



TRADE FLOWS & CULTURAL NEWS

Number 127 - June 2020

EDITORIAL

By Fabienne L'Hoost, Director General of the Belgian Foreign Trade Agency (BFTA)

Dear members of the Belgium-Japan Association and Chamber of Commerce, Dear readers,

In this second issue of the BJA magazine for 2020, a year that will go down in history as an annus horribilis marked by the coronavirus pandemic and by the global state of sanitary emergency and economic downturn it has fueled, it is of utmost importance to maintain close relations with long-standing partners and to seize the opportunities the Belgian-Japanese cooperation can offer in the future.

Over the years, Japan and Belgium have constructed a long-lasting and friendly relationship, which both countries are enjoying thanks also to the close bond between the imperial and royal family. Just four years ago, 2016 marked the 150th anniversary of the establishment of the diplomatic relations between our two countries. On this occasion, Their Majesties King Philippe and Queen Mathilde paid a State Visit to Japan to strengthen the two countries' friendly and cooperative relations. More recently, in 2019, the Belgian Sovereigns also visited Japan to attend the Ceremony of Enthronement of His Majesty the Emperor.

Japan and Belgium have also established close economic relations with one another. Belgian-Japanese economic cooperation and trade relations in particular have always been excellent. As a matter of fact, in 2019, Japan was the ninth largest supplier of goods to Belgium and Belgium's nineteenth main client. Three sectors made up the lion's share of both Belgian imports and exports of goods from and to Japan: transport equipment (mainly ve-

hicles), machinery and equipment, and chemicals (mainly pharmaceutical products). In this way, total Belgian imports of goods from Japan reached EUR 11.2 billion (up 20.1% compared to 2018) whereas total Belgian exports to Japan of goods amounted to EUR 3.6 billion (up 13% compared to 2018). This increase was due to higher imports of gear boxes and hybrid cars but mainly to the EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement. Last year, Belgium thus displayed a trade deficit of EUR 7.6 billion with Japan, with imports from Japan being significantly higher than exports to the country.

Thanks to the Economic Partnership Agreement between the EU and Japan that entered into force on 1 February 2019, European firms also no longer have to face tariffs and trade barriers when exporting to Japan, which in the past sometimes made it hard for them to compete. Preventing obstacles to trade, rejecting protectionism, as well as creating new opportunities for investment already bore fruit last year. In fact, in 2019, Belgium represented a share of 5.3% in EU-exports of goods to Japan, which made our country the 6th largest EU exporter. Belgium was the 2nd largest importer of goods from Japan within the EU with a share of 15.2%.

This strong Belgian-Japanese friendly and economic relationship will bring our countries great opportunities to deepen our partnership and longstanding friendship in the near future. One such opportunity will be the upcoming Belgian Economic Mission to Japan that will mostly take place in spring 2022. The mission will be presided by Her Royal Highness Princess Astrid of Belgium, who will lead large official, business,

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Fabienne L'Hoost

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BJA Annual General Assembly BJA定例総会

Monday, 23 March 2020 - Tele-Conference

In the exceptional circumstances regarding the COVID-19 situation, the BJA deemed it very important to take its responsibility towards the members and the whole of our community. The BJA therefore decided very early on that it was not appropriate to convene a physical Annual General meeting (AGM) as initially planned at the venue of the BOIC, kindly sponsored by ANA. By exception the BJA organized the AGM by tele-conference to address the points on the agenda of the formal AGM. The tele-conference was kindly taken care of by Linklaters LLP, for which we would like to express our gratitude.



Professor Gilbert Declerck, BJA President, at an earlier BJA AGM, together with Tanguy Van Overstraeten, BJA Vice-President, and Anja Oto-Kellens, BJA Executive Director

The members were all informed and sent the BJA a majority of proxies to vote in advance. The registered participants received all the necessary information for the procedure and good conduct of the Tele-Conference AGM.

As for the AGM itself, Prof Gilbert Declerck, Board member of imec International and BJA President, opened the meeting explaining the situation and procedure, followed by Tanguy Van Overstraeten, Partner at Linklaters LLP and BJA Vice-President, who reported on the financial results of 2019, followed by Anja Oto-Kellens, BJA Executive Director, who presented the 2020 budget and BJA Membership situation of 2019.

Mr Van Overstraeten continued to report on the activities of the Executive Committee, representing all business committees, followed by Mrs Oto-Kellens, who gave a review of all the activities organized by the Cultural and Friendship Committees in 2019.

The statutory nominations were presented by Prof Declerck. After all was presented, Prof Declerck opened the floor for voting and for Q&A. All was approved with a majority of votes from the members.

The BJA would like to thank the members for the kind understanding of the exceptional circumstances.

A MESSAGE FROM PROFESSOR GILBERT DECLERCK, BJA PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

This unprecedented crisis turned our lives upside down. The impact on our countries, our societies, our citizens, our families and friends, our hospitals, our companies and colleagues - it touches all of us on multiple dimensions.

Although many things are crumbling down, we can also see our people rising up to face the immense challenges. They show flexibility, a drive to keep going and a tremendous team spirit. Just as our Japanese friends have shown over and over again during natural disasters, we witness the resilience of people. We are creative and capable in adopting to the situation. I believe and I know that we will surmount this crisis to come out stronger and wiser. Together.

As the President of the BJA and Board member of imec International I witness an intense cooperation inside of our mul-

tinational companies to work together. I am confident this will lead to more innovative waves of industrial work, connecting people more than ever with an accelerating trend of adopting new digital ways of work. Belgium has an open economy, located in the heart of Europe. The solidarity among all people in Belgium has proven amazing, and I am touched by it.

I am equally touched by the work delivered by our BJA Office and BJA Committees and Chairs, to remain in control and make constant adjustments. As a membership organization we thrive by bringing people together and serving them. Postponing events has been heartbreaking, but necessary. We cannot wait to welcome you all again once this crisis situation is over and meetings are allowed again in a safe environment.

Our tasks in the months ahead will adapt to the reality: we would like to continue serving our members and the broader

Belgium-Japan relations to the best of our capabilities in these difficult times and beyond - even when physical meetings are and will be restricted for the foreseeable future. We will start organizing virtual events such as webinars, workshops and talks, etc.

We are also committed to communicate whenever and wherever necessary. The BJA Office invites you to contact them and have a BJA Virtual Tea Time Talk with all your questions for them or for the BJA experts in the different committees - or to just share your stories.

I can tell you they miss seeing each and all of you. So do I. Until we meet again, on- or off-line, please stay safe and healthy.

Gilbert Declerck
BJA President



BREXIT

By Lize Martens and Joffrey Decock, EY Tax Consultants – Global Trade

Introduction

While in the midst of a global COVID-19 pandemic, Brexit seems to be the last thing on everyone's mind. A big contrast to the constant flow of news and information of the past 3 years. Given the inability for negotiators to meet in person and members of negotiating teams on both sides of the channel being diagnosed with the virus, the COVID-19 pandemic has momentarily eclipsed the Brexit negotiations. But is this really the case in reality?

What about Brexit?

The United Kingdom formally left the European Union on January 31, 2020. As of the next day we entered a transition period lasting until December 31 of this year. During this period the UK and the EU negotiate their future relationship in trade, security and defense, international co-operation, etc. – a truly challenging goal. The first out of ten negotiating rounds took place at the beginning of March, at the end of which Michel Barnier warned for serious divergence but concluded that a deal between the EU and the UK is (still) possible even if difficult.

However since the outbreak of COVID-19 face-to-face negotiations have been suspended. Although informal talks are being held via audio and video conference it is needless to say that the current crisis is further complicating the already tight timeline for the Brexit negotiations. As things now stand the UK and the EU will most likely not achieve decisive progress by June 30, the deadline by which the UK must decide whether to ask for an extension. Even though Boris Johnson has repeatedly underscored that there will be no extension of the transition period there is a growing consensus that a delay of the current timeline is inevitable. However the exit date of 31 December 2020, has been put in (UK) law.

Crises help sort priorities and it is clear that for now the priority is to emerge from this global health crisis whilst safeguarding our economies. However political decisions may divert from common sense.

Key-elements to watch

Although the existing uncertainty as regards the timing, the current UK government is still determined to cut its ties with the EU. When this moment comes companies worldwide will need to be prepared for the outcome of the transition period and the new imposed trading reality. Some of the key-elements to keep in mind are:

› FTAs and their rules of origin

The EU and UK are aspiring to reach a zero-quota zero-tariff free trade agreement. Such new FTA will include new rules of origin. Will you still be able to deliver proof of origin after Brexit? Did you take into account that components from the UK will lose their EU origin? Not only is it important to monitor the rules of origin in the future EU-UK FTA, the conditions listed in current EU FTA agreements, but also those included in the future agreements the UK will land with other countries, such as Japan, the United States etc. These will all contribute to an increase of origin requirements for which a strong origin management system needs to be set in place keeping into account the different rules.

› Supply chain disruptions

Free trade agreement or not there will be a border and red tape requirements between the EU and the UK which will cause supply chain disruptions for companies with operations in Europe. It is crucial for those companies to investigate the impact of Brexit on their transport methods, border formalities, lead times, inven-

tory, etc. and the costs these new compliance formalities will undoubtedly trigger. For companies that are still using the UK as a doorway to the European market the time has come to look into unbundling supply chains.

› Possible divergence

The UK repeatedly showed its intention to diverge from EU rules in a multitude of areas. One area for which we see growing concerns is that of product regulations. As the UK previously expressed the intention to use different requirements for product quality and preliminary research, labelling, product registration, prohibited products in production, additional import license requirements, etc. this would make it more expensive and cumbersome for manufacturers to sell their goods on both sides of the channel.

Conclusion – New challenges

We advise you to follow the negotiations closely in order to determine what the impact on your sector and your range of products, both goods and services, might be. Additionally we should also take into account that previously communicated easements of the UK post-Brexit formalities (e.g. with respect to import duties, clearance formalities...etc.) are put under reconsideration by the new UK government. We are clearly facing a different reality with new challenges.



EU-Japan news

EU-JAPAN HIGH LEVEL DIALOGUE ON ENVIRONMENT

The European Commission and Japan held a High Level Dialogue on Environment via videoconference on the 1st of April 2020 to discuss two of the key environmental issues - biodiversity and circular economy. It was co-chaired by Daniel Calleja, Director General of DG Environment of the European Commission, and Morishita Satoru, Vice Minister for

Global Environmental Affairs, Ministry of the Environment Japan. The discussions took place against the background of the COVID-19 pandemic. Both sides stressed the need to strengthen the resilience of people and planet and ensure a green recovery. The partners expressed their continued commitment to advancing the environmental agenda at the national

and multilateral levels, in particular in relation to the UN Biodiversity Summit and UNEA5. Both sides reiterated the importance of moving towards an ambitious and realistic post-2020 global biodiversity framework and strengthening the G20 Resource Efficiency Dialogue.

Source: https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/japan/76949/eu-japan-high-level-dialogue-environment_en

TELEPHONE TALK BETWEEN FOREIGN MINISTER MR MOTEGI TOSHIMITSU AND EUROPEAN UNION HIGH REPRESENTATIVE / EUROPEAN COMMISSION VICE-PRESIDENT MR JOSEP BORRELL FONTELLES

On 19 March, commencing at 7:00 p.m. for approximately 25 minutes, Mr MOTEGI Toshimitsu, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, held a telephone talk with HE Mr Josep Borrell Fontelles, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Vice-President of the European Commission. The overview of the telephone talk is as follows.

1. Minister Motegi stated that international partnership, in particular, partnership among G7 members, symbolized as the G7 Summit videoconference the other day, is extremely important to contain the novel coronavirus, and explained the Japan's situation as well as the measures taken by the Japanese Government.
2. High Representative Borrell referred to their measures to prevent the spread of the disease and various impacts in the economy.
3. They shared the view on the three following points.
 - › As the disease spreads in the respective countries, Japan

and the EU will share lessons and insights gained from disease response measures, and in particular, since the development of treatments and vaccines is extremely important, Japan and the EU will strengthen public and private initiatives together.

- › Temporary and appropriate border measures are conceivable for preventing the spread of the disease and it is important to share information with the relevant countries when taking such measures.
 - › Japan and the EU will cooperate to ensure the safety of both Japanese and European nationals residing respectively, and in particular, the EU will support measures taken by its member states in Europe.
4. They confirmed that they will discuss measures on the novel coronavirus extensively at the G7 Foreign Ministers meeting next week and continue cooperating.

Source : https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press1e_000146.html

EU-JAPAN PNR AGREEMENT: COUNCIL AUTHORISES OPENING OF NEGOTIATIONS

The Council adopted on 18 February 2020 a decision authorising the opening of negotiations between the EU and Japan for an agreement on the transfer and use of passenger name record (PNR) data. The Commission will now start negotiations with Japan, on the basis of the negotiating directives adopted by the Council. This agreement will regulate the transfer and use of PNR data to prevent and fight terrorism and serious

transnational crime. It will fully ensure the respect of fundamental rights, in particular, the right to protection of personal data, by setting the necessary safeguards and controls as provided by EU law.

Source: https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/japan/74865/eu-japan-pnr-agreement-council-authorises-opening-negotiations_en

CORONAVIRUS: GUIDANCE TO ENSURE FULL DATA PROTECTION STANDARDS OF APPS FIGHTING THE PANDEMIC

On 16 April 2020, the European Commission has published guidance on the development of new apps that support the fight against coronavirus in relation to data protection. The development of such apps and their take up by citizens can have a significant impact on the treatment of the virus and can play an important role in the strategy to lift containment measures, complementing other measures like increased testing capacities. It is important, however, to ensure that EU citizens can fully trust such innovative digital solutions and can embrace them without fear. The largest possible participation of EU citizens is necessary to exploit the full potential of tracing apps.

EU rules, notably the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the ePrivacy Directive, provide the strongest safeguards of trustworthiness (i.e. voluntary approach, data minimisation, time limitation) for such apps to operate widely and accurately. This guidance aims to offer the necessary framework to guarantee that citizens have sufficient protection of their personal data and limitation of intrusiveness while using such apps. The European Data Protection Board was consulted on the draft guidance. By committing to those standards, the full effectiveness and compliance of such tools can be ensured, even in times of crisis.

The guidance focuses on voluntary apps with one or more of the following functionalities:

- › accurate information for users on the coronavirus pandemic;
- › questionnaires for self-assessment and guidance for individuals (symptom checker functionality);
- › alerts for people who have been in proximity of an infected person to get tested or to self-isolate (contact tracing and warning functionality); and
- › a communication forum between patients in self-isolation and doctors including where further diagnosis and treatment advice is provided (telemedicine).

Main prerequisites for the development of coronavirus apps

- › **THE ROLE OF NATIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITIES:** It must be clearly established from the start who is accountable for compliance with EU personal data protection rules. Given the high sensitivity of the data and the ultimate purpose of the apps, the Commission sees this as a role for national

health authorities, who would in turn be responsible for ensuring GDPR compliance in their use of data collected, including providing individuals with all necessary information related to the processing of their personal data.

- › **USERS REMAIN IN FULL CONTROL OF THEIR PERSONAL DATA:** The installation of an app on a user's device should be voluntary; a user should be able to give their consent to each functionality of an app separately. If proximity data is used, it should be stored on an individual's device and only shared with the user's consent; users should be able to exercise their rights under the GDPR.
- › **LIMITED USE OF PERSONAL DATA:** An app should adhere to the principle of data minimisation, which requires that only personal data that is relevant and limited to the purpose in question can be processed. The Commission considers location data not necessary for the purpose of contact tracing and advises not to use location data in this context.
- › **STRICT LIMITS ON DATA STORAGE:** Personal data should not be kept for longer than necessary. Timelines should be based on medical relevance as well as the realistic duration for necessary administrative steps to be taken.
- › **SECURITY OF DATA:** Data should be stored on an individual's device and encrypted.
- › **ENSURING THE ACCURACY OF THE DATA PROCESSED:** It is a requirement under EU personal data protection rules that any personal data processed by a third party must be accurate. To ensure maximum accuracy, which is also essential for the efficiency of contact tracing apps, technology such as Bluetooth should be used to provide a more precise assessment of individuals' contact with one another.
- › **INVOLVEMENT OF NATIONAL DATA PROTECTION AUTHORITIES:** Data protection authorities should be fully involved and consulted in the development of an app and should be tasked with reviewing the deployment of an app.

Source:
https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/japan/77717/coronavirus-guidance-ensure-full-data-protection-standards-apps-fighting-pandemic_en

news for the members

GEEN ZEE TE HOOG

Geen zee te hoog (s.th. like 'Nothing is impossible'), Japan and the Japanese in the 21st century, is a Dutch language book about contemporary Japan. Japan, a country of which most readers only have a vague notion, even if they eagerly use all kinds of Japanese products in their daily lives and know about ikebana, sushi and Japanese cameras, and have heard of the Japanese companies with operations all over Europe and beyond.

Japan is a flawed democracy, infused with Confucian values such as the emphasis on harmony, hierarchy and propriety, but a democracy all the same. It is a safe, peaceful and cohesive society, with an education system which is the envy of the world. After the USA and China Japan remains the third economic power in the world, with a high standard of living for a large majority of its population, despite a huge public debt of 250 % of GDP and a basically stagnant economy. An egalitarian society where life-time employment, however, may soon be a thing of the past and people believe that robots can truly be friends.

A country that is facing huge challenges: the threat of new tsunamis and earthquakes, the chronic energy problem and possible

solutions, the rapidly ageing of the population and its consequences, such as the lack of labor resources. Japan, a competitive society where men with poor prospects of romantic success are increasingly retreating from ordinary life and preferring virtual reality to genuine relationships.

Japan, an old but innovative and socially cohesive society but also in some respects the canary in the coal mine for the First World as we know it.

**Paul Muys, Geen zee te hoog.**

Japan en de Japanners in de 21e eeuw.

294 p. Ed. Vrijdag.

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5G INNOVATION PUT TO A PRACTICAL USE IN THE PORT OF ZEEBRUGGE

The 5G-project of the Port of Zeebrugge is gaining momentum as the outer port is already benefitting from increased automation. The deployment of the 5G network in the inner port area is due for completion mid-2020.

With this project, the Port of Zeebrugge is a pioneer in innovation and automation, as the 5G network can support the use of autonomous vehicles, safety drones and augmented reality.

Port of Zeebrugge made the investment for a private 5G network for the port area in 2019. Together with Citymesh and Nokia, Port of Zeebrugge is now able to supply a working 5G network that will provide wireless connectivity to more than 100 endpoints across the entire port operations. Safety, the acceleration

of innovation, and offering an ecosystem for the logistics sector are the overarching goals of this project.

Thanks to the successful deployment of this network, Port of Zeebrugge will be able to track, analyze and manage connected devices across multiple port-based applications in real time. We are specifically talking about the connectivity with tugboats, air pollution detectors, security cameras and quay sensors. Furthermore, the connectivity to a 5G network will be advantageous to major building projects of the port, such as the building and the maintenance of offshore wind farms.

A 5G-ready platform at the Port of Zeebrugge brings benefits to a wide range

of stakeholders across local enterprises. The network will act as a beacon for our partners to develop and deliver new solutions right across the logistics value chain. This investment in fast connectivity strengthens our position as an ultra-modern logistics center for European and intercontinental markets.

This project fits in the innovation strategy designed by the Port of Zeebrugge. Aside from existing projects such as RX Sea-port, that aims at simplifying registration of cargo at customs in response to the Brexit, Port of Zeebrugge believes that this 5G-network is an important step in port innovation.

source: <https://portofzeebrugge.be/en/news-events/5g-innovation-put-practical-use-port-zeebrugge>

PENTA-OCEAN AND DEME OFFSHORE SIGN MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING TO COLLABORATE ON CONSTRUCTION OF OFFSHORE WIND PROJECTS IN JAPAN

Penta-Ocean Construction Co., Ltd., Japan's leading marine contractor, and DEME Offshore, Belgium's leading offshore marine engineering company, have concluded a memorandum of understanding (MOU) regarding comprehensive cooperation for the construction of offshore wind farms in Japan.

In light of recent regulations* which promote offshore wind power generation in the general sea areas, as well as in port and harbour areas, the development of offshore wind projects has gained considerable momentum throughout Japan.

However, offshore wind projects can face very complex subsoils due to mixed sandy and rocky, sometimes soft grounds, together with severe metocean conditions like typhoons, bomb cyclones, etc. In addition, seismic forces need to be considered.

"By combining DEME Offshore's extensive experience and technological know-how in Europe with those of Penta-Ocean in Japan, we will be able to provide comprehensive solutions to these challenges. We believe that our collaboration will make a significant contribution to the further expansion of Japan's offshore wind industry, through the realisation of safe and highly efficient construction methods."

"As a first step, we will start with the introduction and development of advanced technologies that are deemed useful and beneficial to the Japanese market, leading to joint execution of offshore wind farm projects in Japan."

About Deme Offshore

DEME Offshore is a subsidiary of the DEME Group, a worldwide market-leading solutions provider in the highly specialised fields of dredging, offshore energy, environmental and infra marine works.

As a pioneer in the construction of offshore wind farms, this

January DEME Offshore achieved an unmatched turbine installation track record, with more than 2,200 offshore wind turbines successfully installed. DEME Offshore possesses a vast reservoir of know-how and the latest, most advanced technologies for the construction of offshore wind farms. Our expertise includes the transport and installation of foundations and turbines, specialised technology for XL drilled monopiles, the installation of subsea power cables, and the Operations & Maintenance activities necessary beyond commissioning.

DEME Offshore owns a comprehensive fleet of installation vessels, including seven Self-elevating platform (SEP) vessels equipped with cranes that have lifting capacities up to 1,500t, the revolutionary floating heavy lift vessel 'Orion' with a 5,000t crane, and other specialised vessels for cable installation, wind farm maintenance and offshore services.

About Penta-Ocean

Penta-Ocean is Japan's leading marine contractor, having an extensive track record and knowledge in marine civil engineering works in the maritime areas surrounding Japan. Penta-Ocean's business has expanded from its core business of marine civil engineering works to civil infrastructure and building construction works, with 124 years of experience in Japan. In Singapore, it has 56 years of experience, contributing approximately 10% expansion of the original national land by reclamation.

In the field of offshore wind farm construction, Penta-Ocean has a track record in the design, construction and removal of a demonstration offshore wind power facility in the Hibikinada District of Kitakyushu Port (Fukuoka Prefecture). Penta-Ocean owns the first Japanese offshore installation vessel, 'CP-8001', which is equipped with an 800t crane, and is currently building a second new vessel with a 1,600t crane.

Source: <https://www.deme-group.com/news/penta-ocean-and-deme-offshore-sign-memorandum-understanding-collaborate-construction-offshore>

* Act of Promoting Utilisation of Sea Areas in the Development of Power Generation Facilities Using Maritime Renewable Energy Resources.

>> keep reading from p.1

and academic delegations across the country's major cities in her capacity of Representative of His Majesty the King of the Belgians. Organized by the Belgian Foreign Trade Agency (BFTA) in close collaboration with the three regional authorities for export promotion and the FPS Foreign Affairs, this mission will undoubtedly attract a high number of Belgian businessmen and women and have positive outcomes on both the Japanese and Belgian economies.

By Fabienne L'Hoost, Director General of the Belgian Foreign Trade Agency (BFTA)

EDITORIAL

The bridge to a successful opera career

By Guy Joosten, Opera Director and General Manager International Opera Academy

The International Opera Academy (IOA) is one of the important institutes of higher education for opera in Europe. This special course for young opera singers and pianists/repertoireurs from all over the world has been in existence for 20 years in the beautiful historical city of Ghent, Belgium. The IOA is an official institute for higher education, recognized by the Flemish Community Ministry of Education in Brussels. Students who complete their two-year course successfully obtain a recognized diploma of postgraduate education. So far 143 students from 36 countries graduated successfully at the IOA.



Mr Ôwada Shinya who played the role of Selim in Guy Joosten's production "Die Entführung aus dem Serail" (W.A. Mozart) for the Tokyo Nikikai Opera.

The IOA aims to give young singers and pianists/repertoireurs an excellent preparation for the complex task awaiting them in the profession. The course admits up to 15 students for two years, following auditions held every second year in major cities across Europe.

Apart from these European auditions, the General Manager and founder of the IOA, Guy Joosten, introduced the IOA in Asia. Guy Joosten is an internationally renowned opera director. He

has worked in Japan and South Korea, both for the National Opera in Tokyo and Seoul. His contacts there with teachers and young artists opened the doors of the IOA to students from these countries. Current IOA students hail from 10 different countries including Japan, which makes the IOA a very international place. It helps students to learn about many different cultures while working together to become international singers or pianists/repertoireurs.

At the moment, the IOA considers opportunities to work closer together with institutes and universities in Japan. The IOA is also searching for partners who can help to support young Japanese artists who would like to continue their studies at the IOA in Belgium. At the IOA, students receive intensive training in all skills needed for a professional career in the world of opera. All teachers are active opera professionals, who know what is needed to become a successful young opera singer or pianist/repertoireur. Based on concrete experience and contemporary ideas, the course is constantly updated in accordance with current needs in the professional opera world.

Singers need to be trained not only to reach a high vocal standard, but also to know how to present a convincing character on stage. As such, the IOA does not only train the students' repertoire, but also their acting skills and their movement on stage. In dramaturgy lessons and workshops, students learn to analyse the score so as to understand the dramatic concepts of an opera.

The intensive study of languages (French, German, Italian, English) is equally important, as students will need these to be successful in their careers. A knowledge of languages helps to make the professional work process easier, but these language skills will also allow for ease of communication. The IOA uses English as its common language.

Every year, the IOA organizes several masterclasses as part of its curriculum, hosting such internationally renowned artists as René Jacobs, Nathalie Dessay, Dietrich Henschel and Linda Watson, amongst others. In addition, the IOA trains its students to prepare for auditions and organizes auditions with agencies and opera houses. It is particularly important to note that IOA students are given the opportunity to engage in an internship offered by one or more of the IOA partners. Such partners include major opera houses like Opera Ballet Vlaanderen in Antwerp and Ghent, as well as the Opera of Essen (Germany) and Oviedo (Spain). This possible internship takes place during the second year of the programme.

Finally, IOA students are given ample opportunity during the course of the programme to perform in concert and opera productions, at least one of which is fully staged and with orchestra. Throughout these practical activities, students learn new skills and apply what they have learned during coachings and lessons. This year the IOA celebrates its twentieth anniversary by organising a number of events that provide you with opportunities to get to know the IOA and its students.

We warmly invite you to visit the IOA Gala Concert "Celebrating (with) Mozart", a unique concert in the restored concert hall in Ghent. This semi-staged concert gathers IOA students, alumni (such as Ana Quintans) and masters (such as Dietrich Henschel) who will perform extracts from all 23 operas composed by Mozart. Italian conductor Pietro Rizzo will conduct the Belgian National Orchestra. This special event takes place on 23 December at 8 pm in the Bijloke Muziekcentrum in Ghent.

Info: www.ioacademy.be



Sawako Kayaki (soprano)- currently studying at the IOA:

栢木佐和子、1999 年 滋賀県生まれ。

私は3歳からバイオリン、16歳から歌の勉強を始めました。高校生になり歌の道に進むことを決め、その後東京藝術大学へと進学致しました。

IOA アカデミーで学ぼうと思ったきっかけとしては、生徒としてより、一人の音楽家としてさらに深く音楽というものを知ることができるからです。

ここではコンサートだけでなく、オペラプロジェクトにも生徒全員で取り組み、完成させます。このような大きな経験を通し、プロの音楽家として生きることがどのようなものかをより身近に感じる取ることが出来ます。

そして実際に感動したことが先生方の熱意です。彼らはいつも惜しみなく知識を与えてくれ、何より彼ら自身も音楽を教えること、音楽自体をいつも楽しんでいます。

楽しむことは音楽を演奏することにおいて最も大切なこと、その演奏者の心情から良い音楽が生まれます。

これからも一段と視野を広げ、音楽を心から演奏することが出来ますよう、一層精進してまいります。

Mirei Arai (pianist/repetiteur)- former student at the IOA:

私は日本で勉強した後、スイス、ドイツ、ベルギーに留学し、複数の劇場勤務を経て、現在ドイツ・カイザー・スラウテルン・プファルツ劇場でコレペティトゥア（主にオペラ制作の現場に関わるピアニスト）として働いております。このうちベルギーでは、インターナショナル・オペラ・アカデミー（以下 IOA）に所属し、日々コレペティトゥアとしての訓練を



受けました。生徒たちをプロフェッショナルに育てようと、情熱を持って取り組んでくださる先生方からのレッスンを中心に、ナタリー・デセイをはじめ世界的に有名な歌手や音楽家を招いて、マスタークラスも頻繁に行われており、そこから私たち生徒は音楽のみならず、音楽家、舞台人としての生き方をも学ばせていただきました。

IOA は実にインターナショナルで、私が在籍していた当時は 14 か国からの生徒が集まっておりました。日本はもちろん、スイスとドイツとも違う文化に、さらに生徒各々の文化が入り混じり、文化的にも発見の多い日々でした。また IOA では英語が共通語ですが、それまでドイツ語圏にいた私にとっては、言語の切り替えにも時間がかかりました。しかし今となっては、英語を話さなくてはならない環境にあったことに感謝しております。

他にも数々の素晴らしい教育プログラムが組まれています。が、何よりも IOA 在籍中にブリュッセルのモネ劇場や、ゲントとアントワープが拠点のフランダースオペラなどで、コレペティトゥアを務める貴重な機会をいただいた事は、忘れたくない経験です。ヨーロッパの第一線で活躍する指揮者、演出家、演奏家、歌手たちの公演に関わらせていただき、その時得た実践に基づく経験が、現在の劇場勤務の様々な場面にヒントを与えてくれました。

大変光栄なことに IOA 在学中には、第 26 回五島記念文化賞オペラ新人賞をいただき、2019 年夏にはコレペティトゥアとして研修記念リサイタルを東京で開催させていただきました。このような夢の舞台で演奏させていただく事ができたのも IOA でいただいたご指導、経験のおかげさまで。IOA で多くの貴重な経験と、素晴らしい時間を過ごさせていただいたことに、この場をお借りして感謝申し上げます。

OSKAR D 25 years, together with Konishi Shuzo

By Dirk De haene, Editorial Committee member, owner at OSKAR D



On 1 April 1995 (not a joke) Gert Junes and I started our own design office, OSKAR D, after working for some years at Axel Enthoven's design consultancy. One of our very first clients was Konishi Brewing co., the oldest sake brewery owned by a single family (1550). They started importing Belgian specialty beers in the early nineties, and thanks to Mrs Michiko Kurita we were introduced for the first small jobs: design of the bottle backlabels in Japanese. A delicate job: lots of (legal) information on a very limited space. When Konishi started importing Hoegaarden, we were involved in real national campaigns. But, since Hoegaarden White is a cloudy beer, Japanese consumers felt uncomfortable with this, thinking the beer had gone bad. Thus we focused on a 'naturally cloudy' campaign. Many campaigns followed, including promotions, scratch and win campaigns, ... Konishi liked the combination of our 'exotic' European design and the correct Japanese DTP. They also insisted all materials being printed here and shipped to Japan. So, several times a year, a large Nippon

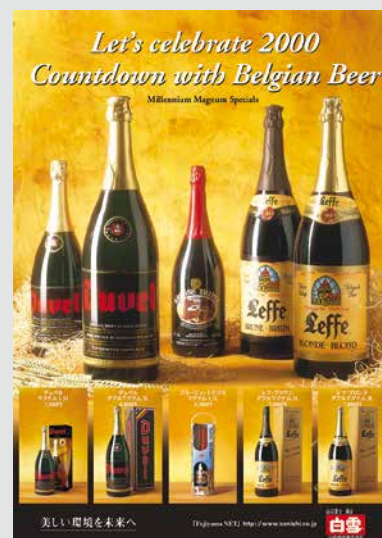
Express truck passed by our office to pick up the flyers, posters, etc. Everything had to be counted and packed accurately: not too few prints, but also not too many! Hoegaarden turned out to be successful and Konishi's portfolio rapidly grew: Duvel, Maredsous, Orval, ... The Vedett concept was a real hit in Japan, so Duvel Moortgat decided with Konishi to use Japan as a test market for the introduction of the new Vedett Extra White. As we were from the beginning into print and web, we also developed a dedicated Belgian beer website for Konishi, including online games, bar and shop finder, foodpairing tips, etc. The website evolved during the years and remains up to date. Today, after 25 years I like to thank Konishi for their loyalty. Special thanks to Mr Shintaro Konishi, Ms Akiko Konishi, Mrs Michiko Kurita and all the Belgians working at Konishi throughout the years: Philip Cop, Kathleen Boyen, Jan De Bock, Bert Winderickx, Hans Rubens, Joris Vermeulen, Carl De Coster, Aaron Vande Mergel. Below you see a small selection of our work through the years!



1998: Hoegaarden brand building



1999: Duvel ordering flyer



1999: magnum countdown flyer



February 2001: draft Hoegaarden campaign at Foodex



2000: business card



1998: sketch for a Hoegaarden wall sign



2003: online game for Hoegaarden



2001: Hoegaarden advertising



1995



2020

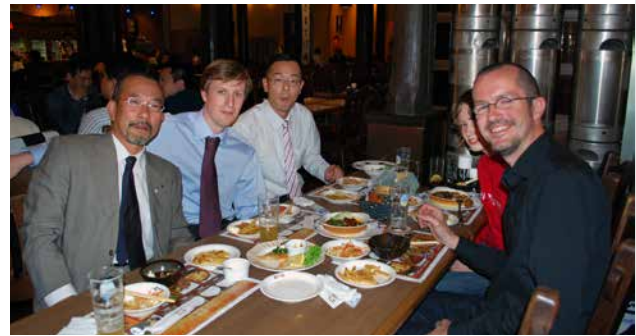
Congratulations to OSKAR D for their 25 years of super service!

We have been importing Belgian beers for over 30 years, and for most of that period OSKAR D has been there standing on our side. Speaking a little Japanese himself, it has always been very easy to work with Mr Dirk De haene and his team. We are happy and grateful that we can share this occasion with the OSKAR D family!

OSKAR D 創業 25 周年、誠におめでとうございます！

弊社は 30 年以上ベルギービールの輸入を行っており、OSKAR D はそのほとんどの期間で素晴らしいサービスの提供をして頂いております。デ・ハーネ氏とそのチームとの仕事はいつもスムーズで助かっています。OSKAR D ファミリーとしてこの機会を共に迎えられたことを非常に嬉しく思っております。

KONISHI



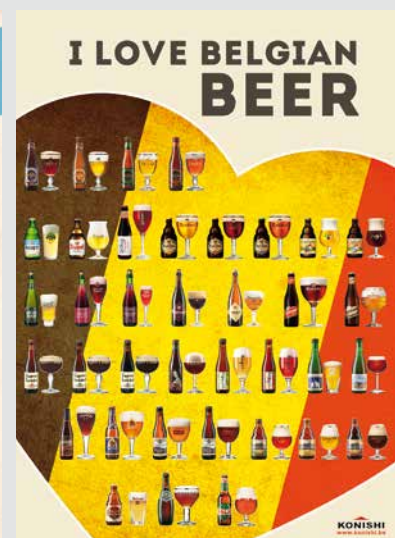
2008: at Konishi's Belgian beer restaurant with Mr Kishitani, Hans Rubens and my son Roel, enjoying stew and beer!



2001: beer portfolio brochure



2008: the Japanese market was used as a test market for the introduction of Vedett Extra White



2015: beer portfolio poster



2018: annual beer portfolio catalogue



2020: www.konishi.be

news from the members

THE VISIT OF HE AMBASSADOR SHIMOKAWA AND HIS SPOUSE TO GHEENT

By Andreas Niehaus (Ghent University) and Inge Willemsen (City of Ghent)

HE Ambassador Makita Shimokawa and his spouse officially visited the city of Ghent and Ghent University on 6 March. The visit of Ambassador Shimokawa started in the morning with a visit to Ghent University, where he and his wife were first welcomed by Professor Gita Deneckere, dean of the Faculty of Arts and Philosophy as well as staff members and students from the Institute of Japanese Studies. After a short visit to the Ranshō garden, which was a present to Ghent by the city of Kanazawa, the delegation was welcomed by Vice Chancellor Rik Van de Walle and Director of International Affairs, Guido Van Huylenbroeck, in the Vandenbrouck Pavilion, the universities' new Center for Architecture and Art. Professor Rik Van de Walle in his welcome speech stressed the importance of Japanese partner universities and research institutions for Ghent



University and also announced that in order to strengthen Japanese studies in Ghent, the Japanese program will be hiring an additional professor in the field of Japanese religion and Japanese social sciences. After a ceremony for the dona-

tion of books by The Nippon Foundation, Ambassador Shimokawa took the opportunity to give a lecture on Japan-Belgium relations. After students reported on the cultural activities of the student club "Tomo no kai" and a two weeks exchange program organized by the city of Kanazawa, there was also some time to visit an exhibition of 19th and early 20th century nude drawings, which also showed a drawing of the first Japanese art student at Ghent University.

Following the visit to Ghent University HE Ambassador was welcomed in the City Hall by Mayor Mathias De Clercq, Vice-Mayors Sofie Bracke and Sami Souguir, General Manager Mieke Hullebroeck, and Deputy General Manager Luc Kupers. Mayor De Clercq stressed the importance of Japanese companies for Ghent and for the North Sea Port. He also talked about the very active and successful sister city agreement with Kanazawa and will celebrate 50 years of collaboration next year. Mayor De Clercq stressed that he wants to further strengthen the exchange between the two cities and that he will therefore visit Kanazawa in November 2020. On that occasion a delegation from the city of Ghent, including the vice-rector from Ghent University, will also attend the opening of an exhibition organized by the Dr. Guislain Museum in the 21st Century Museum in Kanazawa. Ambassador Shimokawa in his reply expressed his hope that the agreement with Kanazawa will also be successful in the future and promised that he will promote Ghent in Japan.

After the small reception the CEO of the North Sea Port, Mr Lagasse, invited the delegation to the Port House at the old harbor, where he explained the history and economic relevance of the harbor for Belgium and the Flemish region. During the lunch organized by the North Sea Port representatives of Japanese companies located at the harbor were able to exchange ideas with HE Ambassador Shimokawa.

In the afternoon the program in Ghent was completed with a visit to the current and already famed Van Eyck exhibition in the Museum of Fine Arts (MSK), which was guided by the director of the museum Cathérine Verleysen.

news from the members

In
memoriam**HE AMBASSADOR
PATRICK NOTHOMB**

It is with deep sorrow that we have to announce the passing away of Honorary Ambassador Patrick Nothomb.

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.

The BJA would like to invite its members to send us your stories, anecdotes or memories of the time you have shared with HE Ambassador Nothomb in the past to us by July 1, 2020. We will publish your short articles and pictures in the September BJA Newsletter.

**UMICORE BELGIUM RECOGNIZED AS A TOP
EMPLOYER FOR THE 15TH TIME IN A ROW**

Umicore is proud to announce that it has been certified for the 15th time as one of the Top Employers in Belgium, recognized as providing excellent employee conditions, nurturing and developing talent throughout all levels of the organization, and striving to continuously optimize employment practices. Crucial to the Top Employers Certification is the completion of a stringent international process and meeting the required HR standards in order to achieve the exclusive Top Employers Belgium 2020 Certification. In other words, Umicore provides an outstanding employment environment.

Career opportunities

As a matter of course, training and personal development belong to your career. Because we find it very important that you keep your personal skills and knowledge up-to-date. This is essential for your career - and essential for us. You are also able to grow horizontally, for example to another business unit. And internationally, we offer a lot of opportunities. All our sites have international contacts that give your work a view of the world as well. If you're flexible and mobile, you can seize those opportunities.

Work-life balance

We offer various possibilities for our employees to build a healthy work-life balance. You can work from home or dependent on your function, work from one of our four Belgian locations. On top of that, you are able to work part time or exchange your end of the year premium for extra paid leave. This enables you to take a full month off for instance during the summer holidays. You are free to do so every single year.

Attractive pay: primary working conditions

Included in your career are: a nice competitive salary and meal vouchers amongst other benefits. Depending on your position, you can opt for an environmentally friendly company car. We also provide group and hospitalization insurance and life and disability insurance.

Materials for a better life

What also puts us among the Top Employers of our country is our business itself. With future-oriented activities such as recycling, catalysis and the production of materials for, among other things, high-tech solar panels, we work towards a cleaner world every day. This involves a large portion of our budget going to R&D in order for us to become even better at what we do. Our commitment also translates into a greener car policy, investment in solar panels and rainwater recovery for our offices, contributions to forest development projects, ... We have the room for your career, and room for your commitment. That's what working at a Top Employer is all about!

Source : <https://www.umicore.be/en/media/news/umicore-belgium-recognized-as-a-top-employer-for-the-15th-time-in-a-row>

news from the members



THE MAP GROUP PARTNERS WITH COOPTALIS AND STRENGTHENS ITS INTERNATIONAL FOOTPRINT

The Map Group, leader in relocation and immigration services in Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg announced its merger with Cooptalis, expert in international professional mobility. The merger between these two specialists which took place at the end of 2019 strengthens the relocation services currently offered to expatriates and corporations in the Benelux. It gives birth to a global offer in international mobility.

Cooptalis builds and manages international mobility projects from A to Z.

Since 2012, Cooptalis has been developing and supporting international professional mobility projects all over the world. Recruitment, immigration, relocation, training and services for expatriates... Cooptalis' teams of experts imagine and build expatriate projects

from A to Z, jointly with candidates and corporate according to their respective needs. An expert in international professional mobility, Cooptalis sees each project as a unique journey. The company has more than 700 employees in 18 agencies around the world. More than 450 companies today trust Cooptalis for the recruitment, immigration and relocation of new talent."

Recruitment

We think that talent is key to successfully launching international mobility projects. That's why we're putting recruitment at the heart of our offering.

Immigration

Whether alone or as a family, regardless of country of origin or destination, we streamline your immigration project and optimize deadlines while respect-

ing the laws of each country.

Relocation

The logistics of an expatriation project quickly become complex. We help you find your new home and organize all the practical aspects of your new life.

Training

We provide you with all the tools to help prepare and adapt so to make your international mobility project a success.



AGC AND CITRINE INFORMATICS COLLABORATE TO DEVELOP NEW GLASS TECHNOLOGY USING AI

AGC Glass Europe, a European leader in flat glass, and Citrine Informatics are collaborating to use artificial intelligence (AI) to accelerate the development of next-generation glass. Citrine Informatics is a technology platform that harnesses the power of AI to bring new materials to market faster, and capture materials-enabled product value.

There is currently high global demand for optimizing optical and mechanical properties for strong scratch and abrasion-resistant glass in the automotive and communication industries. The

purpose of the collaboration is to look for innovative solutions to meet this ever-higher glass performance demand faster than ever before.

AGC is providing experimental data to build proprietary AI models using the Citrine platform and is iteratively testing the newly suggested materials. The

models are improved by Citrine through this sequential learning process, which targets the identification of the best process conditions to reach high-performance glass materials.

"The future of materials development depends on speed. Developing these high performance materials faster will require managing and using data more effectively, which includes consolidating data into a single consistent searchable format, as well as structuring, storing, and using materials data to harness the power of AI," said Marc Van Den Neste, CTO of the Building & Industrial Glass Company from AGC. "Artificial Intelligence is expected to dramatically change how the scientists design experiments or value data, leading to breakthrough results."

"AI-driven materials development is the future of the materials industry and we are honored to be working with AGC," said Greg Mulholland, CEO of Citrine Informatics. "The companies who are first to invest in this technology such as AGC, will reap tremendous market rewards."

Source: <https://www.agc-glass.eu/en/news/press-release/agc-and-citrine-informatics-collaborate-develop-new-glass-technology-using-ai>



NEXELIS TO ACQUIRE SPECIALTY IMMUNOGENICITY AND IMMUNE-ONCOLOGY TESTING LABORATORY IMMUNXPERTS

Nexelis, a portfolio company of Ampersand Capital Partners, and a leading provider of assay development and advanced laboratory testing is pleased to announce the signing of a definitive agreement, subject to conditions precedent, to acquire ImmunXperts. The closing of the transaction is expected by the end of March.

Based in the Brussels South Charleroi Biopark within the town of Gosselies, ImmunXperts has developed and performs a full offering of immunogenicity and immuno-oncology in vitro functional and potency assays. These assays help pharmaceutical and biotech sponsors screen, select and optimize lead compounds before the initiation of in vivo trials. The company, whose CEO is Thibault Jonckheere, was co-created in 2014 by immunology expert Sofie Pattijn, who serves as ImmunXperts CTO, and investors including Sambrinvest. Both Dr Pattijn and Mr Jonckheere will continue in senior leadership roles at Nexelis.

“ImmunXperts’ immunology testing expertise will help Nexelis more broadly serve the needs of our customers” said Benoit Bouche, Nexelis President and Chief Executive Officer. “Nexelis will now have an unrivaled ability to efficiently develop immunogenicity assays, qualify and validate them in a regulated environment, and then ultimately perform them utilizing our high-throughput platforms in support of clinical trials.”

Sofie Pattijn and Thibault Jonckheere added “We are proud of

ImmunXperts’ achievements over the past five years and are grateful for the support obtained from our investors and partners, our employees, and the Wallonia region. We are excited to continue our growth trajectory as part of Nexelis and serve as a European hub for the company.”

About Nexelis

With unrivaled expertise in immunology on both sides of the client/CRO relationship, Nexelis is a leading provider of assay development and advanced laboratory testing. Our versatile team of scientists, working with our advanced technology platforms, were instrumental in the development, qualification, validation, and large-scale sample testing of assays that supported the FDA filing of almost 100 new molecular entities, including blockbuster vaccines and soluble large molecules. For more information, please visit www.nexelis.com

About ImmunXperts

ImmunXperts offers a wide range of in vitro immunology services with a strong focus on immunogenicity and immuno-oncology. The company helps biopharma companies select their best lead candidates by assessing all aspects of immune responses in donors and patients. Acting as a mobile development team, ImmunXperts complements its clients’ expertise to deliver meaningful and potent screening tools. For more information, please visit www.immunxperts.com

Source: <https://nexelis.com/en/2020/03/04/acquireimmunxperts/>

ICO, PORT OF ZEEBRUGGE AND ENGIE JOIN FORCES IN A UNIQUE PARTNERSHIP

International Car Operators (ICO) in Zeebrugge, an important hub for roll-on/roll-off goods handling for worldwide destinations joins forces with ENGIE and the port authority of Zeebrugge in a energy transition project. International Car Operators (ICO) in Zeebrugge will be the location for the largest onshore wind farm in Flanders with a total capacity of 44 MW. ENGIE also provided the largest “electric charging island” in the country with 308 electric charging points. It is the largest onshore wind project on one industrial site in Flanders, oper-

ated by one operator: 44 MW of locally produced green energy from 11 wind turbines will be used in the second half of 2020 by the local community, by ICO itself and by moored ships.

The annual production amounts to no less than 110 GWh, enough to provide electricity to around 30,000 families and to keep 50,000 tons of CO₂ emissions out of the air every year. The wind turbines are an important step forward in ICO’s ambition to create a “green terminal”, but are not the only realization

in that context. Earlier this year, ENGIE provided the largest “electric charging island” in Belgium with 154 double charging points from EVBox, a subsidiary of ENGIE. This impressive infrastructure with a capacity of 3.4 MW has been operational since February 2019 and allows to charge 100,000 electric vehicles per year, or more than 2,000 per week.

Source: <https://portofzeebrugge.be/fr/ico-port-zeebrugge-and-engie-join-forces-unique-partnership>

news from the members

FLEMISH EXPORT TO JAPAN SHOWS SOLID GROWTH IN 2019

In 2019, Flemish exports amounted to 325 billion euros, a slight decrease of -1.29% compared to 2018. However, Flanders saw its exports to Japan increase by +14.21%. Japan rose from 19th to 17th on the list of most important ex-

port destinations. Its share in Flemish exports rose from 0.87% in 2018 to 1.00% in 2019, amounting to 3.26 billion euros compared to 2.85 billion in 2018.

Of the 15 sectors with an individual share of more than 1% of Flemish ex-

ports to Japan, 9 were able to increase their exports to Japan (see figure 1). The pharmaceutical and automotive sectors, which together account for nearly half of Flemish exports to Japan, saw growth of nearly 33% and 19%.

Ranking	HS-code Sectors	Export value	% export	% growth
1	30 - Pharmaceutical products	1 041 439	31,98%	+32,59%
2	87 - Vehicles other than railway or tramway rolling-stock, and parts and accessories thereof	561 006	17,23%	+18,92%
3	90 - Optical, photographic, cinematographic, measuring, checking, precision, medical or surgical instruments and apparatus; parts and accessories thereof	267 173	8,20%	-3,44%
4	29 - Organic chemicals	223 671	6,87%	+13,79%
5	84 - Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances; parts thereof	200 583	6,16%	+35,79%
6	85 - Electrical machinery and equipment; sound recorders and reproducers, television image and sound recorders and reproducers; and parts of accessories thereof	126 886	3,90%	+8,79%
7	39 - Plastics and articles thereof	96 053	2,95%	-7,71%
8	38 - Miscellaneous chemical products	78 187	2,40%	+13,64%
9	18 - Cocoa and cocoa preparations	62 792	1,93%	-1,77%
10	40 - Rubber and articles thereof	51 329	1,58%	+3,43%
11	74 - Copper and articles thereof	43 771	1,34%	+82,57%
12	28 - Inorganic chemicals; organic or inorganic compounds of precious metals, of rare-earth metals, of radioactive elements or of isotopes	39 264	1,21%	-15,80%
13	71 - Natural or cultured pearls, precious or semi-precious stones, precious metals, metals clad with precious metal and articles thereof; imitation jewellery; coin	38 416	1,18%	-40,12%
14	37 - Photographic or cinematographic goods	37 583	1,15%	+25,59%
15	73 - Articles of iron or steel	35 012	1,08%	-15,79%

Figure 1: Growth of the top-15 sectors in Flemish exports to Japan (2019 - 1,000 euros)

The Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between Japan and the European Union entered into force on 1 February 2020, and resulted into lower Japanese import tariffs. To what extent did these lower tariffs contribute to the growth of Flemish exports to Japan?

Within the Flemish export to Japan there are 82 product categories (HS code with

8 digits, called GN8), each of which generated more than 5 million euros in 2019. Of these, 53 categories showed increased export to Japan. 17 of them, or nearly 1/3, saw their Japanese import tariffs drop thanks to the EPA. The top-2 (pharma and automotive) are not included in these 17. They already benefited from a zero rate before EPA entered

into force. The 17 products are shown in figure 2.

In 2019, the EPA led to a reduction in Japanese import tariffs twice, on February 1 and April 1. Figure 2 shows the rates on January 1, 2019, before the EPA came into effect, and after the second reduction on April 1, 2019.

news from the members

Rank	Product Category (GN8-level)	Export value in 1000 €	% of export to Japan	% growth versus 2018	Japan import tax on 1/1/19	Japan import tax on 1/4/19
9	29339980 - Heterocyclic compounds with nitrogen hetero-atom(s) only	47 323	1,45%	+116,02%	3,10%	0,00%
10	74020000 - Copper, unrefined; copper anodes for electrolytic refining	40 958	1,26%	+78,82%	3,00%	0,00%
22	28332400 - Sulphates of nickel	21 952	0,67%	+48,27%	3,90%	0,00%
27	38249964 - Products and preparations for the chemical and allied industries for pharmaceutical or surgical uses, n.e.s.	18 221	0,56%	+2,22%	2,60%	0,00%
32	18062010 - Chocolate and other food preparations containing cocoa, in blocks, slabs or bars weighing > 2kg or in liquid, paste, powder, granular or other bulk form	14 030	0,43%	+17,85%	28,00%	22,90%
37	19041090 - Prepared foods obtained by swelling or roasting cereals or cereal products (excl. based on maize or rice)	10 787	0,33%	+7,85%	11,50%	8,60%
43	29142900 - Cyclanic, cyclenic or cycloterpenic ketones, without other oxygen function (excl. cyclohexanone, methylcyclohexanones, ionones and methylionones)	9 982	0,31%	+49,78%	3,90%	0,00%
44	29359090 - Sulphonamides	9 293	0,29%	+329,02%	3,90%	0,00%
50	20041010 - Cooked potatoes, frozen	8 347	0,26%	+31,63%	8,50%	4,30%
52	39046920 - Fluoroelastomers FKM, in primary forms	7 947	0,24%	+3,22%	5,60%	0,00%
53	18069039 - Chocolates and chocolate products, unfilled (excl. in blocks, slabs or bars, chocolates)	7 817	0,24%	+13,76%	10,00%	8,20%
60	29242970 - Cyclic amides, incl. cyclic carbamates, and their derivatives; salts thereof	6 965	0,21%	+149,26%	3,10%	0,00%
61	21021031 - Dried bakers' yeast	6 911	0,21%	+7,64%	10,50%	0,00%
62	38245090 - Non-refractory mortars and concretes (excl. concrete ready to pour)	6 835	0,21%	15144%	2,60%	0,00%
77	39209100 - Plates, sheets, film, foil and strip, of non-cellular poly "vinyl butyral", not reinforced, laminated, supported or similarly combined with other materials, without backing, unworked or merely surface- worked or merely cut into squares or rectangles	5 463	0,17%	+36,43%	3,90%	0,00%
78	22011011 - Mineral waters, natural, not containing added sugar or other sweetening matter nor flavoured, not carbonated	5 433	0,17%	+12,59%	3,00%	0,00%
80	35051050 - Starches, etherified or esterified (excl. dextrins)	5 144	0,16%	+15,41%	6,8% // 21,3% or 25,5 yen/kg	6,8% // 17,4% or 20,86 yen/kg

Figure 2: Flemish products with an EPA import tariff and export growth in Japan (2019)

The chemical products under HS codes 28 and 29 are well represented with 5 product categories. These are products no. 9, 22, 43, 44 and 60. They have strong export growth in Japan (between 48% and 329%). The Japanese import tax for these products on January 1, 2019 was still 3.10% or 3.90%, depending on the product, but at the start of the EPA, the rate immediately went to 0%.

The same effect can be seen with copper and copper products (product no. 10). The disappearance of the Japanese rate of 3% goes hand in hand with an export growth to Japan of 78.82%.

In the Flemish food sector (HS codes 18 to 22), 6 product categories were able

to convert their reduced import tariff into export growth to Japan. It concerns products no. 32 and no. 53 (chocolate), no. 37 (grain preparations), no. 50 (potatoes), no. 61 (baker's yeast) and no. 78 (mineral water). Export growth is less spectacular: no product shows growth above 25%, except for the potatoes (+31.63%). With the exception of baker's yeast and mineral water, the Japanese import tariff is only gradually reduced to zero for the other food products. This may play a role.

The "golden palm" or "yellow jersey" goes to product no. 62 "mortar and concrete", which increased its exports to Japan fifteen-fold in 2019. Its Japanese

import tariff fell from 2% to 0% as a result of the EPA.

Import tariffs are not, of course, the only playmaker in international trade. Exchange rates, product standards, administrative rules and other non-tariff barriers, in addition to the general economic situation, also play a role. And, the results of an economic partnership agreement are particularly noticeable in the longer term. Nevertheless, the start of the EPA between the EU and Japan apparently led to additional growth in exports to Japan for some sectors in Flanders.

Source: Dirk De Ruijter, Flanders Investment and Trade, Tokyo Office - LinkedIn Page www.flandersinvestmentandtrade.com

news from the members



JAPAN TOBACCO INTERNATIONAL FOR 11TH YEAR IN A ROW TOP EMPLOYER IN BELGIUM AND NUMBER THREE IN THE TOP 10 OF BELGIAN TOP EMPLOYERS

JTI (Japan Tobacco International), known for its worldwide cigarette brands Camel and Winston and the new generation of e-cigarettes Logic Compact, has been awarded as Top Employer in Belgium for the 11th year in a row. In addition, JTI achieved the third position in the top 10 of Top Employers in Belgium. A special achievement and a great recognition for the excellent human resources policy and employment conditions of the company.

Johan Petit, People & Culture Director JTI Benelux: "At JTI we work hard to be a dynamic organization, and we see our employees as the key factor for our success. So we want to be extremely competitive in attracting and retaining talent. We constantly adjust our HR

policy accordingly and we develop targeted programs for this, for example in recruitment, training and employment conditions. Every day, our employees have to feel the conviction that JTI is a special company to work for. All these efforts are now being rewarded by Top Employer."

The annual international survey of the Top Employers Institute screens leading employers worldwide: on terms of employment, on active support of talent at all levels within the company and on continuous improvement of working conditions. For more information www.top-employers.com.

In addition to being recognized as a Top Employer in Belgium, JTI was again named as a Top Employer in Europe.

About JTI

JTI is a leading international tobacco and vaping company with operations in more than 130 countries. JTI is the global owner of both Winston, the number two cigarette brand in the world, and Camel. With its internationally recognized brand Logic, JTI is also a major player in the e-cigarette (vaping) market. Headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, JTI employs more than 45,000 people worldwide. JTI is a member of the Japan Tobacco Group of Companies. For more information, visit www.jti.com.



BJA VIRTUAL TEA TIME TALK & LINKEDIN

The BJA team is here for you. We would like to listen, share and see how we or one of the specific BJA Chairs or Committee members can support you in these challenging times.

Do not hesitate to contact us:

- > oto-kellens@bja.be
- > matsumoto@bja.be
- > durnez@bja.be

We look forward to set up our BJA Virtual Tea Time Talk, via a phone call or a remote live meeting (skype, facetime, etc.).

We welcome you to join our page Belgium-Japan Association & Chamber of Commerce on LinkedIn as well. Please keep an eye on this, in addition to our www.bja.be

STEIGENBERGER WILTCHER'S GREEN KEY AWARD

The environment and smart practices are a priority at the Steigenberger Wiltcher's and our commitment to adhere to responsible management of our resources, is now being recognized. Since 2020 the hotel holds the Green Key certification. The Green Key award is the leading standard for excellence in the field of environmental responsibility and sustainable operations within the tourism industry. The climate commitment is everyone's initiative. It's a real "collective awareness", Mr Cottray, General Manager.

Source: www.steigenberger.com



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news from the members

“GRANDIR” (EMPOWER) PHOTO BOOK AND EXHIBITION

By Claire Ghyselen, Trade Commissioner AWEX Tokyo

The project of “Grandir” (Empower) photo book and exhibition was triggered by a discussion with the president of d’Ieteren of the Belgian Paralympic Committee in May 2018. This meeting led to an internal discussion of how we, as the Japanese office of a Belgian economic administration, AWEX, could live the values of excellence and of inclusion of diversity in our professional lives.

As you know, embracing diversity in all its shapes is one of the major values of the Francophonie and as a team, we

realised that making bridges with athletes from Japan and Belgium was a beautiful way to live our values. Our first idea was to create two calendars on the theme of thriving toward excellence so we convinced 6 Belgian athletes and 6 Japanese athletes to become the models of Jessica Thirion-Martin, a young cameraman whom we had selected to do the photo shooting.

But something happened during the shootings. We had asked the athletes to decide on how they wanted to appear so that they would be telling us their

stories. Jessica unveiled the person behind every athlete, capturing their humanity. The shootings created a space where we were all fully engaged in the present time together. The stories of the athletes are stories of vulnerability, of resilience, of grit to reach excellence, of dealing bravely with life’s vicissitudes. These were odes to the beauty of what makes us unique and of value.

It became obvious very quickly that we could not limit to a mere calendar, so we decided to build a photo exhibition and edit a photo book with the stories of the athletes.

We brought in several Belgian and Japanese companies on this larger project because we wanted this to be an occasion to share ideas on how to create a better environment for everyone. None of this would have been possible without their contribution and I am very grateful to them.

Finally, it illustrates that together, we get empowered, so to speak, generating one idea after the other and putting them into practice. And this was another way to live diversity and thrive for excellence. In this respect, I believe that my office has found a way to bridge its daily activities focused on economy and industry with the idea of embracing diversity. We managed to cross this bridge all together. This was priceless.

Scan the QR code or go to <https://sites.google.com/view/awexjapon-grandir/home> to view the digital version of the book.



BJA VIP Luncheon: One year after the EU-Japan EPA: where are we now? BJA VIP 昼食会: 日EU経済連携協定(EPA)発効から一年、現況と今後の展望

Tuesday 3 March 2020 - Steigenberger Wiltcher's, Brussels



HE Ambassador Kodama of the Japanese Mission to the EU and Mr Chirullo, EU Deputy Chief Negotiator of the EPA & Deputy Head of Unit Far East of European Commission toasting together during the cocktails.



Over 50 guests joined this highly interesting BJA VIP Luncheon.



Mrs Danielle Vermaelen, Partner at EY and BJA EU Committee Chair, is giving a brief introduction before the start of the Luncheon.

One year after the entry into force of the EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), positive results are already visible, with both parties benefiting from the agreement.

Having both been at the center stage of the negotiations, it was an honor for the BJA to invite His Excellency Kazuo Kodama, Ambassador of the Japanese Mission to the EU and Marco Chirullo, EU Deputy Chief Negotiator of the EPA & Deputy Head of Unit Far East at the European Commission's Directorate-General for Trade, to share their views on the current and future impact of the EPA and discuss the way ahead for EU-Japan business and trade relations. Over 50 BJA members joined this exclusive luncheon, kindly supported by JTI.

After a brief introduction by Danielle Vermaelen, Partner at EY and BJA EU Committee Chair, His Excellency Ambassador Kodama gave a very thorough and detailed presentation, praising the positive results while encouraging the audience to take full advantage of the EPA in the future.

Following, Mr Chirullo shared his views, insisting on the agreement's innovative approach towards sustainable development, among others, and its importance for a multilateral world governance ever more challenged by raising unilateralism.

After a brief Q&A session, Mrs Vermaelen gave the closing remarks.



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

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