludes.

Source: [www.flandersinvestmentandtrade.com/invest/en/news/nephroflow-and-nipro-partner-in-dialysis-digitization](https://www.flandersinvestmentandtrade.com/invest/en/news/nephroflow-and-nipro-partner-in-dialysis-digitization)

## In Memoriam - HE Ambassador Patrick Nothomb



It was with deep sorrow that we had to announce in our Trade Flows of June 2020 the passing away of Honorary Ambassador Patrick Nothomb. In follow-up of we have received many testimonials of the great man he has been, to be shared with all of us.



*Baron Nothomb has been a Belgian ambassador in Japan for many years, as well as a dedicated member of the BJA for many more. He put himself at the service of Belgium-Japan relations with whole his heart. It has always been a pleasure to have him and his wife in our midst, and he will be missed very much.*

*The BJA presents to the wife of Patrick Nothomb, his children André, Juliette and Amélie and to his grand-children our deepest condolences.*

*It was a great shock to know the passing away of Ambassador Patrick Nothomb. He and his wife were so kind to Yukari and me, which made our life in Belgium from 2010 to 2013 so pleasant and unforgettable. They kindly invited us to their second house in the countryside. He talked about his wonderful life during two diplomatic services in Japan as consul-general and ambassador with surprisingly clear and abundant memories. I collected his memoirs as well as Amélie's several novels for asking their autographs, which he kindly accepted. In this connection, I had an incredible but interesting experience. One day, I ordered his memoirs of days in Congo from a used book store online. I was surprised after opening a package of the book to find at the back of the front cover his dedicated message to Amélie with his handwriting! Yes, it was his book presented to her.*

*I found out later that it had been sold to a used book store with many other books by mistake. I intended to return it to the genuine owner, Amélie through the original owner, Ambassador Nothomb. However, he told me it had already belonged to me and furthermore signed "To Kazuyuki Katayama, my friend and the new owner of my daughter's book" just below the message to Amélie!  
May he rest in peace forever.*

*Kazuyuki Katayama  
Assistant Minister (Ambassador) and Director-General of Foreign Service Training Institute,  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (Former Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Japan in Belgium)*

*In 1986 I lived in Osaka, Japan as a language student and then from 1989 until 1991 in Tokyo as a business student, with a scholarship from the EU. During my stay in Osaka, the Flanders Center was my native country pied-à-terre, basically just to read the newspaper De Standaard. But during my time in Tokyo, the embassy was a place where all Belgian nationals were always welcome.*

*Ambassador Nothomb was the perfect host for visitors, students, priests and expats alike. I remember that my fellow students and friends from our neighbouring countries France and Germany were jealous about the frequency and openness of the receptions and events at our embassy. The Brussels beer bars in Jimbocho and Kagurazaka were already serving our daily bread but drinking Belgian beer at the embassy was a lot more fun, and a lot cheaper as well.*

*On one of these parties, in the late hours of a hot and humid summer evening, my friend Stefaan – who was a bit more audacious than I was – was looking at the swimming pool of the embassy and said, “Let’s ask the ambassador if we can come and swim here tomorrow afternoon.”*

*Frustrated by the overcrowded Japanese swimming pools with hard to understand codes and rules of conduct, we poured Stefaan another Duvel so that he could overcome his last remaining hesitation. He went to the ambassador, had a five-minute conversation with him and came back with a reply, “We are expected tomorrow afternoon at 2 PM.”*

*And indeed, the next day, a Saturday, we found ourselves fighting a hangover in the embassy pool and were served cocktails by the embassy staff. I think about that wonderful afternoon quite often, when I am in Tokyo on a hot day or when I explain my kids how well all our tax money is spent. Thank you, ambassador Nothomb!*

*Geert Benoit  
Managing Director, Yamagata Europe*

*Filled with sadness, my wife Kathleen and I learned about the passing away of Baron Patrick Nothomb. Our sincere condolences to his family and friends.*

*Kathleen and I were married in July 1993 in Tokyo before HE Belgian Ambassador to Japan Patrick Nothomb acting as Belgian notary.*

*We remember him as a very generous and intelligent man, who offered the Belgian Embassy to hold our wedding walking dinner. He masterly sang a Japanese No song at that occasion.*

*He also always offered access to the Belgian Embassy pool in the garden to all the Belgians during Summer and organized many Belgo-Japanese community events at the Embassy in Tokyo. We will fondly remember him forever.*

*Dave Deruytter  
Head of Expatriates, Non-residents,  
Privilegio, ING Belgium*

*It is with great sadness that I heard the news of the passing away of his HE Ambassador P. Nothomb. My story with Mr Nothomb is that he was one of the guests on my marriage in the Vatican City the church of St. Anne, on March 7, 1998. Mr Nothomb and spouse organized the welcome drink on the rooftop of the Belgian Embassy in Rome for my future wife and our guests on the night before. From the rooftop you have an excellent view of the Forum Romanum. He attended the wedding mass and afterward reception together with Cardinal Edouard Gagnon. It was the start of a beautiful friendship with Mr Nothomb, every time we visited the Vatican / Rome afterwards we met each other.*

*At that time I didn't know my link with Japan would become so important!!*

*Kurt Leuridan,  
CEO, Tokai Optecs nv*

*Hommage...*

*Not often does one have the experience that an embassy in a far-away country feels like "home". Ambassador Patrick Nothomb was a master in giving Belgian citizens living in or passing through Japan the feeling that they are always welcome at the embassy; for a reception, a private talk, a concert, a lecture, a swim in the pool in the beautiful garden and even for their... wedding party.*

*The first time I had the honour to meet Ambassador and Mrs. Nothomb was in 1993 when I was a student at the University of Tokyo. Even as a student, I felt welcome and enjoyed the warm, inclusive atmosphere at the Belgian Embassy in Tokyo. Later, in an informal meeting (in 1995), Ambassador Nothomb kindly suggested that I organize the party for my wedding in the beautiful "living room" of the Belgian embassy as, so he said, this would symbolize the excellent relations between Belgium and Japan. We hardly could believe how fortunate we were for this unique opportunity. On 29 September 1996, my wife and myself – happy but nervous – were seated at the table between Ambassador and Mrs Nothomb. We had dressed in the Room Prince Philippe and descended the monumental stairs accompanied by the wonderful sound of the grand piano in the entrance hall. At the dinner table, suddenly, Ambassador Nothomb stood and presented us with a song, that of the famous Noh play poem: Takasago (高砂). The guests were flabbergasted, not only by the Belgian ambassador's warm-hearted hospitality but also by his deep cultural knowledge of Japan and by the wonderful and warm way he sang the poem. This beautiful Noh poem actually is about two pine trees that will remain together for eternity despite the fact that they are very remote, hundreds of kilometers away and separated by time, one in the past and the other in the present. It is hard to imagine that they ever will be paired but their perfect harmony makes space and time irrelevant. This ancient Japanese poem can also be understood as a metaphor for the link between people with origins in far-away cultures, for the strong bonds between Belgium and Japan in the past and in the present that will continue in eternity. We will always remember Ambassador Nothomb with deep admiration, humble respect and profound gratitude for the way that he and Mrs Nothomb, offered us and many other people the warm hospitality of the Belgian embassy in Tokyo.*

*Dimitri Vanoverbeke  
Professor of Japanese Studies,  
KU Leuven*



*It is quite a long time ago and I think not so many people will remember that in 1964 Patrick Nothomb was consul general in Stanleyville (now Kisangani). With his diplomatic skills he certainly saved many lives of the hostages detained by the "Simba" rebels until Belgium with the support of the US Air Force launched the humanitarian operations Red and Black Dragon. 50 years later he met with veterans remembering the liberation of 2.375 hostages of ALL nationalities, not only Europeans!*



Rolf Vandenborre

### BJA CULTURAL CHANNEL ON YOUTUBE

End of May 2020 the BJA Cultural Committee presented through the 'BJA Cultural Channel' on YouTube a special cooking video series, 'Delicious life of Japan in Belgium', by Mr Tomoyasu Kamo, Master Chef of restaurant Kamo and BJA Member, about the fundamentals of the Japanese cuisine – 'Ichiju Sansai'. There were 4 parts in this video series, covering well-balanced 'Ichiju Sansai' representing three dishes and one soup. In each video Mr Kamo emphasized that eating small portions from a variety of dishes is central in Japanese cuisine and showed us how to cook simple but healthy, delicious dishes that can be pre-

pared easily at home. Successively at end of June 2020, with the collaboration of Mr Koh Ichi Masaki, Head of European Affairs at the Japan Management Association and Chair of the BJA Cultural Committee, and Dr Takeshi Morisato, a specialist in comparative and Japanese philosophy and member of the BJA Cultural Committee, the BJA Cultural Channel featured the first episode of the new video series on 'Virtual Forum on Philosophy'. In this first episode Dr Morisato discussed the notion of "wa" (和) or "harmony" in reference to the history of Japanese philosophy, especially in the works of Prince



Shōtoku, and highlight its relevance to the cross-cultural community of the BJA. This is the beginning of the 'BJA Cultural Channel' on YouTube in action - an initiative devoted to offer cultural activities to the BJA members using dynamic digital platforms. So please follow, like and share the 'BJA Cultural Channel' - stay tuned, stay connected! <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMAuooFr4BDwtK6dpqCVqpa>



## How is COVID-19 forcing Japanese companies to revisit their ways of working?

By Olivier van Beneden, Managing Director of Japan Consulting Office, and BJA Membership Committee Member

The coronavirus COVID-19 has shaken up the way we work. We now know more about Zoom or MS Team applications than we did a few months ago and have all been invited to an “online apero” at this point.

As managing director of a company specialized in multi-cultural training to improve business efficiency when working with Japanese companies, I have been reflecting on some of the impacts that we are already seeing and can anticipate seeing through the ways we work. For Japanese companies, which are on the whole rather hierarchical and group oriented, the impacts may be long lasting and might disrupt their entire business culture.

One of the first aspects of work impacted is the Japanese decision-making process, which is based on consensus and involves many colleagues. Typically, this way of decision making involves a series of prior discussions in order to consult informally first, the so-called *nemawashi* in Japanese. These informal discussions, which usually happen face-to-face and among fewer colleagues, will now have to be done privately over the phone or in the teleconference itself. We can expect that some part of *nemawashi* will have to be openly discussed in virtual meetings which will result in more open exchanges.

The traditional *hanko* (a stamp Japanese use to sign or validate a proposal) still widely used in Japanese companies is now increasingly seen as obsolete, more and more being replaced by virtual signatures. The same goes for the *ringi-sho*, a traditional paper-based approval process which has to follow a pre-defined route, landing on the desks of all reviewers to collect their *hanko*.

We will certainly see a push to reduce the

number of reviewers and to move those paper-based processes to more computer-based ones. As of today, only a few Japanese companies have digitalized their approval processes.

Then there is the focus on group orientation in a workplace that relies less on clearly defined job descriptions than it does on teamwork and group thinking. As meetings are moved online and teams are working remotely, more specific responsibility has to be both defined and assigned, potentially resulting in more efficient task distribution. Meeting invitees will be more carefully selected, which will increase efficiency as employees will only attend meetings directly related to their work.

The way information is shared will also be affected. Traditionally, there is a lot of unofficial information in Japanese companies which is shared verbally, face-to-face and in an “after 5-pm” setting. Japanese spend a lot of time in the bar, socializing, building relationships and exchanging information. This is likely going to decrease and Japanese will have to find ways to replace those encounters such as organizing a “virtual *nomunikai*” (drinking get-together) as noted in a recent article I read.

Finally, probably one of the most important impacts will be on communication, which has now moved online or by telephone. Japanese often hesitate to say “no” or to contradict their colleagues or superiors. They will have to learn to voice their real opinion (*honno*) in front of all participants of a teleconference rather than relying on a public opinion (*tatema*, a non-confrontational opinion to maintain harmony) which has been the norm so far. More frank exchanges will take place. International Japanese companies will also face an additional challenge of commu-



nicating across cultures. The subtlety of body language might not be interpreted correctly by non-Japanese colleagues. It will become more difficult to *kuuki wo yomu* (“read the air” which means read between the lines) as Japanese say. It is therefore even more important for Japanese colleagues to verbalize their thoughts and be explicit when communicating with foreigners. The level of English fluency of many Japanese managers may also be an increasing challenge.

While some of the changes may be destabilizing for more traditional employees, there are also clear opportunities to improve communication and efficiency. Japanese companies have been traditionally good in hardware, but weaker in software. Will they embrace the digital world and finally get rid of their fax machines? Much like the realization that we can drastically affect our environment with decreased travel, we have some clear advantages that have been forced upon us by circumstance. The key is how we fight the urge to return to business as usual and seize the opportunities presented to us.

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Following Covid-19, JCO is offering distance learning with a **complete series of e-learning and bi-monthly ½ day webinars** on working and communicating more effectively with Japanese colleagues or customers. Check our home page: <https://www.japanconsultingoffice.com/japanese-business-e-learning/>

## NEW IMEC AND UANTWERP SPIN-OFF COULD BE A GAME CHANGER FOR ONLINE CLOTHES SHOPPING: WITH SHAVATAR, YOU ALWAYS ORDER THE RIGHT SIZE

Online shopping from the comfort of your own home has been on the rise for years, and this trend has been further amplified by the coronavirus pandemic. But when ordering clothes, trying to guess which size you need can be a real problem. Enter Shavatar, a UAntwerp and imec spin-off that is set to make this guesswork a thing of the past, thanks to innovative technology. All you have to do is create your own 3D avatar!

The European fashion industry generates 13.2% of its turnover via e-commerce. Some time ago, a study indicated that online sales were set to grow by an average of 8.6% annually by 2023. And that was before the coronavirus pandemic reared its head. However, retailers face a number of problems: for example, up to 70% of items ordered online are returned, often because it turns out the garment does not fit.

"In addition, our own survey among 200 people shows that 73% of consumers who want to buy clothing online ultimately decide not to place an order because they're not sure it's the right size," says Geert Mertens, CEO of Shavatar, the newest spin-off of the University of Antwerp and research institute imec. "Of those who do place an order, 40% admit that they tend to order the same item in several different sizes, to make sure they get the right size. These observations obviously have a serious impact on business models in the industry."

### 3D body shape visualisation

Enter Shavatar, conceived by Femke Danckaers during her groundbreaking PhD research at Vision Lab, an imec research group in the University of Antwerp's Department of Physics. "I developed a model for predicting and visualising the human body shape in 3D, based on a limited number of parameters, with an average margin of error of just 7 millimetres compared to the person's actual body shape," says Danckaers, who co-founded the spin-off. "Consumers can do this at home, with no need for a scanner."

The technology was developed and refined further in the Shavatar spin-off, with the support of the imec.istart acceleration programme. Geert Mertens: "We consulted 36 stakeholders from the fashion industry to come up with a tool that would allow consumers to create their own avatars. The tool then suggests the right size and fit of any given item. In a later phase, we will be able to superimpose garments on the consumer's body shape. Our ultimate goal is to be able to visualise entire outfits this way"

### Better tailored collections

In the short term, the tool will be integrated in the online shops

of various clothing brands, but if your interest is piqued, you can already visit [www.shavatar.me](http://www.shavatar.me) today and create your own 3D avatar. You will receive tailored advice for over 50 brands right away.

The more people use the tool, the more valuable data the fashion industry can gather about consumers' body shapes. These insights will enable clothing brands to further optimise their collections and tailor them to their specific target groups. Since its inception, Shavatar has already raised 200,000 euros in funding, enabling the company to develop a first version of the product.



Imec is pleased with the launch of the spin-off. Jo De Boeck, CSO at imec: "Through our spin-offs, we are helping to shape the entrepreneurial landscape in Flanders. We are proud of the incubation process that ultimately resulted in the creation of Shavatar, in collaboration with the researchers and UAntwerp. The success of this collaboration also led to the project's successful selection for the imec.istart programme."

"Shavatar is a great example of scientific research leading to applications we can all use," says Prof. Silvia Lenaerts, Vice-Rector for Valorisation and Development at UAntwerp. "On several occasions now, the Vision Lab research group has managed to translate its extensive imaging expertise into innovative practical solutions. The avatar tool will lead to fewer returns and therefore less transport, which is an important step towards more sustainability. As an enterprising and sustainable university, we can only applaud that."

Source: [www.imec-int.com/en/articles/new-imec-and-uantwerp-spin-off-could-be-a-game-changer-for-online-clothes-shopping](http://www.imec-int.com/en/articles/new-imec-and-uantwerp-spin-off-could-be-a-game-changer-for-online-clothes-shopping)

## news from the members

## EU-JAPAN CENTRE LEAN CAFÉ – SHARING LEAN THINKING IN A FRIENDLY ATMOSPHERE

Since 1992, the EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation has been running lean activities inspired by Japanese manufacturing methods and addressing how companies apply *kaizen* (改善) and other lean and process optimisation ‘tools’ to drive their competitiveness and ensure quality. Over the years, the Centre’s lean offering has evolved to include *Lean in Europe* visits to European plants.

Since the outbreak of coronavirus it has not been possible to organise these physical meetings to visit the *genba* (現場). The EU-Japan Centre has therefore opened a virtual *Lean Café* as a forum to discuss and share lean thinking online.

The first Lean Café offered ‘a coffee with Toyota’ and took place on 16 July. Mike Luff, Section Manager for the Toyota Lean Management Centre at Toyota Motor Manufacturing (UK) Ltd. explained how Toyota uses Lean, shared his insights as to how these principles and tools are equally applicable in all sectors and answered questions from the webinar’s participants.

The Centre plans to organise monthly Café sessions for the foreseeable future. Each one will be moderated by Prof Rich-

ard Keegan, the EU-Japan Centre’s Lean Advisor and Adjunct Professor of Lean Operational Excellence at Trinity Business School. Each café ‘sitting’ will begin with a presentation on a specific topic and will continue with a discussion where participants can give their feedback, ask questions or share their experiences. The guest speaker in September’s Lean Café will be Heiko Gierhardt (Director Launch, Global Programmes and Operations in Purchasing and STA) from Jaguar Land Rover. October’s guest speaker will be Paul Smith, Director at Shinka Management.

Because lean tools can be used by companies in all sectors (not just in manufacturing), the Lean Café is open to companies in all sectors. The EU-Japan Centre would welcome participants from BJA members and would be delighted if any BJA members would be willing to lead a future café session and explain their company’s lean strategy.

To register for the next Lean Café or for more information see [www.eu-japan.eu/events/lean-cafe](https://www.eu-japan.eu/events/lean-cafe) or contact [lean@eu-japan.eu](mailto:lean@eu-japan.eu).



## GSK RECEIVES FIRST REGULATORY APPROVAL FOR DUVROQ (DAPRODUSTAT) IN JAPAN FOR PATIENTS WITH ANAEMIA DUE TO CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE

Approval marks a significant step in GSK’s global efforts to help patients with anaemia due to chronic kidney disease (CKD).

GlaxoSmithKline plc (LSE/NYSE: GSK) announced the approval of a Japanese New Drug Application (JNDA) by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare for Duvroq (daprodustat) tablets, an oral hypoxia-inducible factor prolyl hydroxylase inhibitor (HIF-PHI), for the treatment of patients with anaemia due to chronic kidney disease (CKD).

Dr Hal Barron, Chief Scientific Officer and President R&D, GSK, said: “*The approval of Duvroq brings a new, convenient oral treatment option to nearly 3.5 million patients in Japan who have anaemia associated with renal disease. We are pleased with this first approval and look forward to sharing data from our ongoing phase III programme as we seek to help many more patients suffering with this disease around the world.*”

Anaemia is common in patients with CKD because the kidneys no longer produce adequate amounts of erythropoietin, a hormone involved in prompting the production of red blood cells.<sup>1</sup> HIF-PHIs are a new class of drug that trigger the body’s adaptations to hypoxia (i.e. oxygen deprivation) and encourages the bone marrow to make more red blood cells and so reduce anaemia, thereby benefitting patients.

The JNDA was primarily based on positive data from the phase III programme conducted in Japan. The studies evaluated Duvroq for the treatment of anaemia in patients across the spec-

trum of CKD from stages 3-5. This included patients on dialysis, including both hemo- and peritoneal dialysis, and those not on dialysis, regardless of prior anaemia treatment with erythropoiesis-stimulating agents (ESAs). In contrast to current standard of care in patients with CKD which requires injections, Duvroq offers convenience with oral administration and flexibility with once-daily dosing for dialysis and non-dialysis patients.

Daprodustat is currently not approved as a treatment for anaemia due to CKD or any other indication anywhere else in the world other than in Japan. The ongoing phase III global programme, which includes two cardiovascular outcome studies ASCEND-D and ASCEND-ND, will support additional regulatory submissions across the world.

Duvroq is one of the medicines in GSK’s growing portfolio of innovative specialty care products. In Japan, Duvroq will be exclusively distributed by Kyowa Kirin Co., Ltd. (KKC), following the strategic commercialisation deal announced in 2018. KKC has strong established expertise and experience in the treatment of anaemia due to CKD to ensure availability of this innovative medicine to patients. Commercial promotional launch activities will be led by KKC. GSK will support scientific engagement through medical science liaisons.

Source: [www.gsk.com/en-gb/media/press-releases/gsk-receives-first-regulatory-approval-for-duvroq-daprodustat-in-japan-for-patients-with-anaemia-due-to-chronic-kidney-disease](https://www.gsk.com/en-gb/media/press-releases/gsk-receives-first-regulatory-approval-for-duvroq-daprodustat-in-japan-for-patients-with-anaemia-due-to-chronic-kidney-disease)

## FUJITSU NAMED A LEADER IN THE GARTNER 2020 MAGIC QUADRANT FOR DATA CENTER OUTSOURCING AND HYBRID INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGED SERVICES, EUROPE

Fujitsu has been named as a Leader by Gartner in its latest Magic Quadrant for Data Center Outsourcing and Hybrid Infrastructure Managed Services, Europe. This represents the eighth consecutive year that Fujitsu has achieved this position.

Fujitsu's Multi-Cloud & Hybrid IT portfolio, synonymous with its "Your Multi-Cloud" approach, enables customers to become highly connected, intelligent and transformed through a combination of infrastructure, applications and service transformation. Fujitsu believes that its repeat placement by Gartner as a Leader in the Magic Quadrant for Data Center Outsourcing and Hybrid Infrastructure Managed Services, Europe validates this portfolio and approach – particularly in addressing common challenges faced by organizations as they look to harness the power of cloud to migrate, modernize and innovate rapidly.

Gartner evaluates European service providers' ability to execute, which Fujitsu believes highlights its combination of decades of experience managing critical on-premises architectures, wide-ranging expertise in multiple clouds and a portfolio of global strategic partnerships. The Magic Quadrant evaluation also explores "completeness of vision". Fujitsu feels its positioning in this area not only indicates its focus on addressing unique and emergent customer needs through a co-creative approach, but also its investment in innovative and disruptive services, such as Robotic Process Automation, IoT and Blockchain, to deliver rapid results.

### Increased focus on rapidly evolving customer requirements

Fujitsu continues to increase its focus on addressing the rapid evolution of customer requirements – with a shift from enhancing efficiency to the desire for major transformation. Publicly available customer testimonials praise Fujitsu's commitment to customer experience and partnership, and its expertise and flexibility. Customers also score Fujitsu highly for its focus on secure hosting, migration support and data center reliability.

Over the past 12 months, multiple significant customer cloud

projects implemented by Fujitsu include the introduction of a cloud-driven global digital workplace and managed infrastructure services framework for the technology group Wärtsilä, an entirely new infrastructure for Finnish pension provider Keva to accelerate and manage DevOps for new business-critical applications on Microsoft Azure, and a project with Rice Exchange to leverage the cloud and emerging technologies to implement the world's first global blockchain-based rice trading platform. Delivered by Fujitsu, these large enterprises have successfully harnessed the power of the cloud to become connected and therefore more efficient; more intelligent, resulting in greater competitiveness through enhanced services; and transformed, with the ability to disrupt global market sectors, through accelerated innovation. Sanjeev Kamboj, Head of Multi-Cloud at Fujitsu North West Europe comments: *"I believe this latest recognition by Gartner that Fujitsu is a Leader for Data Center Outsourcing and Hybrid Infrastructure Managed Services in Europe reflects how we continue to proactively evolve and develop our multi-cloud service and solution offerings to anticipate customers' rapidly evolving needs. Many businesses demand business transformation and expect results fast, but struggle with the complexity of making it happen. Fujitsu's ability to deliver an accelerated time-to-results and enable customers to overcome challenges across areas such as cloud migration, service integration and applications modernization has been critical for our customers,"* continues Kamboj. *"During the Covid era, we have seen a greater than usual need to flex and respond to unpredictable market change. We approach every customer project collaboratively, with solutions that reflect not only a customer's multi-cloud maturity but also the most suitable platforms for their needs. As a result, our customers have complete confidence that their multi-cloud or hybrid approach is the best possible fit to achieve their business objectives."*

Source: [www.fujitsu.com/be/about/resources/news/press-releases/2020/emeai-20200624-fujitsu-named-a-leader-in-the-gartner-2020.html](http://www.fujitsu.com/be/about/resources/news/press-releases/2020/emeai-20200624-fujitsu-named-a-leader-in-the-gartner-2020.html)

## PERSONALIA

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

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- › Pay slips issued in English;
- › Salary simulations;
- › Legal assistance in English;

## PERSONALIA

- › Specific expertise on matters relating to foreign workers (posting of workers, work permits, expat status, etc.);
- › Assistance with setting up a fringe benefits policy;
- › Pro-forma documents and documentation in English;
- › Statutory and extra-statutory insurance;
- › Partnership with the National Health Insurance: Symbio.

### Business Portal – Start your own business

Formalis will guide you through the registration process for starting up your business in Belgium. All legal obligations related to doing business in Belgium will be explained and fulfilled by Formalis, so you can be certain that your activities in Belgium will start up smoothly and correctly. Formalis will register your company with the Belgian Crossroads Bank for Enterprises and get you a company number.

### Social Security Insurance for the Self-Employed

Self-employed persons in Belgium need to register with a Social insurance provider. Group S offers you that possibility in-house. We will calculate your social security contributions. The payment of these contributions give you the right to receive child benefits, pension, social insurance in case of bankruptcy and access to legal sickness and incapacitation benefits.

### External Payroll Office

Whatever the size of your business, Human Resources Management is a complex issue. An error in implementation of social legislation can be very costly. So most employers entrust administration of salaries to an authorized external payroll of-

ice. Your personal payroll advisor, who is your first point of contact, keeps careful watch and provides you with day-to-day advice. He calculates wages and social contributions correctly, ensuring that you fully comply with social legislation.

### Legal Assistance

As an employer, you have to deal with complicated social legislation. GROUP S will provide:

- › assistance and advice on individual and collective work regulations;
- › legal defense in the event of a conflict with an employee or with the Social Security authorities;
- › template documents.



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## TAKEDA BELGIUM

As one of the oldest pharmaceutical companies with nearly 240 years of existence, Takeda has a presence in 80 countries and over 50.000 employees worldwide. In Belgium, Takeda is one of the largest pharmaceutical companies and the 5<sup>th</sup> biggest employer of the industry, with over 1,300 employees. Next to the commercial head offices in Zaventem, Belgium hosts one of Takeda's largest global manufacturing sites, in Lessines (Hainaut), where it ensures the purification, aseptic filling and packaging for immunoglobulin products which are distributed globally. Takeda Belgium focuses on three major therapeutic areas: Oncology (blood cancers such as multiple myeloma and Hodgkin lymphoma), Gastroenterology (crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis) and Rare Diseases (haemophilia and metabolic diseases). Laurent Henaux, Managing Director of Takeda Belgium: *"We are excited to join the Belgium-Japan Association and Chamber of Commerce and to connect with the BJA community to continue building strong relations between international and Japanese companies, as well as enhancing*

*public policy and international relations between Belgium based companies and Japan"*.



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**Regular members**  
Mrs Ryoko Horibe

## Corporate Member

**OH!MY SAKÉ**

Oh!My Saké selects and imports authentic Japanese drinks directly from the producers. We provide our service to top-class gastronomy as well as the best Japanese, Asian, fusion restaurants as well as the bistro with a modern touch. Accordingly, we work with the best mixologists who can bring a sophisticated new umami experience to their guests with our products. Next to our restaurant clients, we also specialize in bringing the Japanese food culture to small or big companies. Private events where we adapt our vision from “streetfood” to gastronomic level. Oh!My Saké is proud to take part in JETRO’s “Japanese Food Supporter” program. We consider ourselves being in the hospitality sector rather than import.

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