

Belgium-Japan Association

& Chamber of Commerce ASBL- VZW



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Trade Flows & Cultural News

Investments Japan-Belgium and the BJA

by Masatomo Nomura, Director of KPMG and Chairman of BJA Investment Committee

We have seen the ups and downs of foreign direct investment in Belgium. We are now going through a calm period. This trend is more or less the same in most Western European countries. As a result of this general trend, competition to attract inward investment among the neighbouring countries has increased. Since foreign inward investment is an important part of Belgian economy, we have been looking in the BJA Investment Committee at possibilities on how Belgium could increase its attractiveness for investors, as the strength of this committee lies in the fact that we are in contact with investors.

According to the president of a Japanese company who briefed us in a recent meeting, the attractiveness of this country is as follows:

- It is located centrally in Europe;
- The Belgians have good communication skills;
- Workers are highly qualified;
- Investment agencies provide good services;
- Infrastructures are well-prepared; and
- Other investors that the company is familiar with had already invested in the neighbourhood.

According to him, its negative points are red tape – for example, it could take more than a year to obtain necessary permits for investment, and relatively high labour costs when personal income tax and social security contributions borne by employers and employees are taken into account.

To present the comprehensive views of Japanese investors towards Belgian business environment, we assembled the stories of 20 Japanese companies that had invested in various sectors in Belgium and published a book about it a few years ago. Their testimony shows very honest views on Belgian business environment and presents both positive

and negative aspects. The book is still highly valued by potential investors.

We have been looking at not only issues that affect companies but also individuals. As part of BJA's efforts, we have provided assistance to Belgian and Japanese governments in the run up to the negotiation of a social security treaty between the two countries. Now a treaty has been nearly concluded and we can expect it to come into force in the next few years. It will eliminate the double payment of social security contributions for seconded expatriates and enable the totalisation of pensions contributed in the two countries for expatriates who are not seconded by their employers. The other issue is to improve the reception of Japanese expatriates by the Belgian administration. We have been pursuing an improvement of the procedures for Japanese to obtain work permits and visas as well as registering at communes. More detailed accounts are given in a report from pages 12 to 14.

The objective of the BJA Investment Committee is to facilitate investment from Belgium to Japan as well as from Japan to Belgium. As to investment from Belgium to Japan, we have been looking at ways to enhance the initiatives by Japanese government through BJA's strong presence among Belgian companies doing business in Japan and our close link with such organisations as JETRO.

The Investment Committee is composed of more or less an equal number of Belgian and Japanese members. The committee members represent the main actors in the promotion of investment such as governmental organisations, investment agencies, financial institutions, investment advisors and investors themselves. Apart from its members, specialists and investors may be invited to meetings. Meetings are held four times a year.



Masatomo Nomura,
Director of KPMG and Chairman
of BJA Investment Committee

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YES IV Briefing sessions

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9 September, 2004
Toyota Motor Europe, Brussels
First Briefing Session



The first briefing session of the YES IV program was held on the 9th of September at the premises of Toyota Motor Europe in Brussels. The Session began with an introduction of the BJA, and the BLCCJ by Mr Waucquez, as well as of the YES IV participants. Following a coffee break, Professor Vande Walle of the Catholic University of Leuven explained the participants vividly the cultural factors one has to keep in mind while doing business in Japan.

The YES program is a commercial export project under the auspices of His Royal Highness Prince Philippe of Belgium, who honored us with his presence that day. His enormous support to the YES program was very much appreciated and his extensive talks with all the attendees during cocktails expressed again his deep interest in foreign trade with Japan and Japanese investors in Belgium.

The enriching presentations and the presence of HRH Prince Philippe motivated the participants to exchange their views and opinions during the lunch intensively. In the afternoon, Mr Maes of Père Olive (a participant of YES III program) and Mrs Duplat-De Geynst of Katinique (a participant of YES II program) presented their case studies and their actual experiences in Japan. The participants showed again a definite motivation in making this program successful for their business and enthusiastically exchanged their views with others.



Discussing Toyota's investments in Belgium : (from left) Mr le Hodey, Vice-President of the BJA, Mr Sasaki, President and CEO of TMEM, HRH Prince Philippe, Mr Arashima, President and CEO of TMME, H.E. Ambassador Naito, Mr Athanasopoulos, Executive Vice-President of TME and Mr Bogaerts, Advisor to HRH Prince Philippe.



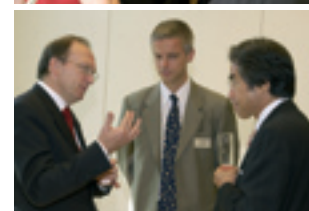
HRH Prince Philippe deeply interested in the stories of the YES participants: (from left) HRH Prince Philippe, Mr le Hodey, Vice-President of the BJA, Mr Dochez of Tigenix, and Mrs Geens of Mitzlavv.



Past experiences were shared with HRH Prince Philippe by (from left) Mrs Degeynst of Katinique, Mr Maes of Père Olive, Mrs Tollenaere of DHL Danzas, Mrs Blondé, Chairman of the YES Committee and Mr Luty, Economic Advisor of the Chamber of Commerce Luxembourg.



HRH Prince Philippe discussing business opportunities concerning microelectronics research and nanotechnology in Japan with YES participant Mr Blokken of IMEC.



Pictures: courtesy by Mr J. Duquesne of H. De Beukelaer & Co.

YES IV Briefing sessions

24 September, 2004
Faculty Club, Leuven
Second Briefing Session

The second briefing session was held on 24 September in Leuven. It started with an introduction of the MBA students of the Waseda University who will support the YES IV participants with their preparations. Following a greeting word also from Mrs Oishi, senior representative of the BLCCJ, Mr Moline of Ceran International conducted an intensive initiation course of the Japanese language. Although this was the first experience with Japanese language for most of the participants, they were well acquainted with some basics of the language.

During a lunch, the participants and the Waseda students exchanged their views on the cultural and business etiquette differences between Belgium and Japan. The afternoon session included two presentations; first by Mr Suzuki, a Director of JETRO on the temptations of the Japanese market and possible benefits from being active in the Japanese market and then by Professor Vanoverbeke of the Catholic University of Leuven on some cultural aspects in doing business in Japan as well as structural differences between Japanese and Western companies.

After a long day of labour Mr Hut, YES IV participant, treated us with some of his delicious beers from the Brasserie de Malonne.



The students of Waseda University traveled all the way from Japan to assist the young executives in their preparation of a successful YES program.



The YES participants listening carefully to the presentations of the day: (from left) Mr Bastijns of Cardon Pharmaceuticals, Mrs Greisen of 7XTM, Mr Dewaele of Waterleau, Mr Calandri of Biogem, Mr De Bruyne of BGS, and Mr Wyszegrodski of Donaldson.



Surrounded by the Waseda University students you can find Mrs Geens of Mitzlavv, Mr Suzuki of JETRO, Professor Vanoverbeke of the Catholic University of Leuven (KUL), Mr Moliteur of ACTE and Mr Blokken of IMEC.

Lastly, we hereby would like to thank the organizations that have supported the briefing sessions:

The Federal Public Service of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade, Cooperation & Development, Toyota, IMEC, Ceran International and the KUL.



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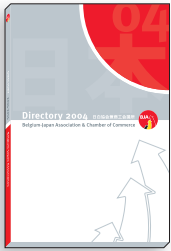
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Lunch conference on recent tax and corporate aspects in Belgium

20 October, 2004 - Hotel le Méridien, Brussels

Thanks to over 50 enthusiastic participants as well as the dynamic guest speakers, the lunch conference on October 20th initiated by the Legal and Tax Committee of the BJA was a huge success.

questions received from the audience and took a quick response to answer. After the Minister's speech, the participants had the opportunity to exchange their opinions with others during lunch.



The conference began with a warm welcome by Mr Luc Willame, the President of the BJA, introducing the newly published BJA Directory to the audience. HE Ambassador Naito also honoured us with his presence to this lunch conference and gave a short speech.

Lastly Mr Patrick Kelley, Tax Partner of Linklaters De Bandt, presented the main features of the European company, called 'Societas Europaea', and the certain benefits this European company can have in the international environment. To conclude the conference, the moderator, Mr Tanguy Van Overstraeten, Partner of Linklaters De Bandt and Chairman of Legal & Tax Committee, reminded that Belgium offers a high standard of living and benefits to foreign investors in many aspects.

First presentation was made by Mr Ronny De Prest, Partner of Deloitte, who gave a thorough presentation on his survey related to the salary burden of Japanese expatriates in the enlarged European Union. This presentation was followed by the speech of Minister Reynders, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, who elaborated the recent aspects of the Belgian tax reform vividly. He also welcomed all

The BJA would like to extend special thanks to the sponsors of this event, Linklaters De Bandt, Deloitte and ING for their kind support to make this event a successful one.



Minister Reynders enjoying lunch with, to the right HE Ambassador Naito, Mr Thielemans, Director Corporate and Investment Banking of Fortis Bank, Mr Watanabe, Director-General of JETRO, Mrs l'Hoost, Deputy Director-General of Agency for Foreign Trade. To the left you find Mr Willame, Senior Executive Vice President and President of Flat Glass Company of Asahi Glass Co./ Glaverbel, Mr Ikeda, President of Subaru Europe and Mr Van Overstraeten, Partner of Linklaters De Bandt.



During cocktails the members exchanged views on the investment climate in Belgium. From the left: HE Ambassador Naito, Mr Deruytter, Manager Expatriates & Non-Residents of ING, Mrs Denil, and Mr Jardinot, Managing Partner of Intercultural Management.

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Linklaters De Bandt



Pictures: courtesy by Mr J. Duquesne of H. De Beukelaer & Co.



Mr Ronny De Prest, Partner of Deloitte, gave a thorough presentation on the salary burden of Japanese expatriates in the enlarged EU.



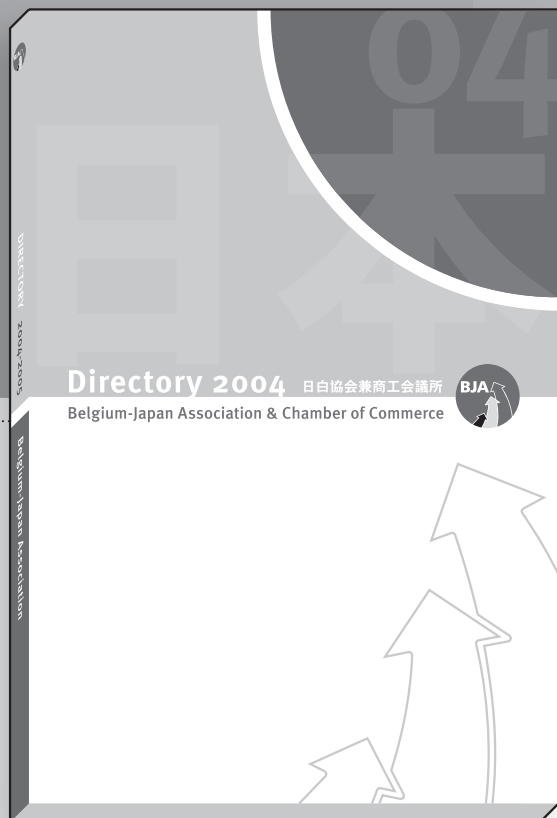
Minister Didier Reynders, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, discussed all questions received, after his lively presentation.



Mr Patrick Kelley, Partner of Linklaters De Bandt, sharing his knowledge about the European Company with the interested public.

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Directory 2004



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Message from the BJA Office

Any interesting articles? BJA would like to receive some news from the BJA members which will be announced in the Trade Flows and Cultural News or in the 'Ad Valvas' section of the BJA web site.

Please send us your articles in 200 words about your company, exhibitions, concerts, or seminars you organize and that you may deem interesting to the BJA members and other parties concerned with Belgium-Japan relations.

Please forward the articles to info@bja.be or you may post them directly on the 'Ad Valvas' section of our web site www.bja.be

日白協会兼商工会議所(BJA)事務局からのお知らせ

今後、BJA では会員の皆様からの色々な情報を BJA のニューズレター、'Trade Flows and Cultural News' 又は、BJA のホームページの 'Ad Valvas' の欄に掲載致します。会社案内又は、展示会、セミナー、コンサートなどの各種イベントの案内などの記事を 200 字以内にまとめて BJA 事務局の E-mail: info@bja.be まで送付下さい。BJA の会員またはベルギー・日本の二国間に関心を持つ方々との情報交換の場としてこの機会に奮ってご案内下さい。

First BJA Directory

The Belgium-Japan Association & Chamber of Commerce is happy to present you our first BJA Directory 2004-2005.

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 214 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.

Facts and Figures on Japan

New book on Japan by Belgian authors

Op zoek naar het nieuwe Japan: de Japanse politiek na 1945 (In Search for a New Japan: Political Development after 1945)

Authors: Dimitri Vanoverbeke and Edward Adriaenssens
Published by Roularta Books

Japan has been experiencing a profound socio-political and economic crisis since the nineties. The collapse of the bubble-economy and the end of the Cold War has shaken the foundations on which the success of post-war Japan is built. Many people and groups involved in the re-development of Japan after 1945 prevent a coherent and dynamic policy of change which Japan needs to go ahead. Central in this system we find the Liberal Democratic Party of Japan. The ruling party's power structure is complex and solid. Nevertheless the image of a conservative party that cannot change is proven to be wrong.

'In Search for a New Japan: Political Development after 1945' deconstructs the post-war Japanese political system and maps today's issues carefully. The choice

between change and continuation runs throughout this book. The necessity for Japan to loosen ties with the US and to search for an own identity on the international scene is extensively discussed. Increased cooperation with Europe is one of the main possibilities that Japan has to find a new identity. But before tackling international problems, domestic issues have to be addressed. Reform is slow but the authors conclude that Japan has no choice...

End of prepay phones in Japan?

Only 3% of mobile phones in Japan are prepay, while this ratio is 90% in Italy and around 50% in most European countries. This is a strong contrast. Japan's governing coalition is preparing the draft of a law that will eliminate prepaid mobile phones from Japan. This new law could pass Japan's parliament sometime in 2005.

What effect will this law have on prepay subscribers? In other words, how many prepay subscribers would carry losses? The expectations are that among DoCoMo prepay subscribers about 88.000 subscribers will suffer losses. For KDDI/AU 370.000, for Vodafone 1.500.000 and for TuKa 700.000 people will carry losses. This immediately shows that the law will have a minor effect on DoCoMo, while Vodafone and TuKa will face the challenge to convert so many prepay subscribers to regular monthly subscriptions.

Eurotechnology News



Japan exports hit record levels

Exports from Japan hit their highest level for more than 50 years last month, but high oil prices could still spell economic slowdown, analysts said. Japan's exports rose 12.5% on 2003 to ¥ 5.46 trillion (\$ 50.6bn; £ 27.9bn), a high since records began in 1947.

But an oil-fuelled rise in imports meant the boost to the trade surplus was smaller than expected. Japan's economy minister said this week that oil prices were the biggest threat to economic growth.

Although the September exports figure showed strong growth over the same month in the previous year, it was down slightly on August when seasonally adjusted. The same pattern could be found in the trade surplus, the amount by which exports exceed imports.

September produced a surplus of ¥ 1.24 trillion, up 12.7% in comparison with 2003 but this figure was 21.8% lower than August's surplus. The decline, said Shuji Shirota at Dresdner Kleinwort Wasserstein in

Facts and Figures on Japan

Tokyo, suggested 'signs of peaking out - mostly due to a slowdown in overseas economies and rising crude oil prices'.

BBC World News

76% of Japanese uneasy about future due to low birth rate

With rising medical spending and pension expenses, 76.7% of Japanese are gravely concerned about the nation's low birthrate, which is certain to have a major impact on the social security system, according to survey results released on September 30 by the Cabinet Office.

Many cited the increasing burden on the public to support the pension and public health insurance systems, as well as a shrinking labor force.

While 8.2% of respondents said they did not feel a sense of crisis over the current low birthrate, 12.6% said they were neutral on the trend and 2.5% said they did not know. These results show growing uneasiness over the unprecedented low birthrate trend.

Allowed to choose multiple answers as to why they felt uneasy, 71.9% picked the impact on social security, including pensions and medical costs, 50.6% pointed out the impact on economic vitality, such as a contraction of the work force, and 33.1% mentioned the impact on family life, such as sharing the burden of child-rearing.

An overwhelming majority of respondents requested that the government create a social environment suitable for raising children. As 51.1% called on the government to support parents balancing work and family life and to promote a review of work styles, 50.5% wanted the government to decrease the economic burden imposed by child-rearing on families.

The Cabinet Office polled 3,000 people aged 20 or older nationwide between 9 September and 19 September. Valid responses came from 70.3%. This was the office's first opinion survey on the falling birthrate.

The Nihon Keizai Shimbun

The Japanese stock market, a break?

Between the middle of November last year and the end of April this year the Japanese stock market experienced an impressive growth of more than 26%. Compared to the European Eurostoxx 50 with a growth of 20% and the American S&P500 with 9% this marks an exceptional percentage. This is due to the unexpected sudden economic recovery of the land of the rising sun.

At the end of 2003 Japan publicized impressive positive growth figures. Still, the last couple of months the Nikkei 225 more or less had to abandon its position. This is due to the fear investors have that this economic recovery is fragile because it is mainly based on the foreign demand for Japanese products. A slump in growth in America or China, the most important export countries of Japan, will have negative effects on the Japanese economy in general. The main question is whether or not this economic recovery will expand to other domains besides export, for example to the domestic demand. As long as there is uncertainty about this answer, the Japanese stock market will stay capricious.

METRO Newspaper

Kobe to create medical industry zone

The port city of Kobe still hasn't recovered from the devastation caused a decade ago by the Great Hanshin Earthquake. "The volume of cargo handled at the port has yet to return to the prequake level, and citizens' incomes have continued to decrease," said Takashi Miki, an official of the planning and adjustment bureau with the Kobe Municipal Government.

To give the local economy a boost, a plan has emerged to create a medical industry zone, designated by the central government in spring 2003 as a special zone for structural reform, or one where regulations are to be eased. Taking advantage of the concentration in the city of major pharmaceutical companies and research institutions, the municipal government aims to create Asia's largest medical industry base to help cope with an aging society.

A number of biotechnology-related venture companies are already in business on Kobe's man-made Southern Port Island. "It's easy to operate there because of understanding from the administration," a venture business manager said. The municipal government's target is to have more than 100 companies located there within 20 years, creating jobs for more than 40,000 people in the area, with annual production output totaling around ¥850 billion.

The government has already succeeded in attracting 69 companies and creating jobs for 1,200 people. "Kobe's effort appears to be very good. The Kansai (region's) economic community has to cooperate with it," said Satoshi Iue, chairman of Sanyo Electric Co., which is based in Moriguchi, Osaka Prefecture.

The Japan Times

EU-Japan Relations

Gateway to Japan encourages EU SMEs to 'think Japan'

EU Trade Mission on Food & Drink products shows large potential for the Japanese market

EU companies active in the Food & Drink sector have good opportunities to enter the Japanese market. A positive example of this is a recent Trade Mission (Tokyo, 27 September - 01 October) in the framework of the European Commission Programme EU Gateway to Japan. During one week, 42 EU SMEs from 10 EU Member States not only had the possibility to have individual business meetings with selected Japanese contacts, but also the opportunity to display their products during a Mini Trade Fair. 500 visitors from the Japanese Food & Drink industry saw a large diversity of products, such as organic food & drink products, ready-to-eat meals, confectionary, as well as alcoholic beverages and soft drinks. The Food & Drink sector is one of the most attractive sectors in the EU Gateway to Japan Programme, which is coordinated in Europe by EUROCHAMBRES. This is due to the fact that Japan, which is the world's largest net importer of food & agricultural products, depends on imports for around 60% of its food. Furthermore, the market opportunities for EU Food & Drink companies wanting to export to Japan are high for the following reasons:

- Recently, trade barriers to enter the market have eased, distribution has become simpler and more direct, and opportunities for creative marketers have increased.
- Due to more extensive contacts with foreign countries, Japanese taste and diet have expanded to include more western food.
- Europe has built up an image of 'Gourmet Europe', thereby increasing the awareness and raising interest for European products. Also, the number of food scares in the last few years has led Japanese consumers to look for safer foods, which European food & drink products can offer due to the strict import procedures and checks they undergo.

For more information on the campaign:
www.gatewaytojapan.org

Eurochambres

Peaceful uses of nuclear energy:

Commission proposes conclusion of cooperation agreement with Japan

The Commission adopted a recommendation to the Council to conclude an agreement on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy between Euratom and Japan. This

agreement completes the series of agreements existing between the three main users of nuclear energy, namely Europe, the USA and Japan. The agreement will provide a stable framework for the development of nuclear trade between the two Parties and for reinforced co-operation in other areas of common interest, such as research into nuclear fission and radioprotection.

The cooperation agreement with Japan on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy is of particular interest for the EU since it is the first to be negotiated with a country that is one of the main clients of the European nuclear industry. Co-operation between the EU and Japan will take place in the strictest compliance with internationally recognised rules. From the outset, the mutual desire to conclude such an agreement was affirmed at the highest level, dating back from the EU/Japan Summit in 1998. The priority of the issue was reaffirmed in the ten-year EU-Japan Action Plan adopted in December 2001. The agreement lays down the basis for a strong commercial relationship between the Parties, estimated at tens of billions of euros for the duration of the agreement. The agreement runs initially for 30 years (with the possibility of automatic extension for five-year periods), hence providing industry with the stable and predictable long-term framework needed to conclude and implement commercial arrangements in the nuclear field.

Moreover, the conclusion of the agreement reaffirms the commitment of Japan, the EU and its Member States to the strengthening and strict application of safeguards and export control. It is also an opportunity to recall the mutual commitment of the EU and Japan to a high level of nuclear safety, which is a matter of major concern for public opinion.

The Council will now examine the Commission recommendation in view of finalising the agreement.

Toyota celebrates 2.5 millionth vehicle 'Made In Europe'

Toyota announced that it has manufactured its 2.5 millionth vehicle in Europe, achieving a significant milestone in the company's European history and operations. Toyota manufactures all of its core models such as the Yaris, Avensis, Corolla and Corolla Verso in Europe, and expects to build 565,000 vehicles, 466,000 engines and 198,000 transmissions here this year. Toyota's manufacturing operations, supported and coordinated by Toyota Motor Engineering & Manufacturing Europe (TMEM) in Brussels, Belgium, count six manufacturing plants in five countries with over 12,000 employees. By 2005, Toyota will begin

EU-Japan Relations

production at two new plants: Toyota Motor Industries Poland (diesel engines) in Poland, and Toyota Peugeot Citroën Automobile Czech (vehicles), a joint venture with PSA Peugeot Citroën located in the Czech Republic.

Mr Shinichi Sasaki, President and Chief Executive Officer of TMEM said: "I would like to take this occasion to congratulate and thank all of the Toyota family members in our European manufacturing operations for their hard work and dedication to manufacturing the highest quality vehicles, engines and transmissions. I am confident they will continue to ensure our European plants maintain the highest standards of excellence in all aspects of production."

In May, Toyota announced it would increase annual production capacity at Toyota Motor Manufacturing UK (TMUK) from 220,000 vehicles to 285,000 Toyota Corolla and Avensis models. In early May, Toyota Motor Manufacturing France (TMMF) increased its annual production capacity from 184,000 to 210,000 Yaris models, adding 500 new employees.

With the current annual capacity of 150,000 vehicles at its Turkish Adapazarı plant (TMMT) and the planned capacity increase at TMMF and TMUK, Toyota will have a total maximum production capacity of 675,000 vehicles per year. In addition, Toyota and PSA Peugeot Citroën will start manufacturing 300,000 entry-level small passenger cars in the Czech Republic starting in 2005, of which 100,000 will be for the Toyota brand, named the Toyota Aygo. Toyota also has a transmission plant in Walbrzych, Poland - Toyota Motor Manufacturing Poland (TMMP) that has an annual capacity of 250,000 transmissions.

Toyota has invested € 728 million in TMMF, located in Valenciennes, France, which has been making the Yaris model since January 2001. The plant also assembles 30,000 diesel engines annually, in addition to 150,000 petrol engines, for the Toyota Yaris. TMMF currently employs 3,300 people.

www.carpages.co.uk

Japanese automobile manufacturers' contributions to Europe: their commitment to the sound progress of the automobile industry in Europe.

Currently, Japanese automakers operate a total of 18 production plants in 10 EU member countries, including some of the newcomers—Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic. The Japan Automobile Manufacturers Association (JAMA) members have also established 15 R&D bases in order to determine the specific market needs of Europe, develop vehicles that exactly meet

those needs, and expand their purchases of European-made auto parts.

Japanese automakers' production in the EU has risen steadily, reaching almost 1.25 million units in 2003. Since 2001, the JAMA members have produced more vehicles in Europe than they have exported to Europe. In fact, the European-made automobiles the JAMA members produce represent 60 percent of all Japanese-brand motor vehicles on sale in Europe.

Last year the JAMA members purchased a total of € 9.7 billion worth of European-made parts for the production of automobiles both in Europe and Japan. This is almost three times the value of their European parts purchases in 1995, and it is the best indicator of the close ties that have been established between Japanese auto manufacturers and European parts suppliers.

A JAMA survey shows that the Japanese automobile industry has invested a total of € 16 billion in business operations — ranging from production to distribution to marketing — throughout Europe, and has created jobs for more than 200,000 people. The JAMA members therefore believe that they are making more than a small contribution to the European economy.

And in doing business in Europe, most of the Japanese auto manufacturers are working hand in hand with European companies, as capital, technical or marketing partners. All these facts demonstrate clearly that Japanese automakers' activities in Europe are deeply rooted, making them full-fledged participants in the European economy. Japanese auto manufacturers are also determined to contribute to the further development of the European automobile industry by becoming one, so to speak, with Europe.

Through the application of advanced technologies and worldwide operational strategies, Japan's automakers continuously strive to produce automobiles that are distinctively appealing. Advanced technologies are necessary in order to satisfy customer needs and respond to safety and environmental requirements. Although the JAMA members are facing tough technological challenges in these areas, they are putting their best resources into R&D in order to benefit consumers.

These research-and-development efforts and the localization of the production and R&D operations will further strengthen the competitiveness of the European automobile industry. It is both the wish and the aim of Japan's motor vehicle manufacturers to work together with the European automobile industry in addressing the common challenges and the common future they share in terms of achieving sustainable mobility for the global community.

Edited from the speech of Mr Itaru Koeda, Chairman of JAMA, during JAMA Annual Reception on 27 October 2004

Focus on Belgium

Belgian delegation of athletes with a mental handicap heading for Nagano

After the Special Olympics World Summer Games 2003 held in Dublin, Japan will host the 2005 Special Olympics World Winter Games (26 February – 5 March). 2,500 athletes, 650 coaches, and thousands of families, volunteers, spectators and journalists from every continent will gather in Nagano for the first Special Olympics World Games ever hosted in Asia.

Special Olympics is a global movement which, through quality sports training and competition, improves the lives of people with mental handicap and, in turn, the lives of everyone they touch. The movement empowers people with a mental handicap to realise their full potential and develop their skills through year-round sports training and competition. As a result, Special Olympics athletes become fulfilled and productive members of their families and the communities in which they live.

One of the 80 national delegations participating is Special Olympics Belgium. A total number of 42 athletes, accompanied by 10 coaches will defend the Belgian honour in Nagano. It is a mixed team, consisting of athletes from the Liège, Antwerp, Mons and the Brussels region. They will give their best in alpine skiing (8 athletes), cross country (9 athletes), snowboarding (4 athletes), unified floorhockey (one team consisting of 4 players with a mental handicap and 3 valid players) and speed skating (5 athletes).

For all of the athletes the World Games will be their first visit to Japan. They arrive on 21 February in Tokyo airport with flight JL412 coming from Amsterdam. A warm welcome by the local community would be the start of an unforgettable sports experience for the Belgian athletes and coaches. If you are in Tokyo and would like to meet and greet with the delegation: this is your opportunity!

Before moving to Nagano they'll stay in a host town (yet to be announced) to prepare for the Games, rest and meet with Japanese people.

From 26 February till 5 March the Belgian delegation resides in Nagano for the World Games. Opening ceremonies will be held on the 26th in the Nagano Olympics Memorial Arena. At the same venue closing ceremonies will be held on 5 March. During the event everybody is welcome to come and cheer on the athletes, or lend a helping hand.

Volunteering for Special Olympics can create lifelong friendships and rewards of immeasurable value. As a Special Olympics volunteer you will take pride in knowing that you are an important part of a movement that changes lives and attitudes, promoting acceptance

and inclusion around the world. If you are interested or know somebody interested in helping the Belgian delegation, to translate, to accompany the athletes or just to cheer them on in Nagano, please feel free to contact Liesbet Marsoul, head of delegation or Luc Nera, sports director for Special Olympics Belgium on sports@specialolympics.be.

For more information on Special Olympics Belgium: www.specialolympics.be, on the World Winter Games: www.2005sowwg.com

Foreign trade and payments

In spite of the fact that exports did not increase as fast as imports, Belgium managed to obtain a wider trade surplus compared to the first quarter of 2003, thanks mainly to the intensified intra EU trade. The extra EU trade surplus' deficit increased slightly during the first quarter of 2004, but improved in the second quarter. The overall results have improved compared to last year.

Significant improvement as well for the export earnings: both intra and extra EU trade grew strongly, especially in the second quarter of 2004. The main reasons of this positive trend are the considerable increase in volume growth combined with the decreasing export prices.

Import payments increased in the first quarter of 2004, but did not reach the growth rate registered in the same period last year, on account of the slowdown in extra EU import payments, which was entirely caused by a contraction in import prices early in 2004.

The import volume continued to grow each quarter, with a substantial acceleration in the 2nd quarter of 2004, made possible by an improvement of the intra and extra EU import payments.

The current account shows a surplus of € 2.6bn for the first quarter of 2004: compared to the same period last year, there was an increase in the goods balance, a stagnation for the income balance, and a rather important decrease in the surplus on services. The deficit on the transfer balance remained unchanged compared to the first quarter of 2003.

The Economist's Country Report on Belgium

Belgian companies among Europe's fastest growing

'Europe's 500', a report listing the 500 fastest growing European companies, has identified a number of Belgian and Flanders-based companies as growing faster in terms of turnover and job creation than the average of their

Focus on Belgium

European counterparts, De Tijd newspaper reports. Compiled with the support of Microsoft and PricewaterhouseCoopers, the report is issued every three years with the recently published edition covering the period to the end of 2003. Some 24 Belgian companies appear on the list, with a total average job creation figure over the three years of 21% against the average European report figure of 15%. Cumulative growth in turnover of these companies reached 96% against a European report average of 54%.

Of particular note was the Belgian biotech sector, with biotech firms in the Top 500 creating an average of 634 jobs per company in the last three years as against the European average of 280 in the same sector.

Three Belgian companies appeared in the Top 25 of 'Europe's 500'. The Flanders-based pharmaceuticals distributor Omega Pharma was the highest-placed in fifth position. Second was the aluminum systems maker Aliplast in 19th and third was the biotech firm Eurofins Scientific in 22nd.

FFIO News

'Nobody knows' ('誰も知らない') awarded at Film Festival Gent

The Japanese director Kore-Eda Hirokazu was already successful a couple of years ago when he made the movie 'After Life'. This time his movie 'Nobody knows' was honored by the jury as the best movie at the Filmfestival Gent. Among 14 selected movies, 'Nobody knows' was selected as the number 1 at the Filmfestival.

In 'Nobody knows', based on a true story, 4 children are abandoned by their mother in Tokyo. When the mother leaves, all the work comes on to the shoulders of the 12-year old Akira (Yuya Yagira). He needs to take care of his two little sisters and his little brother. When Akira realizes that his mother might not come back, he smoothly assumes his role as the head of the family, while dealing with his own growing pains. Though the movie is bolted to the real world by many practical details of day-to-day life, and during the first hour is lensed in a realistic way, Kore-Eda imperceptibly creates a world that is increasingly bordered by just the kids' emotional horizons.

News from the Film Festival Gent

A beautiful art book about four centuries of Belgian-Japanese Exchanges

At the occasion of the four hundred birthday of Belgian-Japanese relationships and the Universal Expo of Aichi 2005, the general commissionership of the Belgian

government decided to publish a luxurious art book about 400 years of Belgian-Japanese relationships.

This masterpiece of 400 beautifully illustrated pages in four-colour print, clothbound hardcover is published under the supervision of Professor W.F. Vandewalle, Board Member of the BJA, and Professors Yoko Takagi and Tatsumori Isomi.

Starting from the Early Connections between the Low Countries and Japan, and the Relations between Japan and the Southern Netherlands during the Edo Period, it reminds us of the Opening of Japan and Belgium's Contributions. It presents the Artistic and Cultural Relations from the turn of the Century onwards, the First War and its Aftermath and describes the Japanese-Belgian Post-war Relations. Bibliography, Chronological Table, Diplomatic Chronology and Genealogical Tables of Reigning Families conclude a beautiful and detailed study of the cultural and economic relations between the two countries.

It is for sale at € 60 (instead of € 90) for one copy. Special conditions will be provided for orders per 25 or 100 copies. For more information, please contact the Belgian Commissariat General of Expo Aichi 2005 at expoaichi2005@mineco.fgov.be or 02/206 52 31.



Honda renews Ghent contract for 26 years

Honda Europe and the Port of Ghent have renewed the Japanese car manufacturer's concession for land at the port for a further period of 26 years. The first concession was signed in 1978 and in March 1979 Honda began operations at its Car Reception Center at the port. Some 3,414 ships have since delivered around 2.18 million cars to the center with 1.71 million of them coming from Japan, 384,000 from the UK and 81,400 from the US. Pre-delivery work to customer specifications is performed at the center.

Today, the center's role has expanded into motorbikes and equipment such as lawn-mowers, which, together with the cars, are distributed from Ghent to Benelux, France, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland. Honda also has a parts, instrument panel and power-train components production facility at Aalst in Flanders as well as a bumper painting plant. The facility has been in operation since 1966.

FFIO News

Investment Committee Report

Investment Committee – making the life of Japanese expatriates more comfortable

At the Investment Committee of Belgium-Japan Association and Chamber of Commerce, we have been looking at various ways to facilitate investment between Japan and Belgium. One of the issues is the immigration procedure for Japanese executives wishing to take up their assignments in Belgium. This issue has an impact not only on Japanese expatriates and their family members but also on investment that comes to Belgium. From the point of view of promoting inward investment, 'user friendliness' of the immigration procedure matters because, for foreign executives, it is often the first personal experience of the country and such experience could play a critical role in the decision making of a location of investment especially when conditions are similar among short-listed locations. The current immigration procedure for Japanese executives consists of obtaining a work permit and a visa before their arrival in Belgium, and registering themselves at a commune in which they decide to live after their arrival in Belgium. There has been much improvement in the process of obtaining a work permit and a visa recently and they seem to be less likely to encounter problems though there still is room for improvement.

Japanese executives and their family members are more likely to encounter problems when they go to a commune for registration. The quality - such as efficiency and friendliness - of the reception of foreigners at communes in Belgium varies a lot. In many cases, their registration goes smoothly. In some cases, however, the registration of newly arrived goes so badly that such experience could deter Japanese executives (or any other nationals) from viewing Belgium as a favourable investment destination.

In April 2004, we sent out a questionnaire to 35 communes where more than 10 Japanese are registered. 24 communes responded.

The results of the survey show, on the one hand, that some communes make considerable efforts to accommodate new comers. On the other hand, there still is a difference in documentary requirements among communes despite the guidelines set by the Federal Government. In the following paragraphs, you will see a summary of the results of the survey together with our comments and recommendations.

Problems often derive from communication

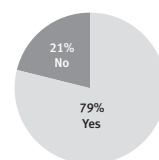
Most problems are related to how they are received when they go to communes rather than the substance of the registration process. Communication is often

pointed out as the main source of problems. We think that these issues could be improved by the following measures.

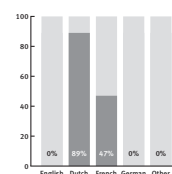
Providing information in English

Many communes these days provide information on procedure and service of the commune on an internet site. (Q1) However, they provide such information in the languages that many Japanese expatriates have difficulties in understanding. None of the communes surveyed has information on their web sites in English. (Q2)

Q1: Do you have an internet web site in which information on the procedure and service of the commune is described?
(% of the communes responded)



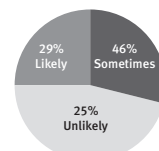
Q2: If yes, in which language(s) is such information provided?



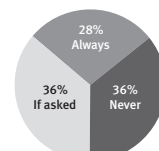
Introducing appointments systematically

Foreign executives could be upset if they have to queue for, say, even 10 minutes, which appears to be the case in many communes. (Q3) By introducing appointments, they would feel more comfortable with the process. In addition, it will enable communes to manage their resources more efficiently. In reality, only slightly more than a quarter of the communes surveyed make appointments systematically. (Q4)

Q3: Are applicants likely to queue and wait for more than 10 minutes?



Q4: Do you receive applicants by appointment?



Making the staff in charge helpful and friendly

If the staff in charge at a commune is not friendly and helpful, it could exacerbate problems. Foreign executives expect that they should be welcome and received as if they are customers for the commune where they have chosen to live.

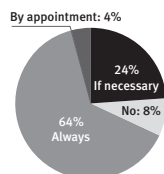
Investment Committee Report

It is also important that the staff of the administration of communes understand the psychology of newcomers. They are often worried about new foreign environment and regulations. Those who are from a country with relatively strict law-obeying tradition, such as Japan, will try to comply with the regulations to the letter and will be worried about any deviation even if such deviation or flexibility is a standard local practice.

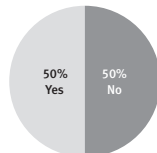
Anxiety in a foreign environment becomes particularly strong if the person is not familiar with the local languages, which is often the case in Belgium. Speaking English and preparing documents in English often improves the perceived quality of service by the commune.

More than 90% of the communes surveyed have capability to communicate in English. (Q5) In practice, however, a half of them expect an applicant to be accompanied by an interpreter if he or she does not speak the official language(s) of the commune. (Q6)

Q5: Do you have personnel at the window who could receive applicants in English?

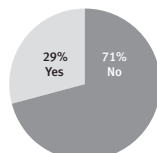


Q6: Do you expect Japanese to be accompanied by an interpreter if he or she does not speak the official language(s) of the commune?

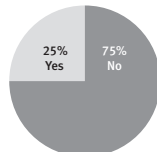


While the languages may be a significant impediment, about a quarter of the communes surveyed, provide a helpdesk to guide foreigners during the process of registration (Q7) as well as a function to help foreigners in settling in the local community after registration.

Q7: Do you have a person to guide foreigners during the process of registration such as a helpdesk in the commune administration?



Q8: Do you have a person or an organisation within or linked to the commune administration with the purpose of facilitating foreigners in settling down after registration?



Simplification of documentation is necessary

Among the documents required for the application of a work permit and a visa by Japanese nationals are a

medical certificate (for both) and a certificate of good conduct for the past five years (for a visa).

These documents could still be required at many communes despite the fact that the guidelines set by the Federal Government do not require them. (Q10) Apart from simply cumbersome, multiple submission could hinder the registration significantly. For example, the validity of the original certificate is regarded to have expired after three months or an expatriate may not have obtained the sufficient number of the original certificates for the entire process. The initial submission should be sufficient for the entire process of immigration formalities.

Furthermore, since these documents are not necessarily required by the neighbouring EU Member States, which are effectively competing for the same Japanese investment, it is hard to understand why to live and work in Belgium requires such documents from Japanese expatriates. Obtaining these two documents requires a time of a busy executive in person. If a Japanese executive has lived in several countries during the preceding five years, which has become frequently the case because of rapid globalisation of Japanese businesses, he or she has to obtain such certificates from all countries in which he or she has resided in the five-year period. It could take a long time and in some countries it requires the presence of the applicant in person.

Q10: Do you require a medical certificate or an attestation of good conduct at your commune?



Conclusion

It is fair to state that many communes surveyed make significant efforts to accommodate new comers. It is also true that some communes are going further than the others. When the competition among neighbouring countries is fierce for attracting inward investment, every small improvement will count.

We think it important to disseminate good practices implemented in some communes to other communes. It will improve the attractiveness of Belgium as investment destination not only towards Japanese companies but also other investors.

We shall continue our efforts in persuading Belgian governments at federal and regional levels as well as communes to provide a better reception of Japanese expatriates in this country.

投資委員会-日本人派遣者の受入れを改善するための活動

投資委員会-日本人派遣者の受入れを改善するための活動

ベルギー日本人会投資委員会の活動は、日本とベルギーの間の投資を促進することに焦点を当てています。最近取り上げた問題のひとつは、ベルギーへ派遣される日本人の労働許可証・ビザ取得、登録手続きの改善です。

この一連の手続きは、多くの外国人にとって派遣先国を実感する最初の機会となるため、手続きが親切であることは、派遣者と家族の負担を軽減するだけでなく、ベルギーへの投資判断そのものに影響を与える可能性があります。特に、ショートリストされた最終候補地間の条件が近接している場合、受入れ国の外国人に対する態度などの個人的体験が決め手となる可能性があります。

現在、日本人がベルギーに赴任する際の手続きは、まず労働許可証を取得し、次に、長期滞在ビザを取得した後、入国します。入国後、住む地域（コミューン）の市役所で住民登録し、身分証明書の交付を受けます。まだ改善の余地はあるといえ、労働許可証とビザの取得手続きは、近年かなり改善され、問題を起こすことは少なくなりました。

問題が起きやすいのは、日本人派遣者あるいは家族が、市役所において住民登録する時です。ベルギーの市役所における対応には、相当な差があり、多くの場合、円滑に進められるのですが、時には、大変おもしろくない経験をする結果、ベルギーに対して否定的なイメージを植え付けられてしまうことがあります。

2004年4月、投資委員会では、日本人が10人以上住んでいる35のコミューンの市役所に対して、手続き等に関する質問状を送り、うち24コミューンから回答を受け取りました。調査の結果を見ると、外国人受入れのためにかなりの努力をしている市役所が見受けられる一方で、連邦政府の決めたガイドラインを超える手続き上の差異が残っていることがわかりました。以下、調査結果の概要と投資委員会の意見や提案を紹介いたします。

問題の原因はコミュニケーション

市役所における問題は、外国人の住民登録手続きの内容に起因するというよりも、市役所における対応に起因することがほとんどであるといえます。特にコミュニケーションが原因であることが多いと指摘されています。日本語によるコミュニケーションを望むことは難しいせよ、英語による情報提供、対応を可能にすることで、かなり改善の余地があると思われる。

英語による情報提供。

多くの市役所は、インターネット・サイトを開き、市役所における手続きやサービスを紹介しています。(Q1 参照)しかし、提供されている情報は、オランダ語かフランス語で、英語情報を提供している市役所は皆無でした。(Q2 参照)

予約制の導入。

外国人派遣者は赴任直後に市役所における外国人登録に出かけるわけですが、その際、窓口には並ばなければならないとしたら、あまり気持ちよいものではありません。(Q3 参照)外国人登録に事前予約制を導入すれば、いつどこへ行けばよいのかははっきりするわけですから、最近赴任したばかりの外国人にとって、安心度は高まるといえます。市役所の側としても、窓口要員の効率的な配置が可能になるはずですが、実際には、調査に回答した市役所のうち四分の一が、常に事前予約を行っているに過ぎません。(Q4 参照)

窓口係員の対応改善。

窓口係員の対応が不十分であれば、小さな問題も深刻な問題に発展する可能性があります。外国人としては、初めて住む国の市役所が親切に対応してくれると、その国に対するイメージはずいぶんよくなりますから、市役所の係員が、新たに赴任してきた外国人の心理を理解することは重要です。新たに赴任してきた外国人は、見知らぬ外国の環境に慣れていないため、規則から少しでも外れることを心配する傾向があります。さらに、地元の言葉を話せない場合、不安は倍加される傾向にあります。市役所において英語でのコミュニケーションを可能にし、英文の説明書類を用意することで、市役所におけるサービスに対する外国人の評価はかなり改善すると思われる。

調査に回答した市役所の90%以上が、多かれ少なかれ英語で対応できる能力を持っているとしていますが、反面そのコミューンの公用語（フランス語あるいはオランダ語）を話せない人に対しては、通訳同伴を期待する市役所が50%あるというのが実態です。(Q5、Q6 参照)

多くの市役所で言語の壁がある一方、調査に回答した市役所のうち約四分の一は、外国人登録に来た人を案内するためのヘルプデスクを用意し、さらに、登録後外国人がその地域社会にとけ込むことを支援しています。(Q7、Q8 参照)

提出書類の簡素化

日本人がベルギーにおける労働許可証、ビザを申請する際に、医師の健康診断書（労働許可証、ビザ取得手続き）及び無犯罪証明書（ビザ取得手続き）の提出を求められます。連邦政府のガイドラインによると、この2書類は市役所における外国人登録の際には必要ないはずですが、実際には、相当数の市役所が提出を求めています。(Q10 参照)同じ書類をたびたび提出するのは面倒なだけでなく、書類の有効期間は3カ月なので、有効期間が切れたり、市役所提出分まで当初から用意しなかったなどの問題が生じる可能性があります。一連の入国手続きにおける書類提出は重複させず、一回で済ませて欲しいものです。

さらに、この2書類は、他のEU加盟国では必ずしも求められていません。日本からの投資に対しベルギーと競合関係にあるこれらの国で求められていない書類が、なぜベルギーで働くためには必要なのでしょう。この2書類は本人が医師や警察に行かなければ取得できません。また無犯罪証明書は、過去5年間居住したすべての国から取得することが求められているので、時間がかかるだけではなく、国によっては、証明書の申請に本人出頭を求めています。

結び

調査に回答したコミューン市役所の多くが、新しく越してきた外国人を受け入れるため、かなりの努力をしているという実態が判明しました。また市役所の中には、他の市役所に比べ一層の努力をしているところがあることも明らかになりました。日本企業が欧州各地に展開し、投資誘致競争が厳しくなっているため、少しの改善も重要なインパクトを持つ可能性があります。より良いサービスを提供している市役所におけるやり方を他の市役所にも伝えることが、日本企業のみならず外国企業全般にとってベルギーの投資先としての魅力と高めるために重要です。

投資委員会では、今後もベルギー連邦政府、地方政府、市役所に対し、日本人受入れ手続を一段と改善するよう発言して行くつもりです。

The YES Committee

Belgium-Japan Association (BJA), in co-operation with Belgium-Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce in Japan (BLCCJ), organizes every two years the YES (Young Executive Stay) Program, a commercial export project under the auspices of His Royal Highness Prince Philippe of Belgium. The objective of YES Committee is to support this program that aims to train young executives from Belgium and Luxembourg in successful Japanese business practices.

The first YES program was launched in 1998, and since last year, the YES Committee has been actively working to prepare for the YES IV Program, which will be held from 7 November until 20 November 2004. The participants of YES IV program had the opportunity to attend two briefing sessions in Belgium, followed by a two-week training program in Japan. The training program in Japan consists of 3 days of intensive seminar training and 10 days of introducing each participant to potential customers in his or her business area.

The YES Committee is organized by a team of dynamic Japan enthusiasts who have extensive experience in working in Japan or with Japanese companies. The Committee also seeks to organize several export seminars and export-promoting initiatives.

Chairman: Ann Blondé

日白協会兼商工会議所 (BJA) は日本のベルギー・ルクセンブルグ商工会議所 (BLCCJ) と協力し 'YOUNG EXECUTIVE STAY'、通称 'YES' という研修プログラムを催しています。このプログラムはベルギーのフィリップ皇太子殿下の御後援の下、日本への投資の促進活動の一貫として発足され、日本で2年毎に行われています。YES委員会では日本市場におけるベルギー並びにルクセンブルグ企業のビジネスの発展をこの研修プログラムを通じて支援しています。

第一回 YES プログラムは 1998 年に行われました。そして第四回目の今年は、11 月 7 日から 20 日の予定で企画されており、昨年からこの研修プログラムの準備にかかっています。今回選ばれた参加者の方々は既に 2 回にわたる説明会をベルギーで受け、来月 2 週間の日本研修に参加します。プログラムの主な内容は、最初の 3 日間に集中セミナーを行い、その後 10 日間に渡り、各参加者それぞれの事業分野毎に将来的な顧客の紹介をします。

YES 委員会は、日本とのビジネス経験豊かなエキスパートたちで構成されており、YES プログラムの他に、輸出に関するセミナーも企画運営しています。

委員長: アン・ブロンデ

BJA YES Committee members

Ann Blondé

Hello, I am Ann Blondé. I was born in Wilrijk on 24 February 1967 and graduated from Leuven University in 1988, Master in Japanese Studies. My personal history within BJA dates from my student years, when Mr J.A. Moorkens, former Vice President of the BJA asked me to become the founding chairman of the Youth Committee. After becoming mother of 3 children, my connection with the Youth Committee was, as you can guess, not so evident anymore. After a short career as assistant to the chairman of the Cultural Committee, I am now active in the Yes Committee and Editorial Committee. From a professional point of view, I have been working for more than 14 years for Blondé NV, and am now leading the communication agency of Blondé, called zeal.



Ann Blondé



Annelies Declerk



Fabienne L'Hoost

Annelies Declerk

At the moment I am Project Manager for the EU Gateway to Japan program and responsible for the Asian region within the International Affairs Department at EUROCHAMBRES. I have worked as Project Manager at the Belgium-Japan Association, at the Federation of Belgian Chambers and at a Tokyo-based PR agency. I hold a Japanese Studies Degree from the Catholic University of Leuven and a Master in Sociology from Sophia University, Tokyo. I lived more than 5 years in Japan and my interest in the country, its culture and its people still lives on in my passion for shiatsu!

Fabienne L'Hoost

After graduating from the University of Mons in 1988, I took part in an exchange program between that university and the Kyoto University of Foreign Studies in Japan, from April 1989 to March 1990, thanks also to a scholarship offered by the Belgium Honda Foundation. I was then hired by the Consulate General of Belgium in Osaka and worked for them for one year. Having returned to Belgium in August 1991, I luckily had the opportunity to almost immediately start a new job at the Belgium-Japan Association & Chamber of Commerce (BJA). Some of you may remember the former Executive Director! In 2003, after 12 enjoyable years, my career took a new turn as I was appointed Deputy Director General of the Belgian Agency for Foreign Trade. Our Agency is planning to co-organize a mission to Japan in

The YES Committee



Olivier Raimond

cooperation with the regional export agencies in June 2005 at the occasion of the World Expo in Aichi.

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Olivier Raimond

Marketing & Financial Director of Coris BioConcept.

After my Master Degree in Biology and Biotechnology, I was employed by a Belgian diagnostic company as R&D Responsible. After it bankrupted in 1994, I followed a Master in Business and Management and I joined an International French company as Marketing Area Manager. In 1996, we decided with another biologist to found CORIS BioConcept, with the aim of setting up a diagnosis concept as accurate as classical ones but much faster... I joined the company in 1999 as Marketing & Financial Director. Now Coris BioConcept, headquartered in the Crealys Scientific Park in Gembloux, is a high technology company in the biomedical field, producing and marketing diagnostic kits for the detection of human enteric pathologies and respiratory diseases. The company produces and commercialises two ranges of products: enteric (five products) and respiratory (three products). Fourteen people presently work for CORIS BioConcept. 80% of the turnover is achieved through export. CORIS BioConcept markets its kits in 50 countries, in Europe, Asia, South America, Africa and Oceania.



Robert Seghers



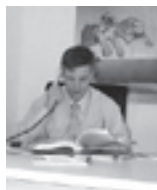
Daniel Stimmer



Takashi Suzuki



Karine Tollenaere



Jean Waucquez

Robert Seghers

In 1995 I joined the EU program in Japan (ETP), studying Japanese, Japanese business practices and enjoying internships at Meiji Seika, Toshoku (now Cargill) and Ajinomoto. After the ETP Program, I helped setting up the Tokyo based sales & marketing office of Cerestar, the company I was working for since 1991.

In 1999, I returned with my family back to Belgium, to join the family owned business SEGHERS better technology & life sciences Group, a company involved in environmental technology at one side and genetics & nutrition at the other side.

In the beginning I took care of the different environmental technology licence agreements with Japanese partners, such as Hitachi Metals, Hitachi Zosen, Mitsubishi Kakoki. Other strategic partnerships were concluded over the years. Later, I set up the Alliances Matrix, a new concept of creating business opportunities by teaming up, as technology provider, with big global contractors,

and identifying potential strategic investors in the Group.

Unfortunately the Seghers group went bankrupt in September 2002, and soon after, I joined Picanol as Director Corporate Development.

Since 1999 I am an active member of the Belgium-Japan Association and involved in the Yes Committee since then.

I studied Applied Economic Sciences (T.E.W.) at the UFSIA (Antwerp University), followed by a Masters in Marketing Management at the Vlerick Management School in Ghent. I am married and have 3 children (2 of them born in Tokyo: ichi hime, ni taro)

Robert Seghers

Tel.: +32 (0)476/46 04 47

Robert.seghers@pandora.be

Daniel Stimmer

Austrian, born in 1967 in Brussels, Belgium.

Between 1998 and 1991, I had some experience with customers on the Japanese market and especially in the textile industry. In 1991, I have founded BJ Trading sprl (Belgo-Japan trading company) with the aim of promoting Belgium and its products in Japan.

In 1993, thanks to the EU-Japan center, I took part in the H RTP (Human Resources Training Programme) organised in Japan by JETRO.

Today, our company exports mainly 'European consumer goods' to Japan, which are 30% made in Belgium and 70 % are European made.

Our company is focusing on 6 main sectors: Textile, fashion accessories, footwear, leather goods, furniture and some typical and exclusive foods.

For me, it is vital to continuously stay in touch with Japanese companies interested in Belgium, its products, its know-how and its tradition.

I'm every single day, since more than 13 years in contact with Japanese clients and the Japanese market.

This is one of the luckiest things in my life as I became very passionate with the Japanese culture and tradition. BJ Trading is member of the BJA since 1999 and I'm a member of the Yes Committee since 2000.

Daniel STIMMER

Managing Director

BJ Trading sprl

Tel.: 32 (0)2/513 36 37

Fax: 32 (0)2/513 63 13

The 'Nello & Patrasche' story

Takashi Suzuki

I am a director of JETRO Brussels, in charge of business promotion. My career at JETRO started in 1994. I used to deal with organizing International Trade Fairs, technology development cooperation to the industries in developing countries. Before assigned in Brussels, I was a representative of JETRO Lagos Office in Nigeria. Here in Belgium, I am trying to promote any business between Belgium and Japan, especially focusing on Belgian company's business investment in Japan.

Actually YES program is something very important for us because the program is designed for Belgian young business persons who can be the most important players in business between our 2 countries.

I really appreciate BJA's usual support toward us, we hope our collaboration continues for further development between Belgium and Japan's business scene.

Karine Tollenaere

Age: 36, living in Lokeren.

I am married and have a son of 3 years old.

I am working as key account and trade lane manager Far East with

DHL-Danzas Air and Ocean.

Japan is my favourite country to do business with.

Being one of the pioneers of YES I it is great to be a member of the YES

committee. The YES program is the perfect tool to motivate young people to

explore a fascinating country such as Japan. The place to be!

If you need more info you can contact me at my mobile: 0475/57 36 47

Jean Waucquez

I have a Master degree in Engineering, and am a former Managing Director and a founder of Barco Japan. I am also a former President of the Belgium-Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce (BLCC) in Tokyo. Currently I run a company called Whise.

Although well known among the Japanese, the 'Dog of Flanders' is ironically not known by the average Belgian.

'A Dog of Flanders' was originally written in English by the British female author 'Ouida' (Marie Louise de la Ramée) in 1872.

The little boy, 'Nello' (nickname for Nicholas), lost his mother in the Ardennes and was adopted by his grandfather, Jehan. He was very poor and lived in a miserable hut in a small village to the south of Antwerp (today assumed to be Hoboken). They made a living by bringing and selling the village farmers' milk at the Antwerp morning market. One day they found a poor dog ('Patrasche') abused and abandoned alongside the street to Leuven. Though extremely poor, the three of them lived happily as a loving family and Nello started to show talent in painting and began to aspire to becoming a great artist like Rubens. However, waves of misfortune arrived. Jehan died. Mr Cogez, the richest man of the village (and the father of Nello's best friend Alois), suspected Nello of setting his windmill on fire and kicked him out of his poor hut. He was then defeated in an art competition, the final single hope in his life. On Christmas Eve, torn in hunger, cold and despair, Nello and Patrasche went to the Antwerp Cathedral and were later found dead in front of Rubens's masterpiece.

Parallel with the Hachiko story

Those of us who have been to Japan will certainly recall a statue of 'Chu-ken Hachiko' (which means the faithful dog Hachiko), the most common meeting place at Shibuya's busy train and subway station. In the early 1920's, the young dog used to accompany his master Eisaburo Ueno, a professor of Agriculture at the Imperial University of Tokyo, everyday to the station when he left for work and awaited his return at the end of the day. One day in 1925 Mr Ueno unfortunately died before he returned home but Hachiko continued the routine faithfully until his death nearly 10 years later.

This story is extremely popular among Japanese, since it emphasizes the importance of faithfulness and loyalty, two qualities well appreciated in the land of the rising sun.

Via Nello and Patrasche, we believe that 'Ouida' also wanted to stress unconditional love and care for children, the weak and the poor.

The NP foundation

When our adopted Vietnamese son was diagnosed having serious cerebral palsy, we created in October 1997 the charity organization, The 'Nello & Patrasche Foundation', to support adoption of handicapped and sick children by people who are deeply involved in Belgian-Japanese affairs. We named it after 'A Dog of Flanders' because we strongly believe that the story communicates the

The 'Nello & Patrasche' story

importance of loving and caring families for children, regardless of nationality, religion and health.

The main fund-raising activity is the sale of our original greeting cards with images associated with Belgium and Japan. Many artists active in Belgium and Japan have contributed with their designs. Many companies and individuals in Belgium-Japan arena have been supporting us not only by the purchase of the cards but also by their production, transportation, sales, etc. Exceptionally, this year we are not creating new design cards. We do, on the other hand, welcome purchases of the existing stock cards!

In the past years, there have been more than a few proposals of developing Nello & Patrasche goods like chocolate. Finally last year, the 1st such project of four different charity wristwatches were realized, thanks to the initiative of Seiko Instruments Europe (SIE). SEI proposed, as a Japanese company located in Belgium, that they would like to contribute to Nello & Patrasche Foundation, the charity run by Belgian-Japanese group. They committed themselves during two years to realize the project by taking high risk of deficit and dead stock. It was decided that our watches would be sold at the Belgian Pavilion of Expo Aichi 2005! Any further ideas, proposals and help are always welcome from BJA members.

For more details, we invite you to visit our web site:
www.multilines.be/np

「ネロとパトラッシュ」の物語

日本人の間では、赤頭巾ちゃんやハイジ同様によく知られる物語「フランダースの犬」は、皮肉なことに、舞台となったベルギーではほとんど知られていません。

「フランダースの犬」は、1872年、英国人女流作家ウィーダ（本名 Marie Louise de la Ramée）によって英語で書かれた物語です。

アルデンヌで母を失い孤児となった幼い Nello (Nicholas の愛称) 少年は、貧しい Jehan じいさんに引き取られて、アントワープの郊外（ホーボーケンとされる）の粗末な家に住んでいました。二人は村の農家からミルクを預かり、アントワープの朝市で売り、その手間賃でなんとか暮らしていましたが、そんなある日、ルーヴァンへの道端で、金物屋にこき使われ捨てられていた瀕死の犬 (Patrasche) を助けるのです。極貧の中でも、2人と一匹は深い愛情で結ばれて助け合い、ネロ少年はいつかルーベンスのような大画家になることを夢見て描きはじめます。しかし不幸の波が押し寄せます。頼りの Jehan じいさんが亡くなり、村一番の富豪 Cogez 旦那（親友 Alois の父親）や彼にへつらう村人達から風車小屋に放火したとの嫌疑をかけられて村を追われ、最後に望みをかけた絵のコンクールでも優勝を逃したネロは、パトラッシュとともにクリスマスの晩、アントワープ大聖堂にたどり着き、ルーベンスの傑作を崇めながら飢えと寒さと失望に耐えかねて帰天する、

Nello & Patrasche Foundation a.s.b.l.
(Michiko Kurita & Pascal Willain)
ネロとパトラッシュ基金
(栗田路子&パスカル・ウィラン)
www.multilines.be/np
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という深い悲しみに満ちたお話です。

忠犬ハチ公の物語

ところで、東京に行ったことのある人なら誰でも、渋谷駅の待ち合わせ場所の代名詞、「忠犬ハチ公」の銅像をご存知でしょう。

ハチ公はまだ2歳足らずの秋田犬で、旧帝大農学部教授であった上野英三郎氏の愛犬として、毎朝ご主人を渋谷駅まで見送り、迎えることを日課としていました。上野氏は1925年のある日、出先で亡くなったのですが、ハチ公はそれから10年近く、自らが亡くなるまで一日も休むことなく毎日駅でご主人の帰りを待っていたというのです。忠義・忠誠を重んじる大和魂の国で、ネロとパトラッシュのお話と同様に、忠犬ハチ公がこよなく愛されていることは言うまでもありません。

ただ、作者ウィーダが「ネロとパトラッシュ」を通して伝えたかったのはむしろ「子供達、弱いもの、貧しいものへの無条件の愛情とケアの大切さ」なのではないかと私達は考えます。

「ネロとパトラッシュ基金」について

「ネロとパトラッシュ基金」- 障害孤児の養子縁組を支援するチャリティ - は、1997年10月、ベルギーと日本に縁の深い私達家族とその仲間によって設立されました。直接のきっかけとなったのは、私達自身がベトナムから養子に迎えた息子が、脳性マヒによる重症心身障害児であったことでした。この基金を「フランダースの犬」にちなんで名づけたのは、このお話が、どんな子供にとっても「無条件の愛情とケアのある家庭」が大切だと訴えているからです。たとえ、その子がどこの国の出身であろうと、その親がどんな宗教を信じていようと、その子にどんな障害があろうと。

私達の Fund-raising 活動の中心は、毎年秋にベルギーや日本にちなんだオリジナル・カードを開発・販売することで、日本とベルギーの多くのアーティストの方々から絵柄を提供していただいています。毎年、カードのお買い上げはもちろんのこと、カードの制作、輸送、販売などにおいても、多くの日伯関連企業・個人の方々のご協力を得ています。今年度は、残念ながら、新作カードの発売はお休みですが、在庫にあるものは販売しています。

これまでも、チョコレートなどのライセンスグッズを造ろうというお申し出はいろいろありましたが、昨年とうとう、その第一号が発売されました。「フランダースの犬」チャリティ腕時計4種の登場です。これは、セイコー・インスツルメンツ・ヨーロッパ (SIE) からのご発案で「在ベルギー日本企業としてぜひ協力したい」と、利益どころか大幅な赤字・在庫を覚悟の上で2年がかりで実現したものです。この時計は愛知万博2005のベルギー館でも販売されることになりました！今後もBJAの皆様からのアイデア、ご提案、ご協力を心より歓迎します。

詳しくは、ホームページまたは直接お電話でご連絡ください。

Youth Committee news

Hanabi (Fireworks Contest and Sand Sculptures Festival), 21 August 2004

On Saturday, 21 August, we went to Blankenberge in order to view the Sand Statues Festival. There, we had the opportunity to admire a lot of sand sculptures representing famous Italian monuments. We then spent some time together at the seaside where we shared some Japanese sake and talked a lot! Around 9 pm, we finally enjoyed the fireworks contest in Duinbergen. Italy, the challenging country of the day, offered us a wonderful and really impressive fireworks show! We then returned slowly to Blankenberge, using the very well organized tram transport. The well-known Belgian rain worried us in the morning but luckily, it stopped just before our BJA-YC event. So, we were glad that the whole event took place under a very beautiful sky!

8月21日(土)、私たちは砂像祭を見学するために、Blankenbergeに行きました。
そこで私たちは、有名なイタリアのモニュメントを模したたくさんの砂の像を観ることができ、とても感激しました。その後で、海辺に繰り出し日本酒を酌み交わしながら、たくさんおしゃべりをしてみんなで一緒に楽しいひと時をすごしました。
午後9時ころ、ついに Duinbergen の花火コンテストが始まりました。その日のチャレンジングな国、イタリアが、すばらしく印象的な花火のショーを見せてくれました!それから私たちはよく整備されたトラムでゆっくり Blankenberge に戻りました。朝は心配だった有名なベルギーの雨も、私たち BJA-YC のイベントが始まる直前には止み、晴天の下で全日程を無事執り行うことができ最高な一日でした。

Walk in the Autumn Forest, 24 October 2004

On Sunday, 24 October, the BJA organized an event in the Soignes Forest, just outside Brussels, which included a walk and picnic under the colourful trees. By starting our walk at the ancient abbey of the 'Rouge Cloître', we were able to discover some historical facts about this magnificent forest. After walking through some parts of the forest, some members of the group tasted fresh water from one of the famous springs. Soon after this everyone realized they had developed a hearty appetite. Snacks, biscuits and onigiri were passed around. People enjoyed the foods and the chats. Eventually the group ended up back at its starting point, having crossed a number of attractive bridges and having also passed by some picturesque lakes. Just as we arrived back the infamous Belgian weather decided to remind us of its presence.



Youth Committee news

10月24日(日)、私たちはブリュッセルの近郊にあるソワーニュの森にて紅葉の中の森の散策とピクニックを楽しみました。

古い修道院 'Rouge Cloître' からスタートし、この美しいソワーニュの森に関わる深い歴史にも触れることができました。又、森の湧き水を飲む参加者の方もいました。

さらに少し散歩を続けたあと、各自持参した手作りのクッキーやおにぎり、お茶などをみんなで一緒に頂きました。ベルギーらしい天候ではありましたが美味しいスナックに会話も弾み、ピクニックの後は、いくつかの橋を渡り、美しい湖のそばを歩いてスタート地点に戻りました。

Contact BJA-YC

For any questions, or additional information:

Olivier (YC Chairman)

Tel.: 0476/32 62 73

BJA青年委員会へのご連絡

ご質問やお問い合わせは:

Olivier (青年委員会 委員長)

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BJA Youth Committee

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<http://www.bj-yc.be>



In the front you can recognize Van Beneden Olivier, Mariko Kano, Van Den Bussche Henri, Ms Sato and Ronse Thomas enjoying a steep climb.



Of course a good walk through the forest should be accompanied with a picnic with foods brought by the participants and the BJA YCOM.

Personalia and sponsors

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