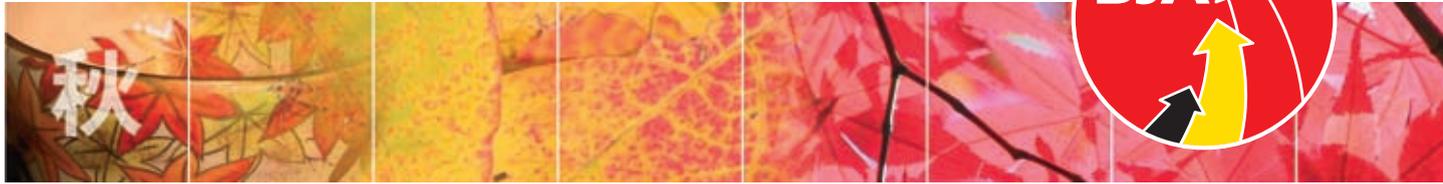


Belgium-Japan Association

& Chamber of Commerce ASBL- VZW



Number 76 - September 2007

Trade Flows & Cultural News

Belgium - Gateway to Europe

By Mr Mitsugu Manabe, President and Managing Director Sumitomo Benelux, President Nihonjinkai and Vice-President BJA

It was a great honor and pleasure for me to become Vice-President of the BJA.

2007 has started with big news for the relationship between Belgium and Japan. One was the visit of Prime Minister Mr Abe to Belgium in January, and the other was the Social Security Agreement between the two countries, which came into force from 1st of January 2007. Particularly, there was a big contribution from the BJA to the Social Security Agreement. I would like to thank all those who contributed, directly and indirectly.

I had the opportunity to read the back numbers of the "Trade Flows & Cultural News" and recognized that BJA's activities have been supported by so many people's good will and voluntarism.

From those back numbers, I would like to ask permission to quote the words of Mr Luc Willame, former BJA President in his Farewell letter to the BJA fellow members with a slight modification;

"If Japan can be considered as the gateway to Asia, Belgium should be seen by our fellow citizens as the gateway to Europe." Indeed this country is regarded by an absolute majority as the gateway to Europe. I think that is why many Japanese companies have established their European head offices here.

About half a year ago, in the Nihonjinkai's monthly bulletin, I wrote an article titled "What is Belgium?" I live in Brussels and I feel that this city is very international, and I am well accepted here, as long as I respect the rules. I have never felt that I am excluded by the local society. Living in a foreign country, this must be a very precious feeling. I find that this is one of the most valuable features of this country. However on the other hand, what is the identity of Belgium? That was my question. With three different languages, different communities with different

characteristics, it was not easy for me to describe Belgium or Belgian people as such. And my answer was as follows;

Probably, we can find the identity of Belgium in its capability of accepting differences; different languages, different thoughts, different nationalities etc... I believe that Belgian people have the capability for peaceful resolution of the conflicts, which may arise from these differences. That is why Brussels is the best place for the head quarter of the European Union. And that is why Belgium is truly the gateway to Europe.

Coming back to the back numbers of the "Trade Flows & Cultural News", I was especially impressed by those Belgian people who have been actively contributing to the excellent relationships of two nations, by their affection to Japan, Japanese culture, literature, and Japanese people. I also would like to learn more, understand more and love more this beautiful country where I live now, and make a contribution to improve further the relationship of the two countries.



Mr Mitsugu Manabe

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EU Business Seminar ‘Energy Policy in the 21st century’

By Mr M. Ruete, Director-General, Energy & Transport of the European Commission
Thursday 3 May 2007, European Commission, Brussels

The EU Committee of the Belgium-Japan Association & Chamber of Commerce had the pleasure to invite the members to the “Energy policy in the 21st century” Seminar, with keynote speaker, Mr Ruete, Director-General, Directorate General for Energy & Transport of the European Commission. This event was a unique opportunity to meet a distinguished high-ranking Commission official and exchange views on current economic and environmental issues concerning energy and transport, which are at the heart of Europe’s agenda. The EU Business Seminar took place in main European Commission building, the Berlaymont.

There is a need for more energy efficient consumption and production patterns. The 2006 Spring European Council called for the adoption of an Action Plan for

Energy Efficiency, bearing in mind the EU energy saving potential of over 20% by 2020. What is happening and where are we going? - questions being posed by the BJA members.

To respond to these questions and to explain the EU’s Energy Policy in the 21st century, nobody was better placed than Director-General for Energy and Transport, Mr Matthias Ruete to give an overview on the current and future economic and environmental issues concerning energy and transport.

The networking cocktail was a fine occasion for the attendees to discuss their personal and business knowledge about Europe’s model of regulation and its influence. In the early evening the event ended with much more certitudes on Europe’s agenda.



The room at the European Commission filled with energetic members ready to pose some critical questions.



Mr M. Ruete, Director General, Energy & Transport of the European Commission shaking hands with Mr Shimizu, Senior Economist EU of JETRO.



Mrs Paula Abreu Marques, Deputy Head of Unit International Relations DG Energy & Transport of the EC, discussing energy with delegates of Toyota Motor Europe and Toyota Belgium.





BJA Golf Cup and Golf Initiation

Saturday, 12 May 2007, Golf Club d'Hulencourt



On Saturday, 12 May, the Cultural Committee of the Belgium-Japan Association & Chamber of Commerce took pleasure in inviting members and friends to the BJA Golf Cup and Golf Initiation at the Golf Club d'Hulencourt.

Despite unfortunate stormy weather on this day, nearly 40 golf enthusiasts joined together for a round of golf or golf initiation. During the events, Lexus Belgium kindly offered participants refreshments after the 9th hole as well as a pleasant cocktail in the Clubhouse after the game.

Prize Ceremony was opened by welcome words from the main sponsor, Mr Eric Janssen, Manager PR & Corporate Affairs of Lexus Belgium, followed by a prize giving for several competition levels inside the Golf Initiation group.

For the 18-hole team competition, the defending champion Japan team won again the hot match, Japan vs. EU, and the team captain, H.E Mr Takekazu Kawamura, Japanese Ambassador to the EU, who honored us in participating 18th hole competition, received the winning trophy.

Among many prizewinners in the individual competition, Mr Nicolas de Wagheneire of Martin's Hotels won the best net score.

Thanks to the generous support by the main sponsor, Lexus Belgium, as well as other BJA member companies mentioned here on this page, all participants could bring home some splendid prizes and once again this exceptional event has ended with a great success.

Pictures taken by courtesy of Mr Duquesne of E. & H. De Beukelaer & Co.



Mr Hayashida of Nippon Express happily receives a round trip ticket to Japan of ANA out of the hands of Mr Cornil.



Mr Matsumoto of Cast Inc, standing next to Mr Janssen of Lexus Belgium, is looking forward to tour the roads in the newest hybrid car of Toyota for a test drive.



Mr de Wagheneire of Martin's Hotels proudly shows his prize from Pioneer Europe offered through Mr Nagahata.



H.E. Ambassador Kawamura receiving a high-tech digital Pentax camera from Mr De Beukelaer of E. & H. De Beukelaer & Co.



Policy Briefing “The Priorities of the upcoming Portuguese EU Presidency and The Future of Europe”

By Dr Manuel Carvalho, Presidency Spokesperson & Counsellor for Institutional and Horizontal Affairs. Thursday 12 July, Hotel Hilton, Brussels



BJA members enjoy a group photo with Dr Carvalho.

On July 12th, the EU Committee of the Belgium-Japan Association & Chamber of Commerce had the pleasure in organizing a policy briefing regarding the Portuguese EU Presidency. During this event, Mr Didier Stevens, Project Senior Manager Government and Technical Affairs of Toyota Motor Europe and Chairman of the BJA EU Committee gave an opening address, with the hope for a decisive voice of Europe in the world.

The Presidency Spokesperson & Counsellor for Institutional and Horizontal Affairs of the Permanent

Representative of Portugal to the EU, Dr Manuel Carvalho gave a presentation about the priorities of the upcoming Portuguese EU Presidency, which are mainly the reform of Treaties, an agenda for modernizing European economies and societies, the strengthening of Europe’s role in the world, and the building of a consensus for the European project to move forward. During the Q&A session and networking cocktails participants could enjoy a beautiful view of Brussels and shared extensively ideas and hopes for a bright EU future with Dr Carvalho.



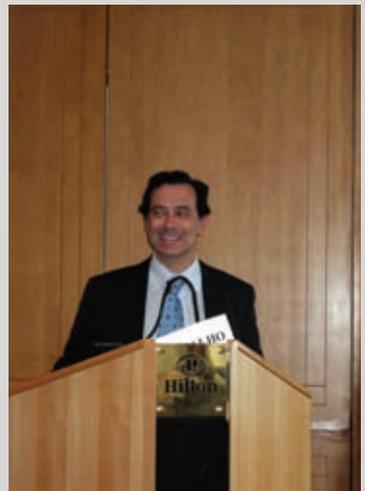
Mr Stevens, Chairman of the EU Committee, meeting the newly arrived General Manager of Yamato International Europe Belgium, Mr Katsura (middle) and his colleague Mr Takada.



The Portuguese EU Presidency Spokesperson & Counsellor for Institutional and Horizontal Affairs, Dr Carvalho, surrounded by Mr Maguire (left) and Mr Teller.



Mr Nakamura, Director General of JETRO and Mr Van de Velde of Deloitte Consulting in the middle of a nice conversation.



Friendship Committee News

Hanami Event

Sunday, 15 April 2007 - Haspengouw

On Sunday, April 15th we all travelled to the east of Belgium for the Haspengouw event of the BJA Friendship Committee. The Haspengouw region is known for its blossoming fruit orchards, but at the same time, you can make beautiful walks through endless, vast fields and hollow paths. It's an area not so many tourists would go to and that's why it was interesting to have a look at this special place, full of nature.

We started our walk at an old, 12th century chapel and after a short stroll, we took a break at the statue of Tjenne, a burnt 'witch', where we learnt more about the old, regional legends of the 17th century; totally different from Japanese stories! Then we continued our walk under the 30-degrees-sun until we reached the highest point of the region. By that time, everybody was very thirsty: time for a taste of some regional fruit gins in the shadow of a large tree. We walked a bit more, enjoying the great view of the green and yellowish landscape. Around 4 o'clock, it was time for our picnic. In the middle of the pure nature, we ate various fruit tarts and had some artisan fruit juices of Haspengouw. After a cosy meal together, we had enough energy for the last part. We walked on under the shadow of old trees, not knowing that we were heading for the highlight of our walk: suddenly we found ourselves amazed by the sweet smell and astonishing beauty of millions of cherry blossoms!

Satisfied but tired, we soon reached our cars. But there was yet one last surprise to come... as a memory of this great day, we all received a bag, full of typical Haspengouw things like blossom beer, fruit juice, an apple and a pear..., things to make us dream of going back.



4月15日、ベルギー東部にあるハスペンゴウを訪れました。ハスペンゴウはきれいな花の咲く果樹園で知られていて、広大な畑の間を縫って散歩を楽しむこともできます。観光客が少ないので、自然を存分に満喫できます。

私たちは12世紀に建てられた古い教会から出発して、チェンネの像にたどり着きました。チェンネの像は、火あぶりの刑にあった「魔女」を表現していて、ここで17世紀の宗教にまつわる伝説を学びました(日本の歴史と全然違いますね!)。青空の下を先に進むと、このあたりで一番標高の高いところまで来ました。みんな喉も乾いてきたころ、大きな木陰でひと休み、地元で果物で作ったお酒をいただきました。またしばらく歩き続けた後、大自然のど真ん中で、今度はいろんなフルーツタルトとハスペンゴウの特製フルーツジュースを満喫。ここでしっかりエネルギーを蓄えて、今回のハイライトへ。古い木々に囲まれた小道を抜けると、甘い香りとともに突然目の前に現れたのは・・・一面に満開の桜の木が!

満足感と心地よい疲れを感じながら、スタート地点に戻ってきました。ここでちょっとしたサプライズ・・・参加者みんなにプレゼントです。ハスペンゴウ名産の、桜のビール、フルーツジュース、りんごに梨、、、すばらしい記念になりました。

Hanne

Takumi



Friendship Committee News

A visit to Damme - Boat trip & windmill visit

Sunday, 15 July 2007, Damme

All participants gathered in time in Bruges to kick off this great event with a charming boat trip to Damme. It was a promising start of what later on turned out to be a beautiful day with lots of historical information, tasty food, sunshine and new friendships.

As soon we arrived in Damme, the BJA Friendship Committee's organizing team gave a brief explanation of this charismatic old city's most important historical facts and buildings. One of the less old but interesting constructions was a restored windmill, built in the year 1867 as replacement of a wooden mill, and currently functioning again... Unfortunately there was no wind that day, but 4 levels of 19th century technology was quite impressive on its own.

Back with 2 feet on solid ground, some of the participants a little more white as normal due to the flour, we set course to a church called "Onze-Lieve-Vrouw-Hemelvaartkerk", an imposing building with a total height of 43m. To enjoy the panoramic view on top of this building, we had to climb many, many... stairs. A great workout for some, a challenge to others. But the result was breath-taking.

After all these energy consuming activities, the BJA Friendship Committee picnic with all the lovely food and refreshing drinks, became a success again. Each time I discover new delicious snacks. Great!

Back on the boat again, direction Bruges... I would like to thank the BJA-FC organizing team again for this amazing day in Damme and a big hug to all the people who brought the food and drinks. Dômo arigatô gozaimasu. See you at the next event!

Tom Scheepers



今回は、20人以上の仲間たちが集まって、ブリュージュ郊外の小さな村「Damme」を訪ねるピクニックイベントが開催されました。先週末までの肌寒さが一転、気温30度!?以上の日差しの強い晴天に恵まれ、とても夏らしいイベントとなりました。

14:00にブリュージュ郊外の波止場を出発。小さなボートに乗り、川沿いの長閑な田園風景を楽しみながら、約30分でDammeに到着。そこに出迎えてくれたのは、畑の傍に立つ大きな風車。ドーバー海峡から吹いてくる風を利用して、風車で小麦とコーンを挽き、粉と植物油を抽出するとのこと。電力を全く使わない伝統的でエコロジーな方法に感心。そこから10分ほど歩いて、町の中心地にある高さ20-30mの教会を訪問。教会内の暗くて狭い200段の階段を上るのは、日頃運動不足の私には一苦勞でしたが、屋上に上がった瞬間、眼下に一望できるDammeの村が出現。しかし、過去には今の長閑な風景には想像も出来ないような、ナポレオンとの戦争があった場所とのこと。イベントに参加した仲間は、過去の歴史に思いをはせながら、ブリュージュの爽快な風と共に360度のパノラマ風景を楽しみました。

Takehisa Yamakawa





Facts and Figures on Japan: Shizuoka from speedy F1 to a relaxing tea time

By Mr Geert Benoit, Managing Director of Yamagata Europe

It has been an extremely long year since Räikkönen and the entire F1 circus left Belgium in 2005, but on the 16th of September 2007 the F1 race finally comes back to Spa and the legendary Eau Rouge. Although most of my Japanese friends agree that Spa-Francorchamps is by far the nicest circuit in the world, I would like to focus in this article on 30th September and the region that will host the Japanese Grand Prix in 2007.

On that day the F1 circus comes back to the Fuji Speedway Circuit in Shizuoka prefecture, where the first two F1 races were organized in Japan back in 1976 and 1977. Since those two dramatic races, all Japanese F1 Grand Prix were organized on the legendary circuit of Suzuka. But now F1 has been moved to the Shizuoka Fuji Speedway circuit that has been totally redesigned by the circuit guru Hermann Tilke and got the FIA approval to organize F1 races in 2005. For people who are interested in the competition between the two circuits and the corporate interests behind this competition, I will have to refer to other media, but let's hope that Japan gets two races next year like Germany in the past years.

Shizuoka is located roughly equidistant between Nagoya and Tokyo, along the southern coast of Japan on the Shinkansen (bullet train) between Tokyo and Osaka. Only an hour by train from either city, the prefecture is anchored by Hamamatsu City. It is well known for Mount Fuji, for beautiful climate and scenery, and for innovation initiatives in three major industries: food science, pharmaceuticals, and photonics. A regional airport is being built which will enhance Shizuoka's Japanese logistics.

Shizuoka has a long entrepreneurial history. Yamaha, Suzuki, Honda and Kawai were all founded there. Shizuoka is regularly in the top three prefectures for new business and external business investment. 3M and Corning are currently situated there as well as over 80 other foreign-owned firms.

The absolute icon of Shizuoka prefecture is of course Mount Fuji. However, Fuji-san is so ubiquitous in everything related to Shizuoka and Japan that we take the freedom to neglect it in this article. For lovers of Japanese traditional food culture, Shizuoka is of course the home base and major producer of products as green tea, mandarin oranges, "wasabi" horseradish, bonito, mackerel, yellowfin tuna, and cherry-colored shrimp. Especially for the Green Tea, Shizuoka is absolutely unbeaten. It represents 40% of the national production and 60% of the distribution. Amid growing interest worldwide in the health benefits of green tea due to its high catechin and vitamin content, Shizuoka

is proud of being known as "The Kingdom of Green Tea." Green tea production dates back to the thirteenth century, when the beverage was introduced to Japan, and encompasses all types of green tea as well as tea-flavored food products that are increasingly popular with consumers. Total tea output in Shizuoka is worth over 70 billion yen per annum.

However Shizuoka is much more than tea, nationally the prefecture is ranked 3rd in terms of value of industrial shipments. This is obviously related to the fact that the prefecture is the native ground of Honda, Suzuki, and Yamaha Motors. They all have headquarters and/or a plant in Shizuoka, and form the nucleus of its manufacturing sector.

But if we look at national shares for different sectors, then Music and Pharma score remarkably high. The Music instrument sector is almost monopolized by the region with the presence of Yamaha and Kawai. These industries also helped to create an artistic atmosphere in cities like Hamamatsu with plenty offerings of art, music.

Shizuoka Prefecture has launched its Fuji Pharma Valley Initiatives to form a cluster of medical, healthcare and biotechnology companies at the base of Mt. Fuji. The Pharma Valley area is home to pharmaceutical and medical device factories, laboratories and the National Institute of Genetics. Companies in the medical and biotechnology fields are concentrated there as well. The Fuji Pharma Valley Initiative is designed to foster a more intensive concentration of medical, healthcare and biotechnology companies, principally in eastern Shizuoka Prefecture, by invigorating existing industries and creating new ones. The Shizuoka Cancer Center, a key institution under the Pharma Valley Initiative, combines medicine, nursing and engineering resources in the public, private and academic sectors to encourage development of new diagnostic and treatment methods and medical devices, as well as the management of new drug development and support for clinical trials. The initiative is designed to leverage the prefecture's healthcare-related infrastructure, including Shizuoka University, hospitals, Japan's second largest pharmaceutical manufacturing industry (732.7 billion yen annually), Japan's third-largest medical equipment industry (130.4 billion yen annually), and venture companies.

From Belgian side, Janssen Pharmaceutica has a distribution centre and a research center in Shizuoka and Solvay Advanced Polymers KK is based in Fuji city. In any case, with offerings as broad as F1, music instruments and green tea, I think we all should move to Shizuoka.

Shizuoka



Behind the Great Wave at Kanagawa (神奈川沖波裏) by Katsushika Hokusai

A season for reading: fall 秋

by Mr Dirk De haene of Oskar D and Editorial Committee Member

Of all woodblock prints, the above image will even look familiar to people who have no link to Japanese culture or art at all. Indeed ‘The Great Wave of Kanagawa’ by Katsushika Hokusai is an international icon of Japanese printmaking.

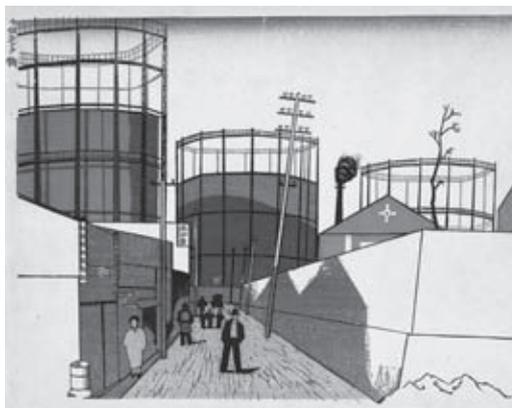
Hokusai (1760-1849) was an ukiyo-e painter and printmaker of the Edo period. He worked under various names, each name related to a certain style or approach in his work, constantly seeking to produce better work. The largest of Hokusai's works is the 15 volume Hokusai Manga collection, a book with nearly 4,000 sketches, published in 1814. These sketches are often incorrectly considered the precedent to modern manga, as Hokusai's Manga is a collection of sketches different from the story-based comic-book style of modern manga. Manga, literally translated, means ‘whimsical pictures’. The word first came into common usage in the late 18th century with the publication of such works as Suzuki Kankei's Mankaku zuihitsu (1771) and Santo Kyoden's picturebook Shiji no yukikai (1798), and in the early 19th century with such works as Aikawa Minwa's Manga hyakujo (1814). Modern manga developed from a mixture of woodblock printed books and pictures with foreign art movements. When the United States began trading with Japan, Japan entered a period of rapid modernization and globalization. Thus, they imported foreign artists to teach their students things such as line, form and color, which were never concentrated on in ukiyo-e as the idea behind the picture was normally considered more important.

One could discuss the origins of manga for hours, but looking merely at the strong, graphic style of works

such as ‘The Great Wave of Kanagawa’ and other Japanese woodblock prints, and also the highly narrative prints depicting the Sino and Russo War (called ‘senso-e’), the link is obvious.

From Hanga to Manga

In early 20th century Japan, the shin hanga (literally ‘new prints’) and sosaku hanga (‘creative prints’) art movements revitalized the traditional ukiyo-e art. The shin hanga movement is often defined in opposition to the sōsaku hanga movement (creative print movement) that began in the 1910s. While sōsaku hanga artists advocated the principles of self-drawn [jiga], self-carved [jikoku] and self-printed [jizuri], according to which the artist engages in artistic expression by involving himself in all stages of the printmaking process, shin hanga artists continued to collaborate with carvers, printers and publishers in print production. At the core of the shin hanga and sōsaku hanga dichotomy is the debate of what constitutes a creative print or pure art. Shin hanga artists and publishers believed that their works were as creative as those produced by sōsaku hanga artists. In fact, we see the same discussion appear when talking about comics or manga, sometimes referred to as ‘the 9th Art’. In a larger context, the dichotomy between shin hanga and sōsaku hanga was just one of the many tensions in the Japanese art scene during decades of modernization and internationalization when Japan was in search of modernity. Behind this background, manga as we currently know it, started to gain enormous popularity, becoming part of everyday Japanese culture.



100 Pictures of Great Tokyo in Showa - #4 Senju tank street
by Koizumi Kishio (1929)

to be continued

Interview: A Japanese view of Belgium

Mr Masaaki Hayashida, CEO of Nippon Express

By Mr Kris Sierens - Managing Partner of BeforeTheHype & Editorial Committee Member

This time it is a smiling interview with a business director who has experienced the changes in Belgium for more than twenty-five years. He makes it clear from the start that both cultures can learn a lot from each other. Life is, after all, more than only business. With each trip back to Japan, this is a man who always knows he is coming back to Belgium.

Mr Hayashida started with Nippon Express in 1975. Six years later he came to Brussels for the first time as a trainee in a one-year overseas business trainee program. After a six year stint in Germany and another six in South-Africa, today Mr Hayashida is in his fourth assignment in Belgium. He vividly remembers that before he came to here for the first time there wasn't a lot of information available to him. He knew it was a country within the EU, but for him its most appealing virtue was that he was very interested in Germanic languages.

Nippon Express is an international logistics service provider, with a clear service definition which they use to differentiate themselves from western competitors. With the Japanese mentality they take care of the client by providing proactive attention in order to offer the best possible service. In Mr Hayashida's opinion, Belgian employees need to understand and embrace that philosophy to properly meet the customer's demands. Western employees are more individual compared to the typical Japanese employee, where everybody works in the group's interest. Both approaches, of course, have their advantages, but respect for everyone is most important. Belgian employees are serious workers and you can always count on their punctuality.

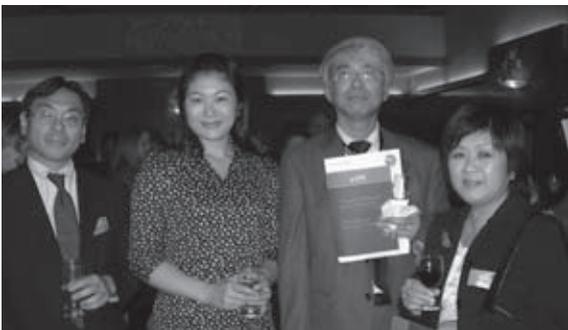
Mr Hayashida is convinced that Belgium is much cleaner than it was in 1981 when he first came here. It is still a strange experience that people calmly wait in long lines in places such as the super market. In Japan this is unbelievable and people would complain. It is also very interesting to see how a small country succeeds in unifying three cultures. With a keen eye for detail, he points out that most people probably aren't aware of the fact that the colors of the poles of the traffic signals differ in each region. For Masaaki Hayashida, this always tells him in which particular region he is driving.



He goes back to Japan once a year, although this year he won't have to pay since he won a free ticket at the BJA golf tournament. What surprises him most each time he returns to Japan is how rapidly things are changing there. Here in Belgium, things remain more or less the same.

Mr Hayashida is big fan of classical music and during winter season he attends classical music concerts up to a few times a week. He follows the Elisabeth contest very closely. In his opinion, one of the major advantages of living in Belgium is that the prices for top musical events are still very affordable. For Mr Hayashida, Belgians are very kind and less busy than in Japan, where everybody always seems to be occupied with some task. Belgium's historic background gives the country a nice feel and helps make it such a nice place to live. Besides, he adds with a big smile, the food is delicious. But if we could improve the traffic situation, it would definitely make it a really great place.

For business people looking at the Japanese market Mr Hayashida stresses the fact that it is most important to learn that the service mentality is always expected. On the other hand, he observes that Japanese people should learn when to stop and not always get caught up in the big rush by thinking things out before and including more leisure activities. Life, after all, is more than just business.



News from the members



Address by Mr Fujio Cho, Chairman, Japan Automobile Manufacturers Association (JAMA)

JAMA members and their local affiliates currently operate 16 production bases and 13 R&D centers across Europe. In 2006 their EU-wide production totalled 1.51 million units, and roughly 160,000 people were employed throughout their EU operations.

Also in 2006, Japanese automakers purchased a record-high 13.2 billion euros' worth of EU-made parts, while their cumulative investment in the EU increased to 15.9 billion euros.

JAMA supports Europe's CARS 21 initiative and the recommendations contained in its Final Report. JAMA especially supports those concerning the simplification and internationalization of the regulatory environment through better regulation, and the adoption of an integrated approach in responding to the need to reduce CO² as well as improve road safety.

JAMA believes that, in the interest of advancing the competitiveness of the European auto industry, the CARS 21 recommendations should be taken fully into account during the formulation of new regulations.

The biggest challenge now facing the automobile industry in Europe is CO² reduction, and this is the focus of my remarks here. Recognizing that countering global warming is a crucial issue for the sustainability of the motor industry, Japanese automakers are according the highest priority to making progress in this area. The CO² emissions performance of their vehicles attests to

this.

Nevertheless, in regard to the European Commission's Communication on the reduction of CO² emissions from cars, which was released in February this year, the Japanese manufacturers believe that the proposed new regulation's target application year of 2012 should be reconsidered.

The development and production of a new car model, from the earliest design stage to its entry on the market, is a very long process. Development and product cycles in our industry require a lead time of at least seven years.

This lead time includes: A five-year period that covers, first, a concept phase for design and the introduction of safety as well as environmental technologies - that is, emission, engine, and other technologies; and second, an execution phase for trial production and adjustment and assessment, among other tasks. Following that, at least two years are required for application to individual models.

In recognition of the lengthiness of this process, Japan has introduced new fuel-efficiency standards whose target values will be enforced in 2015. This provides auto manufacturers with a realistic lead time of eight years.

In addition to the problem of inadequate lead time posed by the Commission's proposal, manufacturers, meanwhile, will be further burdened by cost-effectiveness issues as they also strive to comply with other EU emissions regulations, including the EURO 6 provisions which are to be enforced in September 2014.

JAMA and its members respectfully call upon the Commission to consider all these factors.

The CARS 21 Final Report notes that, in order to strengthen the competitiveness of the European auto industry, cost-effective compliance with CO² regulations will require the efforts of all the stakeholders involved. In other words, it advocates the adoption of an integrated approach. This includes, in addition to industry efforts, the efforts of government, for improvements in road infrastructure and traffic management, and those of vehicle users, for eco-friendly driving.

In Japan, a CO² reduction target for Japan's road transport sector has been established under Japan's Kyoto Protocol commitment. I am pleased to report that substantial progress is being made towards meeting

News from the members

that target, not only as a result of steady improvements in vehicle fuel-efficiency performance, but also as a result of road infrastructure upgrades and enhanced traffic management.

The dialogue between the Commission, other relevant entities, and JAMA provides JAMA members with a vital means by which to contribute to the increased competitiveness and growth of the European automobile industry.

JAMA hopes this valuable dialogue with all concerned parties will be maintained in the years ahead. Likewise, JAMA looks forward to the development of an even closer partnership between the automotive industries of Europe and Japan.

Source: excerpt of Address by Mr Fujio Cho, Chairman Japan Automobile Manufacturers Association at the JAMA Annual Reception - Brussels, 4 July 2007

Honda builds new logistics center in Aalst

Honda is investing EUR 14.5 million in a brand-new logistics center in the Flemish town of Aalst. Extending over 29 500 square meters, this center will function as a distribution point for all Honda auto body parts destined for the European market.

The center is to open in March 2008. The incoming and outgoing deliveries in the warehouse will be completely automated, which will result in a significant decrease in waiting times (with a new maximum of 24 hours).

Honda already has a European parts centre in Aalst, covering ca. 54 000 square meters. The Japanese car builder coordinates its European logistics operations from the city of Ghent, which also serves as a major entry point for newly produced cars in the European market.

More info: www.honda-eu.com

Source: www.express.be

Employment and Social security law LIMOSA - New exemptions for business trips & congresses.

Mid July 2007 the Belgian Council of Ministers approved

new exemptions to the obligation to apply for a Limosa-declaration for certain categories of persons coming over to Belgium for short periods.

As you will remember, LIMOSA was introduced on April 1, 2007 and consists in:

A mandatory declaration for each foreign seconded employee and all foreign self-employed persons working temporarily and/or partially in Belgium (comparable with the DIMONA-declaration for employees who are subject to the Belgian social security system)

An information exchange system between the different Regions (competent for the application for work permits), the Ministry for Middle Classes (for professional cards) and the Ministry of Internal Affairs (for residence permits). The information will become available and exchangeable between the different authorities

When Limosa was introduced earlier this year, exemptions were created for, amongst others, people attending meetings and scientific congresses (both for up to 5 days per calendar month) and certain categories of trainees. These exemptions did unfortunately not take into account the needs of the foreign business community in Belgium.

Last week, on 19 July 2007, the Belgian Council of Ministers approved the content of a new Royal Decree, exempting the hereafter mentioned categories from the Limosa obligation:

- Persons attending scientific congresses (without limitation in time);
- Persons attending meetings in closed circles, for up to 60 days per calendar year (limited up to 20 consecutive days per meeting).

The Royal Decree, introducing these exemptions, is expected to enter into force in September or October this year.

Source: www.laga.be

New Online Guide to doing Business in Belgium

Foreign investors who want to do business in Belgium can now consult a free online guide produced by tax advisers PricewaterhouseCoopers. The guide,

News from the members

titled “Doing Business in Belgium”, offers the latest information on subjects such as setting up a company, tax, politics and social legislation. “Belgium is positioned as the best of places from which a firm can do business with Europe and the world,” says Eddy Dams, who produced the guide. “But fiscally and politically, it is also a complex country.”

www.doingbusiness.pwc.be

Source: Invest in Brussels - Brussels Enterprise Agency

www.investinwallonia.com voted best website at the “La Baule World Investment Conference”.



The website of the Wallonia Trade and Investment Agency - Investment branch, has won the best website award at the European Attractiveness Awards 2007, presented during the World Investment Conference. Last year, the website had been awarded the Content Management Software (CMS) prize.

First among 30 entries, with a comfortable lead on its followers, www.investinwallonia.com shined in the areas of content relevance, ease of navigation and regular updates, as pointed out by the high level jury. This jury was composed of business professionals from the European Commission, E&Y, Euronews, Eurada, Europe+ and other economic specialists.

Following an in depth analysis, the website was redeveloped in and out in 2006 and now offers all visitors (more than 8,500/month) a great web experience. The main objectives of the website were defined by the Agency:

- Increase international visibility for the region of Wallonia
- Help identify potential foreign investors
- Be a single source for information relevant to potential investors
- Inform and assist foreign investors in the process of establishing operations in the region of Wallonia

Communication: both ways! With a high level of interactivity, the website solicits feedback and promotes active communication from the visitor. In French, English, Japanese (German coming soon), the easy-to-access information makes it a very valuable tool to any visitor, whether a business professional, a site location consultant, a scientist or someone from the general public.

About the World Investment Conference

The “La Baule Investment Conference” offers a dynamic base for the joint consideration of issues relating to the attractiveness and competitiveness of Europe, contributing to the development of national and EU strategies for the implementation of the Lisbon agenda. To this end, it brings together all those concerned, including business leaders, academics and representatives of unions and civil society, as well as specialists from regional and national development agencies and representatives of EU member states, the European Commission and the European Parliament.

www.labaulewic.org

About Wallonia Trade and Investment Agency (AWEX) – Investment Branch

The Investment Branch of Awex is the economic development agency for Wallonia, the southern and French-speaking region of Belgium. The Agency’s objective is to provide information and advice to companies looking to establish, expand or reorganize their European operations.

www.investinwallonia.com

Source: www.investinwallonia.com

Contact: Jean-Pierre Marcelle, 0478/218.166

Invitation to IMEC Annual Research Review Meeting - October 18-19, 2007

IMEC’s research-business forum, the Annual Research Review Meeting (ARRM) will take place on October 18-19, 2007 at the Radisson SAS Royal Hotel in Brussels, Belgium.

News for the members

This year's ARRM will focus on the emergence of new technologies and applications in what is called "More than Moore", next to the continued scaling process ("More Moore"). By combining well-proven technology platforms, based on e.g. 130nm CMOS, with RF, sensor technology or bio materials, a virtually infinite number of new applications can be envisaged.

During the 1st day, the program will highlight key trends in advanced semiconductor scaling and in the route towards smart devices using semiconductor technology. Eminent industry speakers will give their view on what is needed to bring these technologies to market, followed by insights in IMEC's research programs

The 2nd day will give participants a deeper insight in a selected number of technology topics.

Who should attend?

Industry executives, industry research staff, research directors from research institutes and universities, business development managers, marketing managers, market analysts, and anyone who wants to get an update on semiconductor and nanotechnology progress in the global community and at IMEC.

For a complete overview of all sessions and speakers, registration fees and hotel information, please consult the ARRM website: www.armm.be

Registration deadline: September 4, 2007

News for the members

101A concert in Belgium

On Saturday, 10 November 2007, Higashi Music ASBL will organize a special concert of the Japanese band 101A. It will be the second time for them to perform in Belgium, supported by the Belgian group Three Fingers Hand.

The show will take place at "Le P'tit Théâtre" of Verviers (near Liege). Start at 9.00pm.

In addition, Higashi Music ASBL is looking for some sponsorships to help in the organization of this concert and the rest of the tour (promotion, travel, ...)

For further information or sponsor contact, please contact:

Mr Laurent Petit, info@higashimusic.com
Tel +32 (0) 498 20 08 98 [French or English]
www.higashimusic.com

Canon Foundation - Research Fellowships Grants

The Canon Foundation in Europe grants up to 15 Research Fellowships annually to highly qualified European and Japanese researchers.

Candidates should hold a doctorate or at least a Master's degree. They are eligible during the ten-year period following the successful completion of their Ph.D or MA degree. Extensions to the ten-year rule are possible in principle in case of exceptional circumstances which should be explained in the application and supporting documents are required. Non-nationals have to have a permanent citizenship in either Europe or Japan.

The European Fellowship holders pursue a period of research in Japan whereas the Japanese Fellows do their research at host institutions in Europe. The Fellowships are awarded for periods of a minimum three months and maximum of one year. Applications for Research Fellowships in all fields of research are welcome.

The aim of the Foundation is to contribute to international understanding, in particular between Europe and Japan.

The deadline for the year 2008 is 15 September 2007.

We invite you to click on the following link to the website for the most up-to-date conditions and for application forms and other information at www.canonfoundation.org

Or contact the Secretariat at:

Canon Foundation in Europe

Postbus 2262

1180 EG Amstelveen

The Netherlands

Tel. +31(0)20 545 8934 , Fax. +31(0)20 712 8934

foundation@canon-europe.com

www.canonfoundation.org

JFTC Essay Competition 2007

Japan Foreign Trade Council (JFTC) is sponsoring JFTC Essay Competition 2007 to encourage students, younger researchers and business people to express their opinions on matters of national and international importance.

One Grand Prize of 1 million yen and three Second Prizes of 200,000 yen will be awarded to the best four

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submissions, as selected by the distinguished judges. In addition, the Grand Prize Winner will be provided with an air-ticket to Tokyo (Japan) in order to attend the award ceremony on January 9, 2008.

The subject of the essay is “Global Capitalism and Japanese Companies”

Essays may be submitted in English or Japanese, by anyone regardless of nationality or place of residence, by e-mail or mail **no later than Sept. 30, 2007**, to:

Public Relations Group
Japan Foreign Trade Council, Inc.
6th Floor, World Trade Center Building,
2-4-1, Hamamatsu-cho, Minato-ku, Tokyo 105-6106,
Japan
Tel: +81-3-3435-5964
kouhou@jftc.or.jp
For further information, please visit the website:
www.jftc.or.jp

EU - Japan News

EU-Japan Summit: Further strengthening the alliance

During the EU-Japan Summit the two sides reiterated their close political and economic cooperation. Regarding climate protection, they agreed that CO₂ emissions must be reduced by at least 50% by mid-century. Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel's assessment of the meeting was that “highly impressive and important results have been achieved”.

The Summit focused on issues which will also play a central role at the forthcoming G8 Summit in Heiligendamm - climate and energy policy, intellectual property rights protection, and development and innovation policy - as well as on regional security-policy themes.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe underlined that the two sides had a lot in common: “We share the same values. We both play a leading role in the international community”.

The EU and Japan meet annually for summits at heads of government level. The previous Summit took place in Tokyo in April 2006. Alongside Chancellor Merkel, who chaired the meeting as EU Council President, and her Japanese opposite number, EU Commission President José Manuel Barroso took part. Federal Foreign Minister

Frank-Walter Steinmeier, EU High Representative Javier Solana and External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner were also present at the talks.

Intellectual property rights protection

Patent protection is vital for business. The two sides signed an Action Plan aimed at strengthening intellectual property rights protection. In this connection they agreed on both bilateral steps and on a joint approach in multilateral negotiations.

Business forum

At the start of the Summit the participants met the Co-Chairs of the EU-Japan Business Dialogue Round Table. Each year this forum of senior business representatives from the EU and Japan draws up recommendations aimed at deepening the two sides' economic cooperation.

High level of agreement on climate protection.

Another major issue at the EU-Japan Summit was climate policy. Chancellor Merkel expressed her satisfaction at the “high level of agreement” on this theme. She listed three specific points on which the two sides concurred:

First, climate change is mainly caused by mankind, and therefore we must react to it rather than ignore it.

Second, long-term CO₂ reduction objectives, subscribed to by more and more countries, are necessary. These objectives must be formulated in a binding way. By the middle of this century the two sides want to reduce global CO₂ emissions by at least 50%.

Third, this reduction objective must be included in a UN framework agreement.

Source: www.eu2007.de/en/News/Press_Releases/June/0605EU-Japan.html

A Network for European Researchers* in Japan

A new network is being developed for European researchers in Japan. It will provide web-based and other services for researchers who want to improve their contacts with other European researchers in Japan and Europe. This project is supported by the European Commission (Directorate General for Research and the Delegation of the European Commission to Japan) in collaboration with the Embassies of the EU Member States in Japan and the other European countries

associated with the European Research Area.

The online survey of European Researchers in Japan was officially launched at the occasion of the EU-Japan Cooperation Forum on Research and Innovation on 11 July in Tokyo. **The survey will remain online until the end of September.** (www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=IAKO2WSV5KEPKBXLxML_2bhw_3d_3d)

The survey has been launched to identify ways of developing the network and the types of information and services that would be useful to European researchers. The results of this survey will be used to develop the network to be launched under the name ERA-Link/Japan later this year.

* European Researchers, including:

Europeans who may not be doing research *stricto sensu* but have connections with science, technology or innovation activities in both public or private sectors, e.g. European engineers, students, investors, entrepreneurs, patent attorneys, etc.

European or Japanese organisations hosting European researchers in Japan.

*Source: EC Delegation in Japan
<http://jpn.cec.eu.int/>*

EU - Japan Business Dialogue Round Table in Berlin, Germany

“Joining forces for competitiveness and sustainability”

The EU - Japan Business Dialogue Round Table (BRDT) held its annual meeting in the head quarters of the Federation of German Industries (BDI) in Berlin on 3 - 4 June 2007, in advance of the Japan - EU summit. The meeting brought together business leaders from leading EU and Japanese corporations, and was co-chaired by Baron Georges Jacobs, chairman of the board of UCB, and Mr Tadashi Okamura, chairman of the board of Toshiba Corporation.

The co-chairmen will present the work of the BDRT to the EU - Japan summit leaders, Ms Angela Merkel, Chancellor of Germany, Mr Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan, and Mr José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission.

This meeting, which represents a step ahead in EU - Japan business cooperation, allowed for discussions on the main issues affecting EU and Japanese business such as the WTO Doha Development Agenda (DDA) negotiations, EU - Japan economic cooperation, innovation, energy and climate change.

As strong supporter of the WTO DDA negotiations, the BDRT continues to urge the European Commission and the Government of Japan to exert their utmost efforts in concluding ambitious negotiations by the end of this year. In particular, the EU and Japan need to focus their efforts among major players to make the case for a successful and ambitious conclusion of the round leading to new commercial opportunities for industrial goods and services and a binding trade facilitation agreement.

The BDRT is committed to creating the necessary conditions to deepen the full potential of EU - Japan economic relations, which are far from being fully exploited. With that in view and in line with its commitment to the WTO, the BDRT proposes Japan and the EU authorities to establish a task force with business support to explore the feasibility of a Japan - EU Economic Integration Agreement, which should be an enriched economic agreement that includes priority issues for business such as strengthened regulatory cooperation, intellectual property, trade enhancement, and improving the investment environment. EU and Japan business expects the results of the outcome of the task force by the 2008 BDRT meeting.

The BDRT members drew serious attention to the joint challenge to ensure availability of environmentally sound energy at a reasonable price. The BDRT supports promotion of the practical advantages of energy efficiency, and reducing reliance on fossil fuels with dissemination of current technology and development of innovative technologies.

For a post-Kyoto Protocol framework, the participation of major carbon-emitting countries, such as the United States, China and India is essential. To realize that, instead of establishing absolute-value targets by country, a sectoral approach based on energy-efficiency targets could be alternative.

NOTE

The BDRT met in the presence of European Commission Vice-President Günter Verheugen and Mr Georg Boomgaarden, State Secretary of the Federal Foreign Office from the German Government, Mr Kozo Yamamoto, Deputy Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry and Ms Midori Matsushima, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Hideo Shimizu, Vice-Minister for Policy Coordination, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications from Japan.

The next BDRT annual meeting is scheduled to take place in Tokyo in summer 2008.

*Source: www.eujapan.com
EU-Japan Business Dialogue Round Table Press Release*

EU - Japan News

Minister Yamamoto and EU Commissioner McCreevy Meet to Discuss Financial Services, Accounting and Auditing Issues

On June 13, Mr Yuji Yamamoto, Minister for Financial Services met with Mr Charlie McCreevy, Commissioner for the International Market and Services of the European Commission (EC).

Minister Yamamoto and Commissioner McCreevy exchanged views on the recent developments in the Japanese and the EU capital markets, including the introduction of the Japanese Financial Instruments and Exchange Law (FIEL) and the EU Market in Financial Instrument Directive (MiFID).

Minister Yamamoto explained the efforts to enhance the attractiveness of the financial and capital market in Japan as an international financial center. Commissioner McCreevy, in this context, showed a particular interest in the potential initiatives underway, including issues of the firewalls regulation.

Minister Yamamoto and Commissioner McCreevy welcomed the on-going dialogue and efforts that address the issue of accounting standards aiming to find a satisfactory solution on equivalence between Japanese and EU-adopted standards. Commissioner took note of the progress in the convergence work by the Accounting Standards Board of Japan (ASBJ), while Minister emphasized the importance of maintaining the openness in the European market.

Minister Yamamoto and Commissioner McCreevy agreed on the necessity to enhance mutual understandings and cooperation in the area of auditing including audit oversight systems. A final goal should be to move towards mutual reliance on each other regulatory systems. Work will involve looking into many aspects, such as systems on quality assurance supported by adequate auditing standards, investigations and penalties, and public oversight.

Both parties agreed to hold a technical-level meeting before the end of this year to monitor the developments in both accounting and auditing areas.

Financial Services Agency, Japan

Source: EC Delegation in Japan
<http://jpn.cec.eu.int/>

Trade facilitation and security: Initialling of the Customs cooperation agreement with the Government of Japan



The Commission welcomes the initialling of the Customs cooperation agreement between the European Community and the Government of Japan, that took place today in Berlin in the margins of the EU-Japan Summit. The agreement aims at simplifying and harmonizing customs procedures for reliable operators and provides the means to fight against customs fraud and to exchange information on mutual assistance matters. This agreement is part of the EU external policy to cooperate on customs matters at international level with its largest trading partners. The European Community has already concluded agreements with the United States, Canada, Korea, Hong Kong, China and India. Both the European Community and Japan authorities have agreed to take the necessary measures towards a formal signature of the agreement in the coming months.

“EU exports to Japan account for 4.1% of EU exports while Japan is the fourth largest source with a 6.2% share of the EU import market. This represents an average of around €5 billion trade exchanges each year” said László Kovács, Commissioner responsible for Taxation and Customs Union. “We therefore need to strengthen our customs cooperation with Japan in order to promote trade facilitation for reliable traders, to improve the fight against fraud and to provide protection of Intellectual Property Rights.”

Further information on Customs cooperation agreements concluded with other trading partners can be found at:

http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/customs/policy_issues/international_customs_agreements/index_en.htm

Multicultural Society and Multicultural Culture: Belgium and Japan

By Professor Takashi Okunishi of the Embassy of Japan



I work as a counsellor at the embassy of Japan in Brussels from this April for one year according to a staff exchange agreement between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Kobe University in Japan. In this university I teach European economic history and study development of market mechanism and regional integration in Low Countries, mainly in Flanders and Brabant, in the late Middle Ages and early modern time. Reading several books written by Henri Pirenne, a famous Belgian historian, in my early teens led to my research life and I lived in Belgium for research for over one fifth of these two decades, including two years (1986-88) as the first Japanese student who received a Flemish Government scholarship. I have noticed several similarities and differences between Belgium and Japan with my experience and multicultural structure of society is one of these phenomena. Such phenomena should be described with many related elements. However I try to summarize it briefly below.

It is widely accepted that Belgium is a multicultural society, located in the linguistic and cultural boundary between Latin and Germanic peoples, and has been strongly and variously influenced by surrounding big countries for a long time. Belgium has many foreigners residing, acting as a center of Europe. Contrary it is said in general that Japan is a homogeneous society that has a so-called single culture and language, located in the east end of the Eurasian Continent and is surrounded by the sea. But if we view more curiously their historical and geographical factors, some interesting similarities can be remarked, though some of them may have no specific meaning.

Belgium and Japan are surrounded by three bigger, - one relatively same and rival and one much smaller - neighbors. As a result, both peoples often pay less attention to the other countries beside these neighbors. And like Belgium Japan locates in some kind of cultural boundary between East and West. (Adding to this historically both countries located in the edge of Ancient Empire.)

A little but important influence of European culture on

Japan began in the sixteenth century and it continued into Tokugawa period by the well-known Dutch East Indian Company. In this period Japanese traditional culture including cuisine was formed from domestic, Chinese, Indian (mainly related to Buddhism) and European elements; they are identified with Germanic, Latin, Greek and Oriental elements in Europe. So some famous Japanese traditional dishes have an European origin.

Then in the late half of the nineteenth century, modernization of Japan began with an enormous influence of Europe. Japanese people absorbed the European system, culture, science & technology, etc. It is interesting that they have autonomously done this in an eclectic way: in the time of modern state forming the state structure of Imperial Germany was imitated, civil law of France was borrowed and the central bank of Belgium was emulated! Even after the Second World War when the role of the United States became much bigger, this has continued in a still eclectic way.

Consequently today's Japanese culture has many elements of different origin and there are many Japanese who are interested in various foreign countries. One can see Japanese in every quarter in the world and it is not difficult to observe that various minority languages can be spoken by Japanese. Japanese people recognize diversity of culture and feel that their own culture is a mixture - but peculiar one - and Japanese and Belgian (especially Flemish) people have a very similar attitude towards foreigners who try to learn and speak their language.

As we see above, geographical position and historical course of Japan has some similarities with those of Belgium.

However there is also clear difference. Belgium (correctly the southern Low Countries) has taken a role of 'center' and its relation with others has been passive. In the late Middle Ages and early modern time it was the main economical center of Europe where foreign merchants gathered. Then it became the main battlefield of big neighboring states in the process of making a "Nation State". And now it becomes the main administrative and political center of Europe where foreign diplomats and officials gather.

In contrast, Japan has not taken such a role and its relation to others has been active. High cost and risk of crossing the sea is one reason of this. Until recently some Japanese and a small number of foreigners who crossed the ocean have brought foreign culture and knowledge to Japan. So Japan may not be a multicultural society but it is possible to say that it has a "multicultural Culture". I think this is in a very close relation with the worldwide popularity of Japanese animation and Manga. But this must be told another time.

Embassy of Japan in Belgium - part 1

By the staff of the Japanese Embassy in Belgium

Established as the Legation in Brussels in 1873, the Embassy of Japan has long contributed to the strengthening of the Japan-Belgium relationship.

We would like to inform you on what the Embassy has been doing and what we will be doing. In this issue, we will briefly describe the work of the Consular Section, the Cultural and Information Centre, and the Economic Section of the Embassy.

Consular Section

The Consular Section provides various kinds of services mainly to Japanese nationals in Belgium, but also to the Belgians as well as other nationals.

As for the Belgians and other non-Japanese, the Consular Section of the Embassy is first and foremost the place you apply for a visa to visit Japan, while the Belgians do not need a visa to visit Japan for sightseeing as long as their stay is shorter than 90 days.

For the Japanese living in Belgium, the Section issues passports and various kinds of official certificates, receives marriage and birth registrations, hosts a voting station when Japan holds national elections. In addition, it provides administrative support to the Japanese School of Brussels and distributes school textbooks to school-aged Japanese children.

Since the safety of Japanese nationals abroad is of primary concern and ensuring it is of ultimate responsibility of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Embassy, not least the Consular Section is working hard in this regard. Consular officers are available 24 hours a day for emergency cases. In case of serious accidents or crimes involving Japanese nationals, for example, Consular officers work for the protection of the Japanese nationals involved, in close cooperation with the Belgian authorities.

As the consular services cover nearly the whole range of daily activities of the Japanese living in Belgium, the Consular Section can be called the face of the Embassy.

Cultural and Information Centre

The Cultural and Information Centre of the Embassy has three major missions: to provide information on Japan to Belgians; to promote cultural exchange between Japan and Belgium; and to help enhance the awareness and understanding on Japan here in Belgium.

At the Centre, you are welcomed to use our library, where books and magazines on Japan (in English, French, Dutch and Japanese) are available for reference and loan. You can also obtain official publications of the Foreign Ministry and other government agencies not only on economy and politics, but also on culture and travel tips.

We also have a conference room, which is used for a monthly showing of Japanese films and other purposes, and an exposition space in the front of the Centre to be used by artists working in the spirit of Belgian-Japanese cultural exchange. The Japanese and Belgian staff of the Centre will be happy to support and help you arrange various cultural events both at and outside of the Centre.

The Cultural Centre also plays a role as a coordinator and from time to time an examiner regarding a number of exchange programmes and scholarship schemes offered by the Japanese Government.

Economic Section

The major role of the Economic Section is to analyse the Belgian economy, help facilitate economic relations between Japan and Belgium, and support the activities of Japanese companies operating in Belgium in close cooperation with the Brussels office of JETRO (Japan External Trade Organization).

It is important for us to ensure an environment that is conducive for economic activities such as trade with and investment in Belgium by Japanese companies. Expanding trade and investment between the two countries is of our mutual benefit. From this perspective, the Economic Section of the Embassy takes active part in various consultations and negotiations with the Belgian authorities. One of our recent achievements in this regard is the conclusion of the Agreement on Social Security between the two countries, which entered into force on 1 January this year. We hope this agreement will hugely facilitate Japan-Belgium economic relations by reducing the social security burden born by both employers and employees.

We recognize the importance of the Belgian economy to us. Since the vibrant Belgian economy that is situated in the heart of Europe offers a lot of opportunities for Japan, we have been closely watching and analyzing it. The Economic Section also deals with the issues of global nature such as energy, climate change, and world trade. We often discuss such issues that go beyond our bilateral relations with our important partner Belgium.



Personalia

The Board of Directors would like to inform you of the acceptance of three resignations from the Board: Mr Masahiro Imamura of Marubeni Benelux and Nissan Belgium, Mr Hidenori Tsutsui of Toyota Tsusho Europe, and Mr Atsuo Watanabe of JETRO.

We would like to thank Mr Imamura, Mr Tsutsui and Mr Watanabe for their continuous support and dedication to the BJA during their stay in Belgium. We will miss their friendship, honest ideas and wise suggestions, but wish them good luck in their future careers upon return to Japan.

We also will welcome a new Board Member, successor to Mr Watanabe of JETRO. We deeply appreciate the warm support of Mr Nakamura of JETRO who is taking up the role of his predecessor on the Board of Directors.

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

Corporate Member:

NYK BULKSHIP (Atlantic) (Transport)
Antwerp Tower, de Keyserlei 5, bus 15
2018 Antwerpen
Tel: 03 202 1500, Fax: 03 570 0160
koichi.uragami@ne.nykline.com
www.nykline.co.jp
BJA Contact: Mr Koichi Uragami, Managing Director

Associate Member:

NANOCYL (Other)
Rue de l'essor 4
5060 Sambreville
Tel: 071 750 380, Fax: 071 750 390
fmassin@nanocyl.com
www.nanocyl.com
BJA Contact: Mr Francis Massin, Managing Director

SOFITEL BRUSSELS EUROPE (Tourism)

Place Jourdan, 1
1040 Brussels
Tel: 02 235 51 00, Fax: 02 235 51 01
bart.vancauwelaert@accor.com
www.sofitel-brussels-europe.com
BJA Contact: Mr Bart Van Cauwelaert, General Manager
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The Belgium-Japan Association & Chamber of Commerce is happy to present you our fourth issue of the BJA Directory 2007-2008. The BJA Directory has the objective to be a comprehensive source of information on the BJA-members. In addition, a list of the data of 260 Japanese companies in Belgium is added as well. The directory is a handy reference on Belgian-Japanese business performance.

By introducing the members, it has the aim to be a powerful resource for building, managing and expanding networking and business opportunities, cultural exchange, finding jobs, evaluating goods and services, and

researching trends or publications. Our directory puts our members in direct contact with other members, and interested parties can easily locate and contact our members. It assists business expansion on a local, regional, national and/or international level, as well as it enhances the opportunities for fostering cultural and friendship relations between the citizens of the two nations. It offers an excellent view on the importance of the network of the Belgian and Japanese companies in Belgium, and therefore is a unique resource publication to identify "who is who" in Belgium with regard to Japanese business and vice versa.



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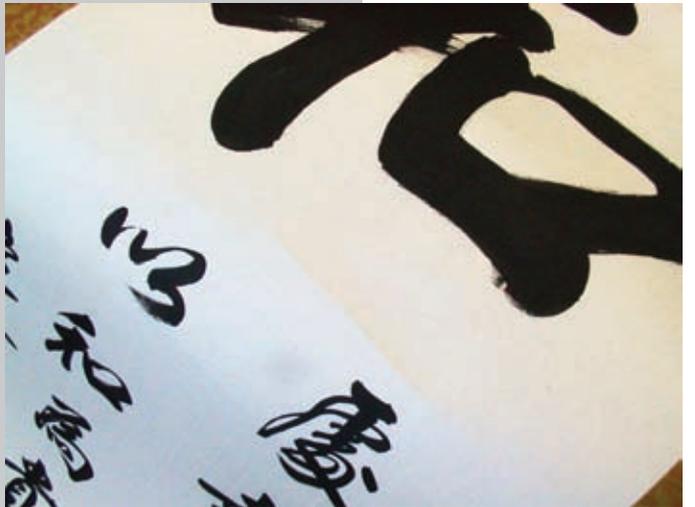
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