

Belgium-Japan Association

& Chamber of Commerce ASBL- VZW



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EDITORIAL

Paving the way to a favoured European headquarters location

by Mr Ronny De Prest, Chairman Legal & Tax Committee BJA and Leader Japanese Services Group Deloitte Belgium

When looking back at the changes during the last couple of years, I believe it's fair to state the Belgian legal and tax landscape has evolved drastically and has brought Belgium on the spotlight again as a top location for European headquarters and research centres.

The entering into force of the Social Security Treaty between Belgium and Japan on 1 January 2007 has been instrumental in creating clarity and certainty as to the social security regime surrounding Japanese assignments on Belgian territory. The (extendable) 5 years exemption from Belgian social security creates a comfortable base to organize Japanese secondments in a cost efficient way. Combined with the special non resident tax status, the total salary burden of Japanese expatriates in Belgium is currently one of the lowest in the entire European Union.

With the adoption of the notional interest deduction (NID) as from tax year 2007 (financial years ending 31 December 2006 onwards), Belgian and non-resident corporate taxpayers can benefit from a tax deduction corresponding to an amount of deemed interest on their Belgium GAAP equity (which has to be adjusted for NID purposes in certain circumstances). Under the NID regime, the reduction of the effective corporate tax rate will be significant and proportionate to the equity invested in the Belgian company or branch. It is expected that on average, the NID regime will result in a lowering of the effective corporate tax rate from 33,99% to approximately 27%. The introduction of this NID regime has been combined with an additional incentive consisting in an abolishment of the 0,5% capital duty on capital increases from 1 January 2006 onwards.

The NID regime has resulted in a significant increase of foreign investments in Belgium in 2006. According to the World Investment Report of the UNCTAD, the foreign investments in Belgium more than doubled in 2006 from 34 to 72 billion USD bringing Belgium on the fourth position after the US, UK and France in the ranking of countries attracting foreign investments

As from tax year 2008 onwards, a new tax deduction has been introduced for companies in respect of qualifying patent income. This tax deduction for patent income has been designed to encourage technical innovations by Belgian companies and branches through R&D activities in connection with "new" patents. The deduction in respect of licensed patents equals 80% of the arm's length patent income (deemed) received and will therefore reduce the effective corporate tax rate on patent income to 6,8%.

The Belgian Government has also extended the scope of application of the withholding tax exemption under the Parent-Subsidiary Directive for dividends between EU resident companies to dividend payments to companies located in a country that has a qualifying tax treaty with Belgium. As a result of this extension, Belgian subsidiaries distributing dividends to their Japanese parent company are no longer required to deduct Belgian withholding tax at source, assuming they fulfil certain requirements.

Finally, it should be noted that the Belgian and Japanese tax authorities recently met to discuss the framework and timing of the Belgian-Japan

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Mr Ronny De Prest

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Celebration of 10 years Young Executive Stay Program Yes Alumni Event in presence of HRH Prince Philippe of Belgium

Monday, 8 October 2007, Egmont Palace, Brussels

On 8 October, the YES Committee of the Belgium-Japan Association & Chamber of Commerce celebrated the 10th year of the YES program by inaugurating a YES Alumni Circle at the Egmont Palace. On this occasion, about 70 guests including former YES participants, BJA board members, YES Committee members and guests participated, and HRH Prince Philip of Belgium and HE Mr Azusa Hayashi, Japanese Ambassador to the Belgium honored the celebration with their presence.

After the warm welcome words by Mr Thomas Leysen, CEO of Umicore and President of the BJA, Mrs Ann Blondé, Chairwoman of the YES Committee, addressed the audience on the 10 years of YES program, a commercial export project under the auspices of HRH Prince Philippe. Her speech concluded with a special thanks to HRH Prince Philippe for his enormous support, followed by presenting him the YES Alumni Booklet on 'Export to Japan' – debriefing the experience of exporters to the land of the Yen. During the cocktail, HRH expressed his deep interest in foreign trade with Japan and Japanese investors in Belgium and showed his appreciation to the YES Alumni Circle and all the supporters of the YES program who have contributed to maintain the success of this project.



Mrs Blondé, Managing Director of zeal and Chairman of the YES Committee, hands over the booklet on the YES program experience to HRH Prince Philippe.



(from right to left) Mrs Karine Tollenaere, Key Account Manager of the DHL Global Forwarding (former YES participant), Mr Bert Winderickx, General Manager of BLCCJ, and Mr Peter Van Riet, General Manager of Beyond Products (former YES participant) join a conversation with HRH Prince Philippe and Mr Leysen, CEO of Umicore and President of BJA.



HE Mr Azusa Hayashi, Japanese Ambassador to the Belgium is joined by HRH Prince Philip, Mr Leysen, Mr Sepulchre and Baron Snoy of the BJA Board, touching upon great things Belgian-Japanese.



HRH Prince Philippe of Belgium inquires about business with Mr Maricau of IEE, YES I Alumni.



BJA REPORT

Exclusive Visit to the Folon Museum, followed by a private recital of Mrs Yuzuko Horigome and Mr Hans de Vos

Thursday, 11 October, Fondation Folon, La Hulpe



Mr Tanguy Van Overstraeten, Partner of Linklaters LLP and Vice-President of BJA, together with Mr Hakkaku, Director of the Cultural and Information Center of the Japanese Embassy, Mr Dominique le Hodey, Vice-President and Mr Thomas Leysen, CEO of Umicore and BJA President, surrounding Mrs Yuzuko Horigome and Mr Hans De Vos during the cocktail.



Mrs Yuzuko Horigome and Mr Hans De Vos are giving a performance in a private room of the Museum.



Mr Dominique le Hodey, Vice-President of BJA and Chairman of the Cultural Committee joins Mr Genang of Agena to enjoy a talk on music and art.



Mr and Mrs Hakkaku and Mr and Mrs Moorkens share some ideas on the beauty of Belgian and Japanese music compositions.

On 11 October, the Cultural Committee of the Belgium-Japan Association & Chamber of Commerce had the pleasure of inviting the members of the BJA and their guests to an exclusive visit to the Folon Museum in the middle of the marvellous Solvay Park in La Hulpe, followed by a private recital of the Violinists, Mrs Yuzuko Horigome, who won the first prize at the Queen Elizabeth International Music Competition Belgium in 1980, and her student, Mr Hans de Vos.

In a lively setting of the museum, over 50 BJA members and their guests were inspired by the art of Mr Jean-Michel Folon, the famous Belgian artist whose masterpiece collection includes many watercolours, etches and sculptures. After the visit, the participants gathered for a coffee break, then Mr Dominique le Hodey, Chairman of the Cultural Committee and Vice-President of BJA gave welcome words to the audience, followed by a dynamic performance of Mrs Horigome and Mr de Vos. After the recital, Mrs Horigome and Mr de Vos joined the cocktail where all the participants enjoyed drinks and photographs with the artists.



Kite making, picnic and fireworks

25 August 2007, Belgian seaside

For my family and me it was the first time going to a BJA Friendship Committee event and it was a super experience! Although we could not join at 16:00 the organization was so good that we found the group without any problem (Belgian people have the bad habit to be always too late). We missed the introduction but were just on time to join the 'kite making'. Note: Kites are a typical 'Japanese art'.

Pierre, Takumi and the team were very well prepared: tape, markers, wood sticks, plastic foil (for the body), scissors AND ... VERY GOOD MANUALS were available.

All participants were very much motivated and after a while the first kites were airborne. The people that where not so successful could count on the experts amongst us ... nice teamwork! This was a very interesting experience ... fun for young and old (although some frustration for some ...)!

Around eight o'clock there was a beach picnic ... Everybody brought food and drinks ... wonderful.

There where some presents for the 'kite contest'. And we won the second prize, we were sooooo proud ... another nice surprise!

Then around 21:30 we moved a bit further towards the fireworks that would start at 22:00. An English team was in charge of the fireworks. And again ... it was great.

After the fireworks ... everybody was satisfied and ready to make another short trip to go home (luckily ... in Belgium travelling to the other side of the country is quicker than in Japan).

Looking forward to other BJA-FC events !!!

Thanks Pierre and Takumi!

Gunther De Neef



凧作りなんて何年ぶりでしょうか。買ったものでさえもうまく揚がらないことが多いのに、自分で作ってどうなることやら。ところがどうして、スタッフの方の教えにそって作ったところ、凧が飛ぶ飛ぶ、面白いように飛ぶ。

飛ばなくても心配無用。スタッフの方々はもちろん、他の参加者の方が助言したり、とても皆さん協力的でアットホーム。凧作り&凧揚げ、そしてその後のピクニック、と自然に皆で話すようになり、輪ができていました。

「日本の花火は世界一(?)」とは言え、また違った趣の花火も一興。ヨーロッパの花火も侮れません。

当日は英国チームの花火でしたが、日本のものとは違った趣向のものも多く、かなり新鮮でした。4歳の息子もおおはしゃぎで、花火が上がるたびに雄たけびを上げる始末。

今回我が家は初参加でしたが、家族全員楽しむことができ、有意義な時間を過ごすことができました。

これも一重にイベントをオーガナイズしてくださっているスタッフの方々のご尽力によるところと思います。

楽しく、充実したイベントをどうもありがとうございました。今後も期待しています。

Maki Saito

齊藤 真紀



Belgian Farm Visit

30 September 2007, Vieux-Genappe

どこまでも広がる晴々とした空、騒音のない静かな空間に時折響き渡る家畜ののどかな鳴き声、豊沃な土の香りと鼻を突く家畜の糞の強烈な臭い。BJA 友好委員会の農場見学は、我々の視覚、聴覚、触覚、嗅覚を大いに刺激し、忘れることのできない思い出を参加者ひとり一人に残すこととなりました。今回の参加者約 40 名は、子供達のグループと大人のグループに分かれ見学を開始。各グループは家畜見学や農場施設の説明を受け、トラクターに引っ張られ広い農場の敷地を移動。子供達はさらにパン作りの体験、大人達はワインの試飲というおまけ付き。最後は皆そろってお待ちかねのティータイム。ワッフル、クレープ、サンドイッチの食べ放題と新鮮なミルクと地元ビールの飲み放題では、参加者がいつの間にか打ち解けた雰囲気となりました。日常の喧噪から解放された楽しい時間を子供達と共に過ごすことができました。忙しい農場経営の傍ら丁寧に対応して下さいだったポダール夫妻と農場関係者の皆様、農場見学の企画と当日の運営に万全の体制を整えてくれた BJA 友好委員会のメンバーの皆様に御礼申し上げます。

Tomosaburo Esaki

First Secretary

Japanese Embassy of Belgium



On 30 September, a group of Japanese and Belgian with great interests in Japan met for the BJA Friendship Committee event on a typical Belgian farm situated near Brussels. Although it was already towards the end of September, we were very lucky not to have a typical Belgian weather! Around 1:30 p.m. we received a warm welcome by the farmer and his family at the farm.

At first the children attended a short course on making bread. They could try themselves on mixing ingredients and kneading. It was difficult work! Ask our member who had to translate the instructions for the children: it was difficult to explain everything in Japanese! While their bread was baking in the oven they received a tour around the farm.

We also experienced in holding small bunnies, feeding young cows with milk, and touching baby pigs! The participants were all excited and saying "How cute!" ("Kawaii!" in Japanese). The farmer and his wife taught us a lot about the animals and the agriculture, and surely they also learned when they heard about Japanese Kobe beef! The recipes were exchanged in no time.

With a big tractor, we set out to the fields to see how sugar beets and potatoes grow. Huge heaps of beets we saw on our way, but do not let the resemblance with Japanese beets mislead you; it cannot be cooked and eaten like daikon!

The adults also enjoyed a little wine tasting. The brick walls with vines in the farm and the autumn sun have set the perfect background for the wine. Good wine created immediately a relaxed atmosphere!

And after all that such interesting activities, it was normal for all of us to get hungry! Freshly prepared waffles, pancakes, unlimited sandwiches, beer and farm milk were already waiting for us! Being a Belgian, it is normal to think Belgian beer and waffles are great! Around 6 p.m. participants slowly started going back home after giving a last goodbye and a pat on the head of the pretty cows.

I enjoyed myself very much and was very happy to participate in this event as I will be leaving Belgium soon to live in Japan for next two years. As an organizing member of the BJA Friendship Committee in 2007 I had a very nice time and received valuable experiences. I would like to invite everyone to join future activities of BJA Friendship Committee and to have a great time!

Elisabeth Hollemeersch



Chiba Prefecture: The only true Gate-way to Japan

by Mr Geert Benoît, Managing Director of Yamagata Europe

Most foreign visitors to Japan enter Japan through Narita airport, Chiba prefecture. But once we have both feet on the ground, we take a connecting flight. Or we catch an airport limousine bus and hurry to Tokyo City. Maybe it is due to the jetlag, but few of us realise that we are in Chiba prefecture. We only hope to get to the bath or shower as soon as possible. Probably because I used to live in Chiba prefecture, I am usually the only one in the bus looking at the floating landscape with eyes full of old memories.

Chiba prefecture is of course more than the narrow corridor between Narita and Tokyo. Most of Chiba lies on the hilly Boso Peninsula, a rice farming region. The east coast, known as the Ninety-Nine League Plain, is an especially productive area. Chiba borders Ibaraki Prefecture to the north at the Tone River, Tokyo and Saitama Prefecture to the west at the Edo River, the Pacific Ocean to the east and Tokyo Bay around its southern boundary. The most populous zone, in the northwest of the prefecture, is part of the Kanto region that extends into the urban agglomeration of Tokyo and Saitama. The Kuroshio Current flows near Chiba, which keeps it relatively warm in winter and cooler in summer than in neighbouring Tokyo.

In traditional Japanese folk culture, Chiba has always been linked to transportation. Close to the place where I lived was the famous “Yagiri no Watashi”, a ferryboat over the Edo River. It originated in the Edo period so that farmers from Shibamata could visit their lands on the other side of the river. It is still there, operated for tourists: for only 100 yen you can cross the river in the small wooden boat seating 10 to 15 people.

First of all we should stress that Chiba has always been an open place to foreigners: in the days I lived in Ichikawa, the town was organizing free of charge Japanese lessons for its foreign inhabitants. Similar efforts are still on-going: The Makuhari district for example, will open an official kindergarten and elementary school in April 2008, capable of accepting Japanese children returning from living abroad, or children of foreign business people.

Many people visit Chiba just for one day. The reason why Chiba attracts so many day-trippers, is because Chiba prefecture hosts Disneyland and Disneyland means happiness in Japan. When you ask Japanese people what the happiest day in their life was, many will answer “The day I first went to Disneyland”. Disneyland was one of the first real theme-lands in Japan. There is a lot of competition today, but Disneyland is there to stay and to grow. In 2008, the Tokyo Disney Resort will open a new theater housing a new Cirque du Soleil production. It will be the first permanent Cirque du Soleil theater outside of North America.

Makuhari Messe is another recipe for one day-successes. Makuhari Messe is a convention centre located in the western region of Chiba Prefecture. It is located close to Chiba city and is designed by Fumihiko Maki. The convention centre was opened in October 1989, and is the traditional host of the Tokyo Auto Salon (annual modified car show in January), the Tokyo Motor Show (a bi-annual motor show in October), Tokyo Game Show (annual video game hardware and software exhibition in September) and the Jump Festa (annual manga, anime, and video game exposition in December). The venue was noted in 2005 for hosting the Live8 concert and this summer it hosted the Live Earth concert.

Chiba offers not only a very long coastline with many opportunities for beach lovers and surfers, but also more than short term one day happiness, cirque and soleil. Chiba is one of the largest industrial areas of Japan. After Chiba was chosen as the site for a major Kawasaki Steel factory in 1950, the prefectural government embarked on a large-scale land reclamation program that dredged up large plots of waterfront property for factories, warehouses, and docks. The three main industries in Chiba are chemical production, petrochemical refining, and machine production, which together account for forty-five percent of the prefecture’s exports. In recent years, the government has funded more than eighty industrial parks to bring development further inland as well. And obviously the closeness to Tokyo, the airport and the many ports have created a thriving logistics industry that has attracted many foreign companies.



The prefecture also boasts Japan’s second-highest agricultural output. Among all the prefectures, only Hokkaido produces more agricultural products, and Chiba leads Hokkaido in vegetable production. Chiba’s fisheries are also productive, catching many of Japan’s spiny lobster. Seaweed is harvested in large quantities from Tokyo Bay. The seaweed is not only used for consumption but also fuels academic research. One of the best examples is the Kazusa DNA Research Institute. The institute is the core facility of Kazusa Academia Park and was opened in October 1994. It is the world’s first research institution to specialize in DNA research. It was the first in the world to decode the entire genome of blue-green algae in 1996.

Why talk about seaweed and not mention anything about Belgian investments in Chiba? Simply because the statistics don’t mention anything about Belgium. If this is true, we have a problem. If the statistics are not correct, we even have a bigger problem: then I would say stand-up!

SEASONAL ITEM: WINTER 冬

A season for watching ... anime!

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

Anime – obviously derived from the English ‘animation’ – started at the beginning of the 20th century in Japan when Japanese filmmakers started experimenting with Western animation techniques. By the 1930s, animation became an alternative format of storytelling compared to the underdeveloped live-action industry in Japan, which suffered from budgeting, location and casting restrictions. Using different techniques than Disney, the first Japanese animators could limit production budgets. Later in the 1970s popular manga was animated.

It would take too much space to dive into all technical and historical details here. But, since *anime* is often perceived as violent or erotic, let me simply persuade you to have a look at the work of Hayao Miyazaki.

Born in 1941 and co-founder of Studio Ghibli, he became highly popular in Japan after the release of his movie ‘Princess Mononoke’. Miyazaki’s 2001 ‘Spirited Away’ broke attendance and box office records, receiving the 2002 Academy Award for Best Animated Feature.

It was also my first contact with his work. I already bought the video of the *anime* classic ‘Akira’ by Katsuhiro Otomo. A true masterpiece, but, having a daughter of 4 and a son of 10, I hesitated having them look at Akira ... And, in order to

give them an antidote for the countless Winnie The Pooh’s and Lion King’s, I tried ‘Spirited Away’ on them. After a few minutes the four of us were intensively watching. And the next day, our kids wanted to see it again. Still now, it’s a big hit at home and our Miyazaki DVD collection has grown ever since (Castle in the Sky, Howl’s Moving Castle, etc.). His style and way of story-telling is literally fantastic. His movies and characters are multi-layered, not the often caricatural good and evil dichotomies as in Disney animations. Conclusion: try the DVD ‘Spirited Away’ for a Christmas gift to your children. I’m sure they will love it, and you too!



Spirited Away



Howl's Moving Castle

天も地もなしただ雪の降りしきる

梶原芭臣

*No sky
No land -- just
Snow falling*

Kajiwara Hashin

This haiku is quite famous outside of Japan; in fact, there are several translations in English and other languages, even Dutch. But it is not famous in Japan and is not even cited in the *saijiki*. *Saijiki* are the books of season words which are quite important for Japanese haiku poets, and they came in many different sizes. Even a small *saijiki* has references to one or two haiku by a famous poet.

There are some haiku that are good but still untranslatable, but this haiku is both good and very translatable, thus its appeal. Hashin was a disciple of Kyoshi Takahama and a druggist; other than that his background is unknown, but he left behind this one good haiku.

source: haiku-hia.com

Mr Akihiro Matsubara, Senior Vice-President Sony Europe

by Mr Kris Sierens, Managing Partner of BeforeTheHype and Editorial Committee Member



Sometimes you have to brave to change, or as the founder of Sony once stated: ‘Don’t be afraid to change things.’ That is a vision of life that also fits Mr Akihiro Matsubara. He has lived in many European countries and it is his opinion that Belgians know how to effectively combine a wide variety of cultural situations. This has many advantages; especially the high quality of life, which, says Mr Matsubara, perhaps the best in Europe.

Before Akihiro Matsubara came to Belgium he had lived in various European countries for a total of more than ten years. He lived in Budapest, Frankfurt, Zurich, and Amsterdam, where he was in charge of Eastern Europe business and audio product marketing. In 2002, he returned to Tokyo for three years. In June 2005, he was then sent back to Europe to take up new responsibilities in Brussels. He was immediately impressed with the friendly atmosphere towards foreigners. In other countries, it was much more difficult to get use to the local culture. Of course, he soon discovered that traffic is often hell.

But what most amazed him was the diversity of cultures to be found in such a small country. Mr Matsubara sometimes watches the two national television networks just to observe the striking difference in taste. Flemish people seem to be more straight-forward and committed to achievement, while Walloon people have more respect for personal life and are very good in team building. The challenge for foreign businessmen is in how to harmonize those traits.

Belgians have an open mentality. Mr Matsubara proves this by counting 34 nationalities working in his Brussels office.

Belgians have the remarkable ability to adapt so easy to foreigners and to accept the differences. They also know how to create a perfect work and life balance, a fact which he appreciates very much. Here in Belgium, it is clear that quality for life is important and you can also get that same quality in business. Japanese employees work longer, as a sign of loyalty and their broader scope tends to make them more result driven. The Japanese ability to listen to people helps them to harmonize many situations. For the typical Belgian employee, personal identity is more important. Nevertheless it is clear that Belgium is a country where everyone can learn from each other in a positive way.

The VAIO business group of Sony Europe of which Mr Matsubara is in charge came to Brussels ten years ago. They chose Brussels because of Sony Service Centre, a company which has been already established here in Belgium as the multilingual capabilities within this support call centre became particularly useful for personal computer business. Another but maybe unexpected reason is that Belgium is not a major volume market. This gives Sony the opportunity to be neutral by keeping its major office out of the big markets. At the same time Belgium, because of its cultural differences, is a very good test market for Sony. A last reason, a hidden one, also is the food. Akihiro Matsubara still finds amazing for such a small country to have so many top quality restaurants. Mr Matsubara’s roots lies in Osaka, known for its great food culture. To survive in the restaurant business, he notes that you need good quality and a good price. In Belgium, the big advantage that virtually every restaurant is of a high standard. He knows that he will miss the Belgian gastronomy when he returns home. He will also miss the greenery because in Tokyo not much of that is left. But one thing he knows that one of his personal favourites, fine Belgian chocolates, though very expensive can now be found in Tokyo.

For business professionals who want to be successful in Japan, Akihiro Matsubara stresses that punctuality is one of the most valuable traits. Japan is a very busy country where respect for punctuality is more than just a standard of behaviour and is highly demanded. Also be flexible to adopt changes, in other words, be brave to stop doing. Sometimes it is necessary to erase your mind from the current situations and to refocus on the key parts of your business.

» continue reading from page 1

tax treaty renegotiations. It is expected that this renegotiation will result in a treaty more adapted to the current economic and business environment with, for example, further lowering or exemption of withholding taxes on interest and royalty payments.

It is needless to say that the above outlined changes in the legal and tax landscape are adding considerably to the attractiveness of Belgium as a safe harbour and an ideal headquarters location for Japanese enterprises. It’s clearly the challenge and ambition of the Legal & Tax Committee BJA to further expand the opportunities this may create for both the Belgian and Japanese business community.

AGC FLAT GLASS EUROPE'S PUBLIC ART INSTALLATION MAKES THE WORLD A BRIGHTER PLACE



A forest of colourful metal trees on Brussels avenue expresses people's hopes for a brighter world and supports Alain Hubert's International Polar Foundation.

Jean-Francois Heris, President & CEO of AGC Flat Glass Europe (formerly Glaverbel) and Alain Hubert, Founder and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the International Polar Foundation inaugurated a living urban art installation entitled 'Let's make the world a brighter place', by hanging on one of the 100 colourful metal trees that form the installation their respective wishes for a brighter world.

The installation, commissioned by AGC Flat Glass Europe to mark its rebranding (from Glaverbel) and the centennial of the AGC company, is a concrete reflection of AGC Flat Glass Europe's corporate mission to 'make the world a brighter place'. Located in the central reservation of Avenue Franklin Roosevelt (1), the 100 trees will add a splash of colour to the Brussels cityscape and provide a surreal focus for residents and commuters as they pass by the 1,100 meter stretch of the

JAPANOLOGY STUDENTS AS PROMISING EMPLOYEES

University and business world are often considered to be different worlds: the protected secluded world of academics and the real outside world of economics. The implication here is that especially soft sciences don't educate young people in a way that fits the needs of companies and business world. Is that true? And what do universities contribute? On the one hand universities certainly provide knowledge. On the other hand university education can be seen as "Menschenbildung" in the sense of the German scientist and politician Wilhelm von Humboldt: Students acquire through processes of critical analysis, intellectual discussion, and understanding "soft skills" that are as important in the business world as "hard skills." Companies are increasingly aware of these abilities' significance and the number of trainee programmes for university graduates bear witness to that.

Since the signing of the Bologna declaration in 1999 European universities are undergoing a radical process of reorganization. In Belgium the Bologna process led to a bachelor (BA) of three years and an academic master (MA) of currently one year. The European university programmes are increasingly taking into consideration the demands of the market and try at the same time to preserve their identity as academic institutions. This is also true for the field of Japanese studies at the University of Ghent. Students at the Department of Japanese Language and Culture (Japanse taal en cultuur) already have the opportunity and are encouraged to follow a two year minor in economics, including subjects like business administration, company law, economics and

international economics. Above that students are introduced to economical topics in their language classes as well as in their course on Japanese society. The Ghent programme thus graduates students that possess the necessary cultural and language skills to work in a Japanese environment or in European companies that hold connections to the Japanese business world. At the same time we provide prospective employees that have an understanding of economical processes.

In order to further develop the direction of economical studies we are aiming at continuing the option of economical studies in our future MA programme. As an integral part of their MA education students will have an opportunity to do an internship of approximately two months in a company that is either Japanese or has business relations with a Japanese company or in a cultural organisation. An internship will certainly give students first-hand experience to practically apply the acquired skills. At the same time however, also companies will profit from this programme as they will meet potential future employees and be able to evaluate their skills and their compatibility with the companies' politics and work sphere. The option for internships will be implemented most likely in 2010. We hope to find partners that see our programme as an opportunity and that are willing to support the education of young Belgians.

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road during the two weeks of the installation.

The installation specifically aims to engage citizens in suggesting how, through steps great and small, together we can help combat climate change to make the world a brighter place. AGC Flat Glass Europe for example has a long tradition in investing in innovative products that help cut CO2 emissions. As a further concrete measure of helping make the world a brighter place, the installation also serves as a vehicle of support of the International Polar Foundation: one week following the end of the installation, seven of the trees — one of each colour, each serial-numbered and autographed by Alain Hubert — will be auctioned on eBay, with all proceeds of the sale going to the International Polar Foundation.

Source: AGC Flat Glass Europe

DRIVING A CAR IN JAPAN WITH A BELGIAN DRIVING LICENSE

Driving a car in Japan with a Belgian driving license becomes possible.

On 19 September 2007, the Japanese Traffic Law will be modified and from that day on it will be possible to drive a car for up to one year counting from the day of entry in Japan, using a Belgian driving license on the condition that a Japanese translation (done by a specified authority) is attached to the license.

One of the authorities which can translate a license is the Japan Automobile Federation (JAF). When applying for a translation, it is necessary to provide proof that one has resided in Belgium for at least three months after acquiring a Belgian driving license.

For further information, please refer to the JAF homepage (www.jaf.or.jp/inter/into0002.htm) where you will find a link to the English version in the bottom of the page.

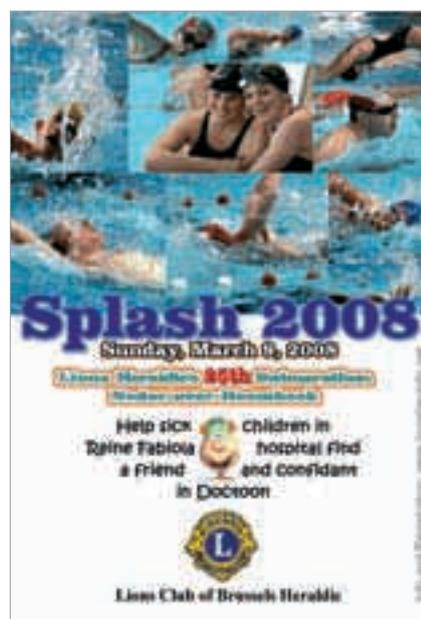
(caution: it is NOT allowed to drive a car in Japan with an international driving license issued by the Belgian Government)

Source: Consular Section of the Japanese Embassy in Belgium



JOIN US IN A SUPPORT OF LIONS CLUB HERALDIC CHARITY EVENT, *SPLASH*

The Lions Club Heraldic supports many charities, both in Belgium as well as abroad whenever there are projects that can help enormously to those less fortunate than others. A privately organized team called 'KAMIKAZE' with many Japanese volunteers has been actively participating for many years to one of their annual charity events, a Swim marathon 'Splash'. Now the KAMIKAZE is currently looking for more swimmers and sponsors of all nationalities to join the team for the Splash 2008, taking place on Sunday March 9th, 2008. If you are interested in participating, please contact Mika Matsumoto at the BJA Office, 02/644 14 05 or send e-mail info@bja.be. To find out more about 'Splash', please visit www.lionsheraldic.net/Splash.htm.



ライオンズクラブ・ヘラルディック主催のチャリティイベント、スイムマラソンにあなたも参加しませんか

ブリッセル・ライオンズクラブ・ヘラルディックではベルギーのみならず、他国における主に身体障害者の為の教育施設や医療設備など様々な面での援助活動の一環として毎年3月にスイムマラソン、Splashを企画しています。そしてこのチャリティイベントに多くの日本人ボランティアを主体としたカミカゼチームが長年参加してきました。そこで来年2008年3月9日、日曜日に予定されているこのチャリティイベントに参加頂けるスイマーとスポンサーを探しています。年齢、国籍は問いません、ご家族の参加も大歓迎ですので御興味のある方はBJAの松本までご連絡下さい。電話 02/644 14 05 又は e-mail info@bja.be。

尚、このスイムマラソン Splash に関する詳細はこちらのホームページをご覧ください www.lionsheraldic.net/Splash.htm

ARTICLE

Old Embassy Project

From 30 October till 3 November the (old) Belgian embassy in Tokyo opened its most creative doors and welcomed 4000 visitors ... never done before.

Very probably everybody knows by now, but mid November 2007 the Belgian government will start the reconstruction of its embassy facilities in Tokyo. A modern embassy complex will be built in Nibancho, on the same grounds that have been home to Belgium for the last 80 years.

To commemorate more than half a century of Belgian history in Tokyo, the Belgian embassy in Tokyo organized "old Embassy": a series of activities in the empty embassy with the aim to promote "creative Belgium". A transition from old to new!

From 30 October till 3 November, the embassy in Tokyo has been an open house entirely redesigned with innovative contemporary design furniture and products of Belgian designers like Extremis, Domani, Sixinch, Jaga and Piet Stockmans. This extremely unique design exhibition at the embassy -the entire complex will disappear very soon!- has been linked with 100% design Tokyo and Tokyo Designer's Week, the biggest design happening in Asia (www.100percentdesign.jp).

Besides DESIGN, "old Embassy" also featured FILM, ART (painting, photography and video), DANCE and MUSIC. old Embassy closed its doors on Saturday 03 November with

live performances of Gabriel Rios, Stijn and Buscemi in the embassy compound. Attended by 900 music lovers it was truly an unforgettable night!

Undoubtedly Belgium has been noticed in Tokyo and Belgium from 30 October till 3 November, not only as the country of chocolates and beer, but also as a country of creativity.

All info about "old Embassy": www.oldembassy.jp

Many thanks to:

Creative collaborators

Extremis, Domani, Sixinch, Modular, Jaga, Orang Tiga, blom-art, Beyond Snow, Piet Stockmans, Awardt, DM Depot, JHP Concept, Eric Van Hove, Pieter Mathysen, Tokyo Art Beat, Anton Kusters, Ippei Naoi, Bernard Languillier, Gabriel Rios, Stijn, Buscemi, Jean-Francois Maljean, Voetvolk, Matsukiri-Ken Takahashi Duo +2, Niels Van Tomme, Sven Augustijnen, Messieurs Delmotte, Harald Thys & Jos De Gryter, Bram Van Paesschen.

Event sponsors

Gold: Agfa-Gevaert Japan, Ltd., Asahi Glass Co., Ltd., Barco Co., Ltd., Daikin Industries, Ltd., Dexia Japan, Fortis, Kaneka, Kuraray Co., Ltd., Nitto Denko Corporation, Nippon Shokubai Co., Ltd., Pioneer Corporation, Solvay, Umicore Japan K.K.

Silver: Austrian Airlines, Honda Europe, Palace Hotel Chain

Bronze: Aisin AW Co., Ltd., Bekaert Japan Co., Ltd., Brussels Airport, ECOVER, Galler Japan Co., Ltd., ING Bank N.V., IMEC, Janssen Pharmaceutical K.K., JSR Corporation, Komatsu Ltd., Petit Jean de Bruxelles, Puratos Japan Co., Ltd., Rosen Co., Ltd., TOKYO CHEMICAL INDUSTRY CO., LTD, Toyota Motor Corporation, UCB

Event partners

Belgian Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce in Japan, Belgian Tourist Office, Belgium-Japan Association & Chamber of Commerce, Belgium Wallonia Foreign Trade and Investment Agency, Brussels Capital Region, Flanders Center, Flanders Investment & Trade



BUSINESSES AND INDIVIDUALS SUPPORT AGAIN BELGIAN CHARITIES WITH THE HELP OF THE UNITED FUND FOR BELGIUM



Each year, the United Fund for Belgium raises about € 1.000.000 from corporations and individuals for the benefit of small and medium sized charitable institutions here in Belgium.

A success story

Since its creation in 1972, the UFB has donated more than 18.1 million to 2.064 charitable projects across Belgium and has done so without any subsidies from any official Belgian or foreign organisation.

Children's charities mainly

Thanks to a great number of volunteers and the donations in kind, the UFB is able to redistribute 100% of the received donations. This is quite exceptional in the charity world and proves the success of the formula.

Donors can be sure that donations are adequately redistributed to the charities. The allocation of funds

is directed by the UFB Allocations Committee which is composed of leading Belgian citizens from business and social communities of all the provinces. The Committee meets each month, carefully examines each request and visits every single institution before making a final selection.

UFB allocates around 50% of its funds to child related charities which include projects to support handicapped children, childcare, education and shelter of underprivileged children etc.

Funding

Each fund-raising campaign kicks off with a reception at the residence of the US Ambassador to Belgium who is a great supporter of the Fund.

UFB regularly organizes special social and/or cultural fund-raising events such as the Ralph Lauren Charity sales, book sales, golf tournaments and so on.

Greeting cards are an important element of the fund-raising activities- the profit generated from their sales accounts for more than 10% of the collected funds. The cards can be ordered directly via the website: www.ufb.be

If you would like to support UFB there are various ways you can do this - you can become a volunteer, buy the fund's books or greeting cards or make a donation to UFB Bank Account 953-000003-69. All donations over €30 are tax deductible.

United Fund for Belgium Avenue
Adèlelaan 1, 1310 La Hulpe- Terhulpen
www.ufb.be

Katrien Goossens, Executive Director
kgoossens@ufb.be, Tel: 02/655.49.33

5TH WORLDWIDE SECURITY CONFERENCE (WSC5) IN BRUSSELS

The EastWest Institute (EWI) is proud to announce its 5th Worldwide Security Conference (WSC5) in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and the World Customs Organization from 19 February through 21 February 2008.

WSC5 will gather 750 participants over the course of three days to discuss the security of people, economies and

infrastructure. Workshops will cover individual topics, some of which will be carried on after the conference as Working Groups within EWI's Worldwide Security Network.

Day three of the conference will be an innovative "horizon thinking" exercise, where the participants in Brussels will contribute to a set of global seminars

on such topics as the weaponization of science, energy security, and religion and human security. This session will construct a vision of "a day in the future", identifying channels to overcome political obstacles, mistrust, and differing perceptions.

Source: www.ewi.info

EU-JAPAN HIGH LEVEL MEETING ON COMPETITION POLICY

European Commissioner for Competition Neelie Kroes met with the Chairman of the Japan Fair Trade Commission, Kazuhiko Takeshima on Friday 14 September to co-chair the EU-Japan High Level Meeting on Competition Policy. The high level meeting on Competition Policy provided an opportunity for Japan and the EU to discuss the latest developments in their respective competition policies and enforcement.

The Commissioner was informed about recent developments in Japan following the entry into force of the revised Antimonopoly Act last year and about the plans for future changes foreseen next year. The reform introduced inter alia a leniency policy in Japan, which has already brought results, as it has allowed the Japan Fair Trade Commission to uncover quite a number of cartels and bid-riggings.

The Commissioner, who was also informed about a recent report of the Anti Monopoly Act Study group under the Cabinet Office which is favourable towards the Japan Fair Trade Commission's policy for a strong enforcement of the law in particular as regards cartels, stated "This is a development that I sincerely welcome. As you know, I have made our enforcement activity against cartels a priority of my mandate as Commissioner."

Chairman Takeshima and Commissioner Kroes confirmed that the positive and close relationship between DG Competition and the Japan Fair Trade Commission should be further intensified.

*Source: Delegation of the European Commission to Japan
http://jpn.cec.eu.int/home/news_en_newsobj2418.php*

NIHON EU GAKKAI

The Nihon EU Gakkai (The European Union Studies Association - Japan = EUSA-Japan) was founded in November 1980 with the aim of promoting of research on the EU and cooperation with other study associations in the world.

The member count is around 400, mainly professors and graduate students but include also journalists, businessmen, government officials and lawyers.

The Nihon EU Gakkai has organised a conference in November every year and research papers on the EU are widely read. Those papers are published under the title of the "EU Studies in Japan" and are available from bookshops. For the details on this association including application for admission, please contact the Secretariat.

c/o Yoshikatsu Washie, (Secretary-General, EUSA-Japan)
Faculty of Law, Doshisha University
Karasuma-Higashi-iru, Imadegawa-dori
Kamigyo-ku, Kyoto 602-8580 Japan
Tel: +81-75-251-3620 Fax: +81-75-251-3620
E-mail: ywashie@mail.doshisha.ac.jp
www.soc.nii.ac.jp/eusa-japan/index-e.html

TRAINING ACTIVITIES

The EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation is currently inviting applications for:

Training activities in Japan for EU managers working for EU companies.

Distribution & Business Practices in Japan

6-day training course, from 2 - 7 March 2008

Application deadline: 12 December 2007

More information: www.eu-japan.eu/europe/dbp.html

ITER AGREEMENT ENTERS INTO FORCE

IP/07/1586 - Brussels, 24 October 2007

The ITER Agreement, creating an international project to demonstrate the feasibility of fusion as an energy source, enters into force today. Involving the EU, US, India, China, South Korea, Russia, and Japan, ITER is the world's biggest scientific collaboration of its kind, representing over half of the world's population. The agreement was signed on 26 November 2006, and enters into force 30 days after the last ratification, which was by China.

The ITER Agreement set up the international ITER Organization which

is responsible for the construction and operation of an experimental reactor which will reproduce the physical reaction - fusion - that occurs in the sun and stars. ITER aims to do this at a scale and in conditions that will demonstrate the scientific and technological feasibility of fusion as an energy source for the future.

The International Atomic Energy Authority (IAEA) is depositary of the ITER Agreement and has confirmed that ITER enters into force today – 30 days after having received the confirmation of adoption of the Agreement from all

Parties according to their national laws and practice. The EU, acting on the basis of the Treaty establishing the European Atomic Energy Community, confirmed its adoption of the ITER Agreement to the IAEA on 5 February 2007.

The first session of the ITER Council is scheduled for 27 and 28 November 2007.

For more information on ITER:

MEMO/06/216

IP/06/676

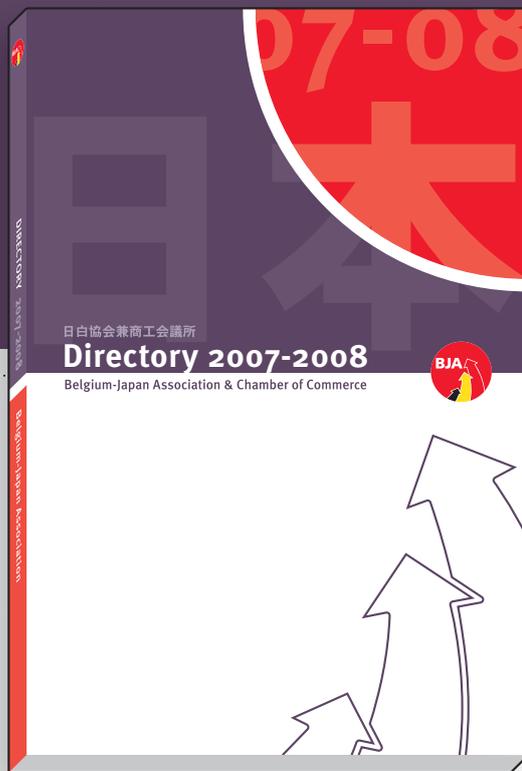
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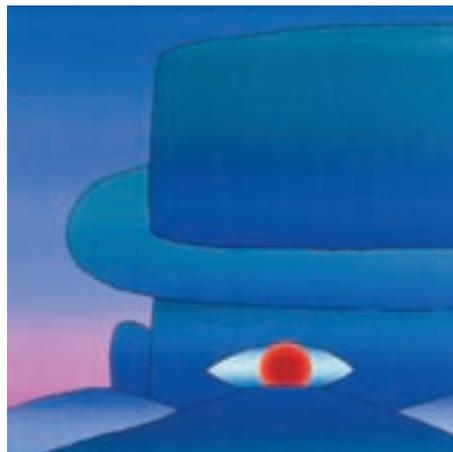
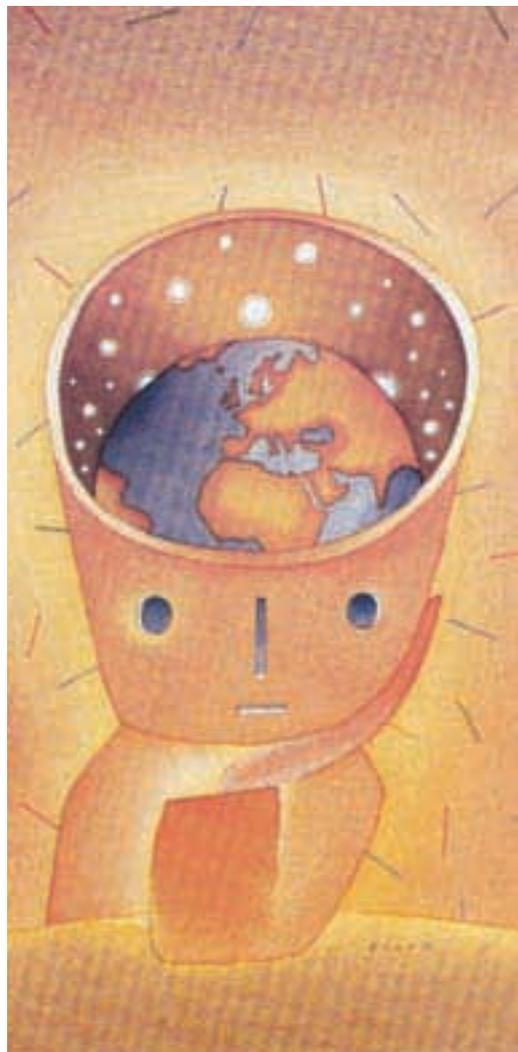
N° of copies requested

Price: € 5 for BJA members, € 25 for non-members
+ mailing costs (depending on quantity)

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.



Let yourself be amazed by this original and interactive exhibition, gathering over 300 works by the Belgian artist Jean-Michel Folon: watercolours, screen prints, etchings, posters, wooden objects, stained glass windows, sculptures, films...

The dreamlike scenography designed by Folon himself takes you along on a journey through his creation, enlightening his poetic universe and the variety of themes and techniques developed in his art.

Also discover from now on our first temporary exhibition in a series that will focus on artists who had either an artistic or a personal link with Folon, when not both.

FONDATION FOLON

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02/653.34.56 – fondationfolon@skynet.be

Ouvert tous les jours sauf le lundi, de 10 à 18 h

Pour de plus amples informations, consultez le site www.fondationfolon.be

Assignment of Japanese employees to Belgium: the obligations in various western European countries compared

by Mr Matthias Lommers of Laga and Editorial Committee Member

Belgium is not so demanding towards foreign employees

Further to a comparative examination in the EU (the 15 old member states), it appears that Belgium is not demanding as regards the temporary employment of foreign workers in comparison with other European countries. First it should be pointed out that Belgium is not the only country where temporary workforce deployment has to be notified in advance, as under the so-called Limosa obligations introduced on 1 April 2007.

When a Japanese employee is assigned to Belgium, a number of formalities have to be fulfilled, which include:

- applying for a work permit
- applying for a type D visa and registration with the local authorities
- applying for a Limosa notification
- drawing up and keeping of Belgian social documents, such as payslips, work regulations and a staff register

The survey by Laga shows, however, that Belgium is not so very demanding as is generally assumed, certainly not compared to our neighbouring countries. For instance, there is a requirement to apply for a work permit for non-EU workers in all member states of the European Union, even for short periods. In some countries, such as France, the Netherlands and Germany, it is compulsory to have a work permit as from the first day of employment. Belgium on the other hand has created an exemption from this obligation for Japanese people coming over on business trip for maximum 5 working days per calendar month. Furthermore, Belgium has low thresholds for issuing work permits to highly qualified foreign personnel. For instance, a highly qualified Japanese manager will only be provided with a work permit in France, Germany or the Netherlands if he earns a gross annual salary of at least EUR 60,000; in Belgium he is eligible for a type B employment card for highly qualified personnel where his gross annual salary is only EUR 33,677. Moreover, the procedure for applying for a work permit in Belgium goes very quickly. In Flanders and Brussels, a work permit is issued in two or three weeks. In France and Spain, the procedure can sometimes take up to 12 weeks.

Additionally, the Belgian authorities are currently working on fully automating the work permit and residence procedures via the Limosa web site, which will yet further increase the speed of the administrative processes.

Limosa

During spring, there was much ado in Belgium about the so-called Limosa obligation. The obligation was introduced

in the Act of 27 December 2006 and the Royal Decree of 20 March 2007. One of the consequences of Limosa is that Japanese and other foreign employees that temporarily work in Belgium under the authority of their foreign employer have to be registered up with the Belgian social security authorities via the Limosa web site before the start of their activities in Belgium. The requirement is similar to the Dimona obligation that applies to employees who are subject to Belgian social security.

The comparative survey reveals that similar requirements also exist in the Netherlands, Germany, Spain, France, Italy, Luxembourg and Austria. Greece and Portugal, too, have a notification requirement, although notice does not have to be given up front there. The notification can be given after employment in those countries has commenced. In addition, most countries also require the foreign employer to keep employment documentation for its posted employees such as payslips, work regulations, work schedules, safety codes, etc.

Since 1 April 2007, under section 141 of the Finance Act of 28 December 2006, foreign employers or service providers that make a Limosa declaration have been exempt from the requirement to keep Belgian social documents for a period of 12 months, albeit on condition the employer draws up and keeps similar documents in the home country. Previously, this obligation only applied in Belgium for a period of six months and was implemented into Belgian law by the Act of 5 March 2002, transposing Directive 96/71/EC of the European Parliament and the Council of 16 December 1996 on the posting of workers.

Finally, a fair number of countries, like Germany, Greece, Luxembourg, Austria and Portugal require the foreign employer to have a local representative, who must furthermore be a national of the country of employment in most countries. This administrative burden does not exist in Belgium.

The following table contains a summary of the most important requirements in the countries neighbouring Belgium:

NOTES:

1. This requirement is currently being challenged before the European Court of Justice.
2. This requirement is currently being challenged before the European Court of Justice (C-490/04, *European Commission v Federal Republic of Germany*).
3. This requirement is also currently being challenged before the European Court of Justice (C-319/06).
4. See *inter alia* the case of *Arblade*, C-369/96.
5. The "Report to the King" in respect of the Royal Decree of 31 August 2007, published in the Belgian official gazette on 13 Sept. 2007.

LIMOSA	Is there a system comparable to Limosa?	Does a Japanese employee need a permit to work?	Is there a requirement to keep social documents on behalf of the Japanese employees?	Is a foreign employer required to have a local representative?
Belgium	Yes, Limosa	Yes, Employment card	Yes, Exemption for the first 12 months, under conditions	No
The Netherlands	Yes ¹	Yes, Employment permit	Yes	No
France	Yes, By letter or fax sent to the Préfecture du département	Yes	Yes	No
Germany	Yes, declaration via the internet	Yes	Yes ²	Yes, a competent agent (verantwortlich handelnder) and an appointed agent (zustellungsbevollmächtigte)
Luxembourg	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ³
United Kingdom	No	Yes	Yes	No

Many of the requirements mentioned are not only imposed on Japanese and other non-EU employers but also on employers operating from the new EU countries. For this reason, they have been referred to the European Court of Justice, it being alleged they constitute a restriction on the free movement of services within the EU.

Article 49 of the EU treaty sets down the principle that the member states must ensure the free provision of services within the Community. Part of this basic freedom includes the right for a service provider in one member state temporarily to post workers to another member state to provide a service there. The case law states that the freedom to provide services, one of the basic principles of the Treaty, can only be restricted by rules justified by, for instance, imperative requirements in the general interest, in compliance with the principle of non-discrimination and proportionality⁴.

Limosa - new exemptions

On 13 September 2007, a Royal Decree was published in the Belgian official gazette exempting a number of persons from the requirement to be in possession of a Limosa declaration further to their work activities in Belgium.

When Limosa came into force earlier this year in April, the Royal Decree of 20 March 2007 created inter alia exemptions for persons who came to Belgium to attend meetings and take part in conferences for a limited period of 5 workdays per calendar month. Initial experience in practice has shown, however, that certain exemptions were not adequately in tune with reality in the field and urgently had to be adjusted.

“Practice has shown in particular that this time limitation had a detrimental effect: it had a very deleterious effect on attendance at and the organisation of congresses in Belgium, which was certainly not the intention of the notification duty.”⁵

Under pressure of the BJA and the law firm Laga, Section 2 of the new Royal Decree now exempts the following categories from the need to give a notification:

- persons attending congresses in Belgium (without time limitation);
- persons attending meetings in Belgium “provided their presence at such meetings does not exceed 60 activity days per calendar year, with a maximum of 20 successive calendar days per meeting”.

These ample descriptions easily allow attendance at such meetings (negotiations, strategic meetings, etc.). However, where an individual requires to be present in Belgium for more than 60 working days per calendar year, the requirement to give notification is justified and proportionate since what is then involved is an activity that structurally takes place in Belgium. Where the meeting is not a short assignment but a longer unbroken period of more than 20 consecutive calendar days is involved, the requirement to give notification is justified. Travel days and days for tourist purposes connecting to the start or end of the meeting are not included.

The Royal Decree introducing the said exemptions came into force with retrospective effect as of 1 April 2007.

Embassy of Japan in Belgium - part 2

by the staff of the Japanese Embassy in Belgium

In the second and last article of this series, we would like to introduce how the Political, Security as well as WCO (the World Customs Organisation) Sections of the Japanese Embassy are working. While they may be less visible from outside than the Consular Section or the Cultural and Information Centre that we touched upon in the previous issue, they are playing a very important role in respective fields.

Political Section

The Political Section of the Embassy is in charge of Belgian foreign policy and observes domestic politics.

The areas of foreign policy that we deal with range from human rights, disarmament, non-proliferation, regional issues to other various areas such as development cooperation, immigration, justice affairs, international terrorism. The Political Section interacts with the Belgian Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other government authorities to collect information and exchange views. It then analyses the situation and reports back to Tokyo.

Based on instructions from Tokyo, we often make inquiries or official requests to our Belgian counterparts. Formal requests are called 'demarches'. Given that Japan and Belgium are partners who share common basic values such as freedom and democracy, we believe it is important to forge a common stand with Belgium whenever and wherever possible. That is why 'demarches' often take place between the two countries on various issues from a broad international agenda to more specific issues such as the interpretation of international treaties. Elections in international organisations also give us an opportunity for us to seek valuable support from the Belgian government. Japan has been very active in standing for elected posts in international organisations to make further contributions in the international community. We highly appreciate the kind support the Belgian government has extended to us so far and would like to continue to work together more in the future.

The Political Section also closely follows and analyses Belgian domestic politics. It produces a regular report on domestic politics, which we share with Tokyo. In order for the Embassy to grasp the situation as correctly as possible, we often meet with scholars and other experts, as well as following local news sources and meeting government officials.

WCO Section

Needless to emphasise that our life, both from consumers' as well as producers' perspectives is dependent on international trade, and customs administrations at borders all over the world play vital roles in controlling the flow of goods imported or exported, as well as in ensuring proper

collection of customs duties. What happens if different countries use their own different sets of rules? Burden for traders, and ultimately, for consumers? What consequences would there be if customs do not function in a proper manner? It may lead to increased smuggling of goods that endangers public safety and harms interests of law-abiding citizens and enterprises.

Brussels is home to the World Customs Organisation (WCO) headquarters, in which consultations on customs and international trade affairs take place among over 170 Members in the world. The main role of the organisation is to establish international conventions, guidelines and common initiatives regarding customs procedures, with a view to simplifying and harmonising different practices of the world to the extent possible.

It is with this aim that the WCO Section at the Embassy participates in the meetings of the WCO and contributing to the discussions there. Not only do we present Japan's positions to the table, but also we exchange views with other countries to achieve economic and social well-being through customs cooperation in the international community.

Security Section (NATO Section)

The Security Section of the Embassy covers NATO and Belgian defence. While Japan is not a member of the Alliance nor does it have any formal or institutional relations with NATO, cooperation between us has developed significantly over the past few years. Successive visits to NATO HQ from Tokyo, including those of Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and Defence Minister, exemplify that Japan-NATO cooperation has been given a firm foundation on which to build further cooperation.

Japan-NATO collaboration has developed from political consultations to more concrete cooperation on the ground most notably in Afghanistan (while limited to non-military humanitarian and reconstruction aspects). Staff of the Security Section is on the frontline of Japan-NATO relations - frequently meeting and exchanging views with NATO as well as representatives of member states' delegations to NATO.

We have a defence attaché to Belgium at the Embassy, who is a principal point of contact for the Belgian armed forces and NATO's military authorities. Good relations between Japan and Belgium as a whole intensifies defence exchanges between the two countries, and leads to reciprocal visits of Chiefs of Staff.

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PERSONALIA

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

Corporate Member

Acerta Consult (Services)

Diestsevest 14, 3000 Leuven
Tel: 016 24 63 40, Fax: 016 24 63 44
arie.vos@acerta.be
www.acerta.be
BJA Contact: Mr Arie Vos, Business Unit Manager

Sato International Europe (Machinery Industries)

Leuvensesteenweg 369, 1932 Sint-Stevens-Woluwe
Tel: 02 788 80 00, Fax: 02 788 80 80
info@be.satoeurope.com
www.satoeurope.com
BJA Contact: Mr Laurent Lassus, General Manager

Toyota Boshoku Europe (Cars and Related Industries)

Ikaroslaan 49, B-1930 Zaventem
Tel: 02 709 09 80, Fax: 02 721 57 01
yoshihiko.nishioka@toyota-boshoku.be
www.toyota-boshoku.co.jp
BJA Contact: Mr Yoshihiko Nishioka, Managing Director

Yamazaki Mazak Optonics Europe (Machinery Industries)

Weiveldlaan 39, 1930 Zaventem
Tel: 02 712 55 00, Fax: 02 725 33 20
info@mazaklaser.be
www.mazaklaser.com
BJA Contact: Mr Yoshihide Miura, Managing Director

Associate Member

Tohnichi Europe (Machinery Industries)

Industrieweg 27, 3190 Boortmeerbeek
Tel: 02 16 60 66 61, Fax: 02 16 60 66 75
naito@tohnichi.co.jp
www.tohnichi.be
BJA Contact: Mr Hiromi Naito, Managing Director

Individual Members

Regular members

Mrs B. Denil
Dr A. Randerson
Mrs C. Schreiber
Mr S. Segers
Mr P. Szyster

Couple members

Mr Gregory Lukito & Mrs Haruko Noda

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The BJA would like to express our gratitude to a following company for upgrading its associate membership to corporate membership.

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Avenue Louise 165, 1050 Brussels
Tel: 02 647 73 50, Fax: 02 640 64 99
jfbellis@vanbaelbellis.com
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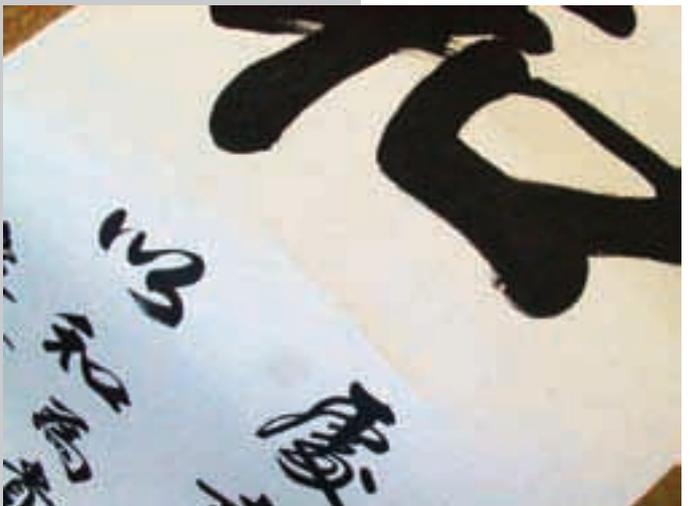
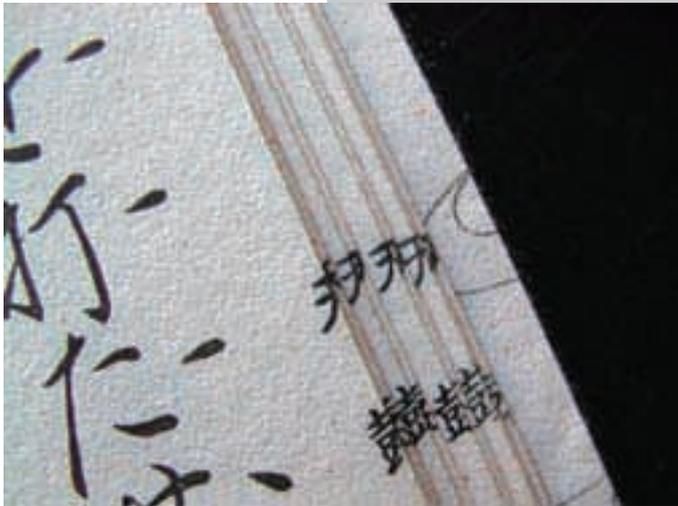
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