



THE 27TH EU-JAPAN BRT ANNUAL MEETING WAS HELD IN BRUSSELS

16 April 2026, Brussels - The 27th Annual Meeting of the **EU-Japan Business Round Table** (or “BRT”) took place in the European Commission’s Berlaymont headquarters and was co-Chaired by Dr. Nobuhiro Endo (Executive Advisor, NEC Corporation) and Jeremy Grossas (Representative Director & President, Merck Biopharma Japan).

Iwao Horii (State Minister for Foreign Affairs), Toshiro Ino (State Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry) and Takuo Imagawa (Vice-Minister for International Affairs) delivered the keynote address from the Government of Japan, and Kerstin Jorna (Director-General, DG GROW) gave the welcome address from the European Commission.

The meeting featured in-depth discussions on three key issues for the EU and Japan – global trade, economic security and industrial competitiveness. It also adopted the BRT’s recommendations to the EU and Japanese Authorities. In due course, the 2026 Recommendations will be submitted to the Government of Japan and to the European Commission.



After a session devoted to a report from the BRT’s ad hoc Defence Task Force, the meeting concluded with remarks by Ambassadors Aikawa and Paquet.

During the same week, other EU-Japan related events were also organised including the EU-Japan Industrial Policy Dialogue.

To mark this, participants from the BRT, the EU-Japan Bioeconomy Working Group and the EU-Japan Defence Industrial Dialogue came together for a reception co-hosted by the EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperations and the Japan Machinery Center for Trade & Investment.



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JOINT EU GREEN MISSION SHOWCASED ADVANCED GREENTECH IN TOKYO

Started in 2025 as a collaboration between the EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation and the EU Business Hub, the initiative returned with an even stronger presence at Smart Energy Week / Sustainability Management Week in Tokyo.



From 17–19 March 2026, around 60 European companies active in renewable energy, circular economy, and other green technology sectors showcased their solutions at the joint EU Green Transition Pavilion. The pavilion attracted strong interest from exhibition visitors, with European Greentech solutions often regarded in Japan as a global benchmark for innovation and sustainability. To support business development, individual meetings were arranged alongside the exhibition and could be booked in advance through an online matchmaking platform. Companies selected through either the EU-Japan Centre or the EU Business Hub programme benefited from online pre-departure as well as on-site briefings.

On the day before the fair, the EU-Japan Centre, JETRO and the EU Business Hub jointly organised the EU-Japan Green Transition Seminar & Networking Event, bringing together around 150 participants from Europe and Japan.

The programme featured presentations and pitch sessions highlighting European and Japanese perspectives on green transition-related business and innovation opportunities, alongside networking and face-to-face business meetings between participating organisations.

Another highlight was the EU-Japan Green Transition Reception, organised by the same partners as the seminar/networking event, together with the fair organiser RX Japan, which provided participants with further opportunities to strengthen business connections in Japan's rapidly growing green innovation ecosystem.

The next Green Mission is planned for March 2027. In addition, both the EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation and the EU Business Hub continue to organise similar business missions across a range of industrial and technology sectors.

➔ <https://www.eu-japan.eu/events/green-mission>

A LOOK BACK AT ÉTIENNE DAVIGNON'S LINKS TO JAPAN

Étienne Davignon, a former Belgian diplomat, EU Commissioner and industrialist died on 18 May, aged 93.



BRT co-Chairs Tadahiho Sekimoto & Étienne Davignon greet EC President Romano Prodi at the first BRT annual meeting - 1999 (left photo)
BRT co-Chairs: Étienne Davignon and Yotaro Kobayashi; PM Junichiro Koizumi; European Council President Bertie Ahern and European Commission President Romano Prodi - 2004

In 1984, as Commission Vice President, he attended the first Commission-Japanese Government ministerial meeting, having helped negotiate an agreement on wide-ranging Japan-EEC cooperation in 1983. He was a prominent member of the Trilateral Commission, an NGO created to foster cooperation between North America, Western Europe and Japan.

When the EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation was created in 1987, he became the co-Chair of its Supervisory Board together with Shoichi Akazawa the then JETRO President. Mr Davignon remained the Centre's co-Chair until 2000.

In 1994, given concerns from European industry leaders and the European Commission about the lack of a structured dialogue between Europe and Japan he worked with NEC's Chairman Sekimoto to establish a round table to "constitute a key instrument for open discussion between Japanese and European industrialists on problems where a convergence of interests or a need for in-depth examination is likely to emerge". It would "make recommendations to Japanese and European public authorities on the selected topics; address, in addition to more general subjects, bilateral sectoral issues" and

facilitate the "development of joint projects". In 1998, the EU-Japan Industrialists' Round Table merged with the EU-Japan Business Forum to create the EU-Japan Business Round Table (or "BRT") which Mr Davignon co-chaired until 2005.

Mr Davignon received several orders of merit including the Japanese Order of the Rising Sun, 2nd Class in 2006 for his contribution to strengthening economic ties between Japan and the European Union (the citation mentioned his former roles as EU Co-Chair of the BRT and Vice-Presidency of the Commission) and was granted the Belgian title of Count in 2017.

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS: WCM OCTOBER 2026 – 56TH EDITION

Applications are now open for the 56th edition of the EU Japan Centre's World Class Manufacturing (WCM) mission.

If you are a professional passionate about lean manufacturing and process improvement, working in a European company, this is your chance to join an esteemed programme that promises hands-on learning, valuable networking, and insights from Japan's manufacturing excellence.

Over five intensive and highly practical days, you will:

- Gain first-hand insight into Lean Thinking, TQM and TPM
- Visit leading Japanese factories and suppliers
- Discover how continuous improvement is applied on the ground
- Exchange experiences with peers from across Europe
- Reflect on learnings and how to apply them within their own organization

Application deadline 8 July 2026

Any questions? Please check our WCM Programme FAQ

Contact: Follow-up_training@eu-japan.eu

For more information and to apply

➔ <https://www.eu-japan.eu/events/world-class-manufacturing-mission-1>



TESTIMONIALS FROM WCM FEBRUARY 2026 - 55TH EDITION



"This mission gave me a profound perspective on Japanese organisational culture and how efficiency and discipline are lived out daily, not just displayed on walls. The factory visits were eye-opening: I witnessed firsthand how culture shapes every process, every interaction, every decision on the shop floor.

I'm returning home with a concrete plan: I will redesign the production floor layout and relocate operational management directly to the shop floor, where decisions matter most.

The most important lesson I took away is that everything starts with culture. If you manage to build the right culture, implementation follows naturally.

My advice for future participants is to be curious and keep your eyes wide open. Japan rewards attention to detail.

The next step for INNO Robotics is to concretely assess the prospects of entering the Japanese market".

By **DUMITRU-COSMIN IOANES**

Manager at INNO Robotics SRL, Romania

➔ <https://www.inno-robotics.com>

"This mission was an inspiring and eye-opening experience. Throughout the week, I was deeply impressed by Japanese work culture, especially its strong discipline, respect, responsibility, and genuine commitment to continuous improvement.

Seeing the Toyota Production System in action, clear flow, visual management, standard work, and hands-on problem solving was extremely valuable. The creative workplace ideas and the remarkable consistency in following processes gave me many new perspectives and fresh energy.

Back home, I will focus on bringing this mindset into our daily operations, strengthening culture, establishing clearer processes, improving team discipline, and fostering a lasting Kaizen spirit.

These elements are essential to make improvements sustainable. My key takeaway from the mission is that true excellence comes from mindset and culture, not from tools alone. My advice to future participants: stay curious, observe carefully, and learn from every detail. A big thank you to the WCM team for this truly inspiring mission."

By **ULRICH STROMMER**

LEAN Expert at Rational AG, Germany

➔ https://www.rational-online.com/en_xx/home

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS: DIGITAL SOLUTIONS BUSINESS MISSION TO JAPAN 2026

The Digital Solutions Business Mission 2026 will take place 13-16 October in Japan.

Apply for a chance to participate in CEATEC 2026, held at Makuhari Messe near Tokyo, Japan's largest trade fair dedicated to digital innovation. The 2025 edition drew nearly 100,000 attendees, 810 exhibiting companies and organisations, and 222 conference sessions.

Application deadline: 18 June 2026.

➔ <https://www.eu-japan.eu/events/digital-mission>

The mission targets European SMEs, clusters, as well as large companies, active in industrial IoT and edge computing, industrial cybersecurity, engineering software and digital twins, applied AI, and other advanced digital fields. Participants must offer mature, demonstrable solutions with clear industrial applications. Up to 16 companies will be selected.



The EU-Japan Centre will provide exhibition space under a shared booth, tailored 1-to-1 meetings with Japanese counterparts, interpretation services, hotel accommodation, and two preparatory online training modules in September. Participants cover their own travel and living costs.

FORTHCOMING DEFENCE BUSINESS MISSION TO JAPAN

Japan's Defence Transformation: a growing opportunity for European Industry.



Japan's defence sector is undergoing its most significant transformation since the postwar era, driven by a challenging regional security environment, an ambitious rearmament programme, and a deliberate effort to diversify industrial partnerships — including with Europe. The pace of Japan's defence build-up has accelerated sharply under the Takaichi cabinet which is also working to revise core security documents by the end of 2026, representing a shift to more active deterrence and international security engagement. Perhaps the most consequential development is the formal lifting of Japan's postwar ban on lethal weapons exports. The Cabinet approved a two-category framework distinguishing lethal systems (warships, tanks, missiles) from non-lethal equipment (radars, protective gear). Exports will initially be limited to 17 countries, including several European states

with defence equipment and technology transfer agreements with Japan. The revision removes five restrictive export categories; decisions on individual sales will henceforth be assessed on their merits. The **EU-Japan Security and Defence Partnership**, concluded in November 2024, covers maritime security, cyber defence, hybrid threats, space, and defence industrial cooperation. The first **EU-Japan Defence Industry Dialogue** took place on 17 April 2026, with both sides confirming strong interest in enhancing defence supply chain resilience and advancing cooperation in dual-use sectors. Concrete cooperation is already emerging. Finland and Japan entered negotiations on a defence equipment transfer agreement, building on Japan's decision to procure Patria's AMV XP under a licensed production arrangement — a model likely to attract other EU companies.

Japan has **shown interest** in engaging with European defence industrial initiatives including co-development in unmanned systems, missile defence, and maritime surveillance. The country's export liberalisation also creates a new dynamic.

Japan is no longer merely a recipient of allied defence equipment — it is becoming a co-developer, manufacturer, and exporter in its own right. The combination of record defence spending, a landmark export reform, a maturing EU-Japan institutional framework, and an explicit policy of industrial diversification an opening for EU companies across aerospace, naval systems, cybersecurity, and dual-use technologies.

The **Centre's Japan Tax & Public Procurement (JTPP) Helpdesk** and the **Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) Japan** service are supporting this momentum by organising the second edition of the Defence Business Mission to Japan from 27-30 April 2027, offering 16 EU companies the opportunity to explore the Japanese defence market firsthand and exhibit their solutions at the **3rd DSEI Japan Exhibition**.

A call for participation is expected in the Fall. ➔ <https://www.eu-japan.eu/events/defence-mission>

EU-JAPAN CENTRE BIOTECH BUSINESS MISSION TO JAPAN: **TWO SUCCESS STORIES**

Below abstracts are part of the interviews held with the companies' executives. Please visit the EU-Japan Centre website to learn more about the companies' challenges in the Japanese market and their advice to European SMEs targeting Japan.



APPLICATIONS FOR THE CENTRE'S 2026 BIOTECH MISSION TO JAPAN ARE OPEN UNTIL 19 JUNE !!



PL BioScience is a German biotech SME founded in 2015 in Aachen, building on research conducted at RWTH Aachen University. The company specialises in Human Platelet Lysate (HPL), a cell culture supplement derived from human platelets that provides cells with the growth factors they need to proliferate efficiently in laboratory conditions. [...]

Why Japan?

Japan's leadership in stem cell science made it a natural target market. Following the Nobel Prize-winning discovery by Professor Shinya Yamanaka of Kyoto University in 2012, Japan became one of the most advanced countries in

the world in stem cell research and regenerative medicine. [...]

For nearly two years, the company explored entry options without finding a clear path forward. The turning point came through a German accelerator programme, which facilitated introductions to multiple Japanese companies and organisations. [...]

The EU-Japan Centre's Support

The EU-Japan Centre's **Biotech Business Mission 2025** — including participation in the Osaka Partnering Conference — helped the company obtain PMDA certification, which as a foreign company is a complex process. [...] The company highlights several aspects of the mission that were particularly valuable:

- A well-organised partnering programme — The structured approach to pre-arranged meetings, with detailed company profiles made available in advance, allowed PL BioScience to identify and meet the right counterparts efficiently.
- Access to end-users and the wider ecosystem — Site visits to science parks and biotech hubs provided an on-the-ground understanding of Japan's life sciences landscape, the structure of its value chain, and where the company's products could best fit.
- Continuous improvement — Having participated in the mission on multiple occasions, the company noted a consistent year-on-year improvement in the programme's organisation and quality.

Text based on an interview with **JUNGSOO PARK**, Vice President of Marketing and Sales.

Continues on: ➔ <https://www.eu-japan.eu/eubusinessinjapan/library/publication/success-story-pl-bioscience>



Founded in 2016, **Iktos** is a French global leader in AI and robotics for drug discovery. Its generative AI technology designs molecules in silico, optimized to meet all key success criteria of a discovery project. With over 60 successful projects to date, Iktos is also advancing its own pipeline of drug candidates in oncology, obesity and metabolism, inflammatory and autoimmune diseases. [...]

Why Japan?

Iktos identified Japan as a strategic market from early on.

The first connection came in 2020, when Teijin Pharmaceuticals reached out looking for a partner with advanced capabilities in AI for drug discovery. After initial discussions for a potential strategic collaboration, a formal agreement was launched in early 2022 and ran until mid-2024 — a significant milestone.

Around the same time, Iktos started a business relationship with Ono Pharmaceutical.

These two partnerships provided a strong foundation and demonstrated that the Japanese market was the right fit. [...]

As Japan became an undisputed priority market, a local subsidiary was established: Iktos KK, based in the Greater Tokyo area in Chiba, to better serve its

growing base of customers and partners, with Hideyoshi Fuji as Representative Director.

EU-Japan Centre's Support

Iktos benefited from the EU-Japan Centre's support through participation in the 2024 **Biotech Business Mission** to BioJapan Yokohama, the leading trade fair in Japan.

Mr. Gaston-Mathe, CEO and co-founder, and Mr. Fuji, Representative Director, took part in the mission and were hosted at the Centre's pavilion, gaining visibility with key Japanese industry players and access to targeted business-to-business meetings.

Text based on an interview with **YANN GASTON-MATHE**, CEO and co-founder, and Hideyoshi Fuji, Representative Director.

Continues on: ➔ <https://www.eu-japan.eu/eubusinessinjapan/library/publication/success-story-iktos>

7TH EU-JAPAN HIGH-LEVEL ECONOMIC DIALOGUE

On 7 May 2026, the EU and Japan held their 7th High-Level Economic Dialogue (HLED) in Brussels.

Importantly, this was the first time the Dialogue took place in its reinforced format, allowing to expand its focus to cover cooperation on trade and industrial policy as well as on economic security. During the Dialogue, both sides appreciated their long-standing strategic relationship and shared their commitment to further reinforce it. Both sides reiterated that the EU-Japan is a partnership based on trust, openness and fairness and reconfirmed their commitment to rules-based international order.

This includes their ongoing efforts to reform and support multilateral fora such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), as well as to cooperate under plurilateral initiatives, including at the G7 and through dialogue between the EU and the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership. Moreover, sharing views on the situation in the Middle East, both sides underscored the importance of well-functioning, stable, and transparent energy markets and reaffirmed the importance of secure and uninterrupted trade flows, including the safety of navigation and the protection of critical maritime routes and infrastructure.

Importantly, the Ministers discussed several pressing challenges that the EU and Japan share. They expressed their concerns over all forms of economic coercion applied by third countries. In particular, they regretted the recent expansion of unjustified export restrictions and reiterated the importance of ensuring that export control measures are narrowly defined, non-discriminatory, and in line with international law and practice, so as not to disrupt strategic supply chains, notably those for critical minerals. They also expressed their serious concerns about the use of non-market policies and practices that are leading to harmful overcapacity and market distortions.

In this context, the EU and Japan reaffirmed their commitment to jointly work on enhancing supply chains and thereby to deliver on the EU-Japan Competitiveness Alliance established at the EU-Japan Summit in July 2025, in particular by strengthening complementarities and building resilient and secure markets in strategic products, notably in critical minerals, batteries, clean tech, clean energy including offshore wind, hydrogen and solar, steel, robotics and biotech, defense and space industry, building on the work in the relevant bilateral fora as well as events including those held in the EU-Japan business and Industrial Week.

They also acknowledged the ongoing discussions between the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) on their cooperation. Ministers also welcomed the progress achieved through the matchmaking sessions for the Strategic Projects under the EU Critical Raw Materials Act (CRMA) reiterated their intention to explore support to realize additional joint critical mineral projects between the EU and Japan.

Acknowledging the significant advancements of the MoU between Battery Association for Supply Chain, European Battery Alliance and RECHARGE based on the EU-Japan Competitiveness Alliance, Ministers will implement policies to promote both industries' collaboration for further enhancing supply-chain resilience in batteries including organizing opportunities for battery industries in both sides to explore real business chances. Building on the Memorandum of Cooperation signed last year among Japan's Green Transition Acceleration Agency, JETRO and InnoEnergy, both sides also intend to advance initiatives such as providing support for startups engaged in innovation in both sides.

Ministers reaffirmed the role of the **EU-Japan Business Roundtable** as a place of policy exchange and as an investment platform to facilitate business projects between Europe and Japan.

Moreover, following on the Leaders' call at the 2025 Summit and building on their shared commitment to enhance cooperation on economic security and address critical dependencies and systemic vulnerabilities, the Ministers concurred on reinforcing the EU-Japan cooperation under the upgraded EU-Japan Working Group on Economic Security and Related Emerging Trade and Economic Issues, highlighting the need for closer engagement on the promotion and protection of critical and emerging technologies. This cooperation will encompass joint work on technology transfer risk assessment, mitigating measures, coordinated responses and structured engagement with private sector and technology holders. Both sides will aim at promoting this cooperation within the G7 and to other like-minded partners.

In the context of Japan's concerns about the EU's proposed measure on steel, both sides concurred to continue discussions, in consideration of the EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement and the WTO-covered agreements, while stressing that stronger global action is needed to tackle global steel overcapacity.

Both sides exchanged views on their respective industrial policies to seek a mutually beneficial solution and will continue discussions towards maintaining and further enhancing free, open, inclusive and transparent trade and supply chains between the EU and Japan, especially in the automobile and battery sector, consistent with international rules.

EU AND JAPAN ACCELERATE COOPERATION ON AI, DATA, QUANTUM AND CHIPS

At the fourth meeting of the EU-Japan Digital Partnership Council held on the 5 May 2026 in Brussels, the European Union and Japan agreed on new steps to deepen regulatory, research and industry cooperation on data, AI, quantum, semiconductors, digital infrastructure and online platforms.

These steps will improve cross-border data flows, advance interoperable digital identities and strengthen cooperation on research, platform regulation and digital infrastructure while delivering tangible benefits for citizens and businesses.

Data governance and data flows: to improve data sharing, the EU and Japan deepened discussions on the joint development and interoperability of data spaces.

Artificial intelligence: as global leaders in frontier AI, the EU and Japan are working together to ensure that emerging technologies serve the public good while maintaining their competitive edge.

They welcomed the agreement on the future association of Japan to Horizon Europe, which will accelerate joint research, including in digital areas such as AI. They also committed to conclude a Cooperation Arrangement to deepen collaboration on AI research and innovation, as well as AI safety.

Quantum: the Letter of Intent, signed in 2025, has enabled deeper cooperation in quantum science and technology. The EU and Japan welcomed the launch of the joint research project Q-Neko. This project brings together European and Japanese partners to advance hybrid

computing environments and explore quantum-enabled solutions.

Semiconductors: on semiconductors, the EU and Japan confirmed their intention to address challenges posed by non-market policies and practices, as well as supply chain dependencies in critical sectors. They also encouraged further exploration of collaborative research opportunities in next-generation semiconductor technologies.

The fifth meeting of the Digital Partnership Council will take place in Tokyo in 2027.

Source: European Commission ➔ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_26_978

DEEPENING EU-JAPAN QUANTUM COOPERATION: FROM RESEARCH TO STRATEGIC INNOVATION

Quantum technology has become a key priority under the EU-Japan Digital Partnership, reflecting its growing role in enabling industrial innovation and next-generation computing applications. Cooperation has advanced steadily in recent years through initiatives such as Q-Neko, demonstrating the deepening and increasing maturity of bilateral engagement.



EU-Japan collaboration is guided by the Digital Partnership launched in 2022 and the Memorandum on quantum science and technology signed in 2025. At its core, Q-Neko represents the first joint quantum technology project between the EU and Japan. It is supported by Japan's Strategic Innovation Promotion Program (SIP) and, on the EU side, by Horizon Europe and the EuroHPC Joint Undertaking, supporting the development of next-generation computing infrastructures and practical applications.

The Q-Neko kick-off meeting in Helsinki in February 2026 brought together leading research institutions and companies from both regions. Discussions covered high-performance computing (HPC), quantum computing (QC), hybrid approaches, and integration with artificial intelligence (AI), highlighting future directions for advanced computing systems and emerging use cases.

Cooperation has also expanded through joint workshops, researcher exchanges, and coordinated research activities, fostering trust and sustainable networks.

Building on these foundations, Q-Neko strengthens collaboration through resource sharing, technological roadmap development, and the advancement of quantum-ready applications relevant to industry and scientific use cases.

EU-Japan quantum cooperation is now entering a more strategic phase, involving industry and policymakers alongside researchers, while addressing shared challenges such as standardization, economic security, and responsible innovation. With growing applications in materials, energy, telecommunications, and manufacturing, both sides are expected to strengthen their role in global innovation ecosystems. The EU and Japan have long been natural partners in science and technology. As cooperation deepens, both sides are expected to leverage complementary strengths across research, industry, and policy to advance global development based on openness, security, and trust.

Source: Cabinet Office, Government of Japan

EUIPO LAUNCHED NEW EU-JAPAN INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ACTION

The European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) has officially launched the EU-Japan intellectual property (IP) Action, on 27 April 2026 in Tokyo, marking the first cooperation on IP between the European Union and Japan. The Action aims to enhance the protection and promotion of IP rights through technical cooperation, policy dialogue, and industry engagement between the European Union and Japan.

The event drew policymakers and industry figures to map out a shared agenda for IP cooperation amid rapid technological changes. Mr. João Negrão, Executive Director of the EUIPO, highlighted the importance of a robust IP framework in fostering innovation and protecting creators in a globalized market. *“Today’s event marks a milestone: the official launch of the EU-Japan IP Action. As the first dedicated cooperation project on intellectual property between our two regions, organised by the EUIPO and co-funded by the European Union, it carries real promise – for trade, for innovation, and for growth on both sides.”*

Mr. Thomas Gnocchi, Deputy Head of Mission at the EU Delegation to Japan, welcomed the launch of the intellectual property project with Japan, at a time when Artificial Intelligence (AI) is reshaping industries and societies. It will benefit both the EU and Japan as we have engaged in a Digital Partnership to align our respective strengths to foster technological progress and fair competition. The Action will support cooperation on key topics from tackling IP enforcement in the digital space, using AI in IP and providing support to SME’s.

Keynote speeches were delivered by Mr. Yasuyuki Kasai, Commissioner of the Japan Patent Office (JPO), Mr. Hirohiko Nakahara, Secretary-General of the Intellectual Property Strategy Headquarters and Mr. Antonio Berengue, Deputy Director, International Cooperation, EUIPO. The speakers collectively underscored that the “new phase” of this cooperation will focus on streamlining IP processes and ensuring that the legal landscape evolves alongside industrial advancements.

Source: Delegation of the European Union to Japan

➔ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/japan/euipo-launched-new-eu-japan-intellectual-property-action_en

EU AND JAPAN DEEPEN CLIMATE COOPERATION AT HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE

At the High-Level Dialogue on Climate Change between the European Union and Japan, held in Brussels on the 26 March 2026, senior officials agreed to deepen their bilateral co-operation, working together towards achieving climate neutrality and tackling shared economic and geopolitical challenges.

The meeting was opened by Kurt Vandenberghe – Director-General for Climate Action at the European Commission and DOI Kentaro, Vice-Minister for Global Environmental Affairs at the Ministry of the Environment of Japan.

During the dialogue both sides reaffirmed their resolve to uphold multilateralism and their unwavering commitment to the Paris Agreement and the need to scale-up climate action in this decade, to reduce emissions with a view to keeping the limit of 1.5°C temperature rise by the end of the century within reach.

The EU and Japan discussed the implementation of their 2030 Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) as well as their NDCs for 2035 and 2040 in the case of Japan. Both sides agreed to join efforts to ensure a successful COP31 in Antalya later this year.



They also agreed to advance the implementation of the Paris Agreement’s ambition cycle including through international cooperation on the preparation and delivery of NDCs and Biennial Transparency Reports (BTRs) for parties that have not delivered them. The EU and Japan recalled the first of its kind Green Alliance launched between the EU and Japan in May 2021 and reviewed opportunities to work together to support each other respective climate agendas. In particular, they agreed to promote bilateral exchanges during 2026 on industrial decarbonisation, climate adaptation, carbon pricing and carbon credits, carbon capture use and storage, sustainable finance, as well as climate action at sub-national level. Source: European Commission

➔ https://climate.ec.europa.eu/news-other-reads/news/eu-and-japan-deepen-climate-cooperation-high-level-dialogue-2026-03-24_en

YOUR JAPAN SUCCESS STORY DESERVES TO BE SEEN!

DG TRADE is looking for EU companies with successful export experiences in Japan

The European Commission regularly highlights concrete success stories of EU companies that have expanded internationally, including in Japan, by making use of the opportunities created by EU trade policy. For companies active on the Japanese market, these stories are a valuable way to showcase how they entered or developed their presence in Japan, what challenges they faced, and how EU tools or the EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement may have supported their journey.

DG TRADE is therefore particularly interested in hearing from EU companies with a positive export experience in Japan. Companies willing to share their story can contact DG TRADE with a short description of their export journey, the market opportunity, the main challenges encountered and the support or EU framework that helped them along the way.

Your export success deserves to be seen !

Share how your company grows internationally with the support of EU trade agreements and inspire other businesses to do the same !

- Gain visibility
Be featured on an official European Commission platform
- Showcase impact
Highlight markets reached, growth achieved and concrete results
- Build credibility
Strengthen trust through a recognized institutional spotlight
- Inspire others
Help more European businesses see what is possible

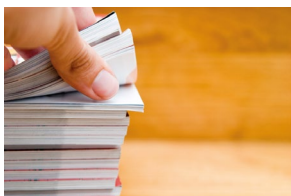


Interested ? Let's tell your story.
Contact us at: TRADE-EXPORTERS-STORIES@ec.europa.eu

DG TRADE will then assess the story and, where relevant, follow up with the company to prepare a short article for publication. A recent example is the Estonian company **Artisan Honey, Baltic buzz in Japan - Trade and Economic Security** which illustrates how EU businesses can successfully build opportunities in Japan.

Contact details: TRADE-EXPORTERS-STORIES@ec.europa.eu

Source: European Commission



REPORT ON THE EU-JAPAN EPA'S IMPACT

An Ex-Post Evaluation impact report commissioned by the European commission was released in May 2026 following a 1 year and half long research.

Overall, the analysis suggests that the EU-Japan EPA has largely achieved its core economic objectives, particularly in terms of tariff liberalisation, trade expansion, enhanced economic relationship, protection of intellectual property rights, and macroeconomic gains.

However, while progress has been significant overall, it has been uneven across policy areas, with some objectives not having been fully met (e.g. on regulatory aspects affecting trade in goods, SME engagement, and trade in services) and some having been only partially realised (e.g. in investment flows, government procurement participation, and the utilisation of trade preferences).

Moreover, while the Agreement has also recorded positive sustainability-related results, there is room for improvement and further dialogue and cooperation, notably in the environmental area, within the EPA and other existing forums.

The Agreement has increasingly served as a platform for cooperation on wider economic and sustainability issues, including industrial policy, supply-chain resilience, digital transformation and economic security. It has thus become one of the pillars of a broader partnership between the EU and Japan, alongside initiatives such as the High-Level Economic Dialogue, the EU-Japan Green Alliance, the High-Level Dialogue on Environment, the Working

Group on the Circular Economy, the Digital Partnership, the Informal Dialogue on Consumer Policy and bilateral symposia on labour-related issues.

The Agreement has generated positive macroeconomic effects for both Parties. Economic modelling indicates that the EPA increased EU GDP by approximately €13bn annually and Japanese GDP by around €23.6bn annually.

The complete +250 pages report and annexes are available online. The Executive Summary can be downloaded **directly here**.

Source: European Commission

➔ https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/analysis-and-assessment/ex-post-evaluations_en

ACCESS2MARKETS - EXPORTS & IMPORTS MADE EASY

The Access2Markets website has been recently revamped with improved visuals and functionalities.



In October 2020, the European Commission launched the Access2Markets website to help EU businesses navigate and understand the many regulations related to trade and to provide tools on how to benefit from the various Free Trade Agreements the EU has with foreign countries. Today, the revamped Access2Markets offers simple, practical guidance to companies looking to export outside the EU or import into the EU, making it easier to understand and use the opportunities created by EU trade agreements.

By sharing clear, step-by-step tips on tariffs, rules of origin, procedures and market requirements, Access2Markets is a go-to tool for businesses seeking practical, reliable information for their day-to-day international activities.

For example, with the “My Trade Assistant” tool, a simple search by product name or HS code will provide practical examples and clear explanations about rules of origins and other aspects linked to a free trade agreement active with the target foreign country.

The website does not only cover physical products, but also trade of services, and public procurements.

Of course, the website contains detailed information about trading regulations with Japan and about the EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement. The use of the website is free of charge and accessible in any official language of the EU.

Source: European Commission

➔ <https://trade.ec.europa.eu/access-to-markets/en>

JETRO'S SURVEY ON JAPANESE-AFFILIATED COMPANIES IN EUROPE FY2026

Japanese-affiliated companies face high costs and geopolitical risks but expect easing of sustainability related regulations.

Released on March 2026, the purpose of JETRO's annual survey is to identify actual conditions in the activities of Japanese-affiliated businesses operating overseas and to provide the results to a wide range of Japanese companies and policymakers.

- Companies forecasting “profit” in 2025 declined slightly in Europe as a whole, but there was a strong performance in Central and Eastern Europe, supported by manufacturing.

- The number of companies expecting “expansion” as their future business direction increased only slightly.
- There are more companies working on human rights due diligence and decarbonization activities, but fewer preparing or planning to do so.
- CSRD and PPWR have a significant impact among sustainability related regulations in Europe; deregulation is expected to reduce costs and burdens.

- Significant increase in attention to AI regulation, and significant increase in the use of AI, with more than half already using it.
- “High labor costs” largest operation challenge in Western Europe
- Poland is a promising sales destination for seventh consecutive year: ongoing trend of procurement from country of location or neighbouring countries.

Source: JETRO

➔ <https://www.jetro.go.jp/en/reports/survey.html>

JAPAN AND ESTONIA RENEW DIGITAL COOPERATION

On 27 April, Japan and Estonia have renewed their bilateral digital cooperation agreement, strengthening collaboration in artificial intelligence, cybersecurity and digital governance.

The Memorandum of Cooperation was extended during the visit of Estonia's Minister of Justice and Digital Affairs Liisa-Ly Pakosta to Tokyo. The signing ceremony took place at Japan's Digital Agency together with Japan's Minister for Digital Transformation Matsumoto Hisashi, who is also responsible for digital administrative and fiscal reform and cybersecurity.

The partnership between the two countries began in 2022, when then Japanese Minister for Digital Transformation Karen Makishima and minister Andres Sutt signed the original agreement in Estonia. Since then, cooperation has expanded through practical exchanges and dialogue between the two digitally advanced nations.

One key initiative included the dispatch of a Digital Agency expert from Japan to Estonia for an extended period.

The exchange allowed Japanese officials to study Estonia's internationally recognised digital governance system, while also sharing Japan's own experiences in digital transformation and public administration reform.

The renewed memorandum aims to further deepen cooperation in areas such as AI, cybersecurity and resilient digital infrastructure.

Officials from both countries highlighted the importance of trusted international partnerships as governments increasingly face challenges related to technological change, data security and digital resilience.

Estonia is widely recognised for its advanced e-governance ecosystem, while Japan has accelerated its digital transformation efforts in recent years through the establishment of the Digital Agency and broader administrative reforms.



The renewed agreement reflects growing cooperation between Japan and European partners on digital policy, innovation and secure data governance, as both countries seek to strengthen resilient and human-centred digital societies.

Source: Embassy of Estonia in Tokyo

➔ <https://www.digital.go.jp/en/news/1587abef-8522-46a5-a6fe-fb88b528e142>

EU-JAPAN CITIES FOSTER STARTUP ECOSYSTEMS

Under the EU's International Urban and Regional Cooperation (IURC) programme, European and Asia-Pacific cities are strengthening cooperation through the Community of Practice on "Economy in Cities – Start-ups, Innovation Ecosystems and Branding."



The initiative brings together leading innovation hubs from Europe, including Grenoble Alpes Métropole, Warsaw, Espoo, Torino, Leuven, Bielsko-Biala, Tallinn and Cork, with Nagoya City serving as the lead Japanese city, alongside Melbourne in Australia and other non-EU partners.



The cooperation focuses on common challenges faced by deep tech ecosystems: attracting international investors and growth capital, fostering entrepreneurial and business talent, and strengthening technology transfer from universities and research institutions to commercial applications. The participating cities aim to exchange practical experience on how local and regional governments can support startups, scale-ups, innovation districts, and future-ready ecosystems.

Nagoya contributes as a major industrial and deep-tech hub, building on its strengths in automotive, aerospace and robotics, as well as the Central Japan Startup Ecosystem Consortium,

Nagoya University, STATION Ai, Nagoya Innovator's Garage and other innovation platforms. The roadmap foresees online technical exchanges, joint seminars for startups, and the development of a collaborative network of technology events connecting Europe and Asia.

Planned study visits will further deepen cooperation. A visit to Nagoya is envisaged for mid-December 2026, including exchanges with universities, innovation hubs and participation in TechGALA JAPAN. A reciprocal visit to Grenoble is planned for February 2027, with a focus on the city's research-to-industry model, startup support structures and Tech&Fest.

Source: International Urban and Regional Cooperation Programme - IURC - Japan branch ➔ <https://www.iurc.eu>

JAPAN-SLOVENIA POSTAL COOPERATION REACHES NEW MILESTONE

Another milestone was reached in early 2026 in the cooperation between Slovenia and Japan in the postal sector.



This collaboration takes place at several levels, both governmental and business-to-business, and reflects the shared interest of both countries in the modernisation of postal services. At government level, the Japanese Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) and the Slovenian Ministry of the Economy, Tourism and Sport, held high-level meetings for several years, exchanging information on the rapidly changing postal sector from the perspective of regulators.

At business level, Toshiba has supplied several parcel sorting machines to the Post of Slovenia (PS) over the past eight years. On 26 February 2026, a new mixed mail sorting machine was deployed at the Ljubljana Postal Logistics Centre of the PS and an inauguration ceremony took place.

During the inauguration ceremony attended by high level authorities, several speakers emphasized the positive cooperation between Slovenia and Japan in the postal services sector.

HE Akiko Yoshida, Japanese Ambassador to Slovenia, said that Toshiba's technology contributes to the public service that supports the lives of Slovenian citizens. She hopes that the partnership between the PS and Toshiba will further strengthen the relationship between the two countries and create new opportunities in the future.

Yasunari Ueno, Director, International Affairs Office, Postal Services Policy Department, MIC, mentioned that the Universal Postal Union, which is the UN specialised agency responsible for international postal cooperation and development, awarded Japan with the Postal Excellence Award in 2025. Toshiba's sorting machines support the country's postal reliability, vast network and culture of meticulous service.

Ivana Vrvišćar, a PS board member, said that PS has recently taken a major step towards fully automating the sorting of letters and packages. PS recognises that it can only remain competitive and provide modern, high-quality services to its users by continuously investing in technology, digitalisation and infrastructure.

Iwao Tsuji, Toshiba's Executive Director, said that its postal automation systems division has a history of almost 60 years. Currently, more than 1,000 of its devices and systems are in operation worldwide. The TT-2000 sorting machine is a new device developed by TSB that can sort two types of shipment - flats and letters - and will contribute to the efficiency of PS operations. Source: Barbara Rovani

MALMÖ DELEGATION JOINS SUSHI TECH TOKYO AND G-NETS

On 27-29 April the City of Malmö, Sweden, attended **SusHi Tech Tokyo** together with a Nordic delegation led by Business Sweden and Nordic Innovation House.

SusHi Tech, which first launched in 2023 by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, is Asia's largest global innovation conference. Their aim is to foster solutions for sustainable cities together with innovators from around the world.

From Malmö, two startups who are launching their business in Japan joined the delegation. **Imvi Labs**, who develops VR-tools for functional sight and reading training, is now collaborating with several schools in Japan. **OpenPoint**, who develops a platform for digital versions of physical assets and environments, has recently opened an office in Fukuoka. Also joining the delegation was **Malmö's Japan Business and Innovation Hub**, which works to promote strong innovation ties between Japan and Sweden.

Held in parallel with the innovation conference was the City Leaders' Summit at **G-NETS – the Global Network for Sustainability** – where city leaders, policymakers, and experts from more than 50 cities around the globe proactively exchanged insights and skills to spark collaboration within sustainable urban development. Malmö's Director of Business and External Relations, Mr. Micael Nord, participated in a panel on decarbonization, showcasing the city's active collaboration with civil society and the business sector in tackling climate change. This marks the third time that the City of Malmö has attended the City Leader's Summit, and the second time at SusHi Tech Tokyo.

Source: City of Malmö



Micael Nord with Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike

FINESTJAPAN BOOSTS NEW GREEN TECH SMEs' EXPORTS FROM FINLAND AND ESTONIA TO JAPAN

Green Net Finland and Tehnopol Science and Business Park (Estonia) arranged a joint trade mission to Tokyo with green/health tech SMEs in April 2026. A total of 9 companies were along: SYKLI Environmental College, Ecomiles and Helsieni from Finland, and Ayren, Lumos Strategies, Fienta Ticketing, Airi Solutions, Kontorva and Spinnistart from Estonia.

The goal of the export mission was to introduce the SMEs in Japan and to enable new business cooperation for the participating organizations with Japanese businesses. The business meetings in Tokyo were assisted by the consulting company Ciriote Inc. The FINESTJAPAN project and companies joined with the cities of Helsinki, Espoo, Malmö, Copenhagen and Stockholm, and with the Nordic Innovation House and the Kiraboshi bank in a joint Nordic-Baltic presence at the SusHiTech Expo - the largest sustainable and smart city expo in Asia.

The mission program included familiarizing with the Japanese market and business culture, a visit to the Tokyo Innovation Base, as well as various smaller networking and company pitching events.



FINESTJAPAN is a European Union co-funded development project running during 2024-2027 led by Green Net Finland and Tehnopol Science and Business Park. The project aims to build commercial partnerships between Finland, Estonia and Japan in the field of green technology and ICT by connecting growth-oriented SMEs with partners and customers in Japan. The main focus areas are: Green technology; AI and digitalization; Health technology.

Contact in Finland: ilkka.aaltio@gnf.fi Mr. Ilkka Aaltio, Project manager, Green Net Finland, Helsinki. Contact in Estonia: anu.puusaag@tehnopol.ee Ms. Anu Puusaag, Smart Tech Manager, Tehnopol, Tallinn.

Source: Green Net Finland Oy ➔ <https://centralbaltic.eu/project/finestjapan/>

ITALIAN PAVILION AT SUSHI TECH 2026

The Italian Trade Agency (ICE) organized, for the first time, an Italian National Pavilion at SusHi Tech Tokyo 2026, one of the leading international events dedicated to technological innovation and smart cities, held at Tokyo Big Sight on 27-29 April 2026.

The initiative aimed to promote Italian startups and innovative SMEs in the Japanese and international markets, highlighting Italy's growing ecosystem in sectors such as artificial intelligence, smart cities, IoT, cybersecurity, sustainable mobility and smart construction.

Nine Italian companies participated in the collective exhibition, presenting cutting-edge technological solutions and taking part in networking activities, B2B meetings and pitching sessions with investors, corporates and institutions. The participating companies were: Athlos, Digitarca, Electe, Icarus, Koala, Lunocode, MLR srl, Take Over Rilievi Integrati and TimelapseLab. The Italian participation was supported by a dedicated communication campaign managed by the ICE Office in Tokyo, including a Japanese-language webpage, a digital company catalogue and promotional activities on major social media platforms.

Organized by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, the event gathered more than 57,000 participants from around 100 countries and regions in its previous edition, confirming its role as one of the world's most dynamic hubs for urban and technological innovation.

Source: Italian Trade Agency Tokyo Office



➔ <https://ice-tokyo.or.jp/events/italy-at-sushi-tech-2026/>

PUNTO ITALIA AT SPEXA 2026

The Italian Trade Agency (ITA), in coordination with the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, and the Italian Space Agency (ASI), supported the participation of the Italian industrial sector in the initiatives planned within the framework of the ITALY-JAPAN SPACE CONSULTATIONS, which took place in Tokyo during the last week of May 2026.



The initiative formed part of the Joint Statement between the Italian and Japanese Governments, aimed at strengthening bilateral cooperation in the commercial, industrial, scientific, and security sectors related to space activities.

In this context, SPEXA – Space Business Expo, one of Japan's leading trade fairs

dedicated to the space industry and its applications, was held from 27 to 29 May 2026 at Tokyo Big Sight South Hall.

Organized annually, SPEXA serves as a key platform for business development and networking among companies, institutions, investors, and the research community.

The first Italian participation organized

by the ITA Tokyo Office / Trade Promotion Section of the Embassy of Italy represented a strategic opportunity to showcase Italian companies and organizations interested in identifying new industrial and commercial partners and strengthening their positioning within a rapidly expanding ecosystem supported by significant public and private investment.

Source: Italian Trade Agency Tokyo Office ➡ <https://ice-tokyo.or.jp/> ➡ <https://www.spexa.jp/tokyo/ja-jp/about.html>

ICCJ FLAGSHIP EVENT "ITALIA, AMORE MIO!" CELEBRATED 10TH EDITION AT ROPPONGI HILLS

On 6-7 June, Roppongi Hills Arena hosted the 10th edition of Italia, amore mio!, the flagship public event of the Italian Chamber of Commerce in Japan (ICCJ).

This milestone year carried particular significance, coinciding with the 160th anniversary of diplomatic and commercial relations between Italy and Japan — a dual celebration that underscored the depth and continuity of the bilateral partnership between the two countries. Since its launch in 2016, Italia, amore mio! has grown into ICCJ's most visible platform for connecting Italian excellence with the Japanese market.

This year's edition once again confirmed its role as a strategic showcase, where Italian companies across fashion, automotive, design, food and beverage, and lifestyle engaged directly with Japanese consumers, partners, and media in one of Tokyo's most prestigious commercial venues.

Over two days, attendees experienced a curated presentation of Made in Italy: premium brands, authentic regional cuisine,

iconic Italian drinks, and a continuous live program that ran from 11:00 to 20:00, featuring Italian and Japanese artists who embodied the cultural dialogue between the two countries. The arena welcomed a vibrant audience throughout both days, with visitors moving between exhibitor stands, tasting sessions, and the main stage in an atmosphere that captured the warmth and conviviality at the heart of Italian culture.

For ICCJ, this 10th edition reaffirmed its institutional mission: to act as a bridge between Italian enterprise and the Japanese market, fostering business opportunities, cultural understanding, and long-term partnerships. Italia, amore mio! proved itself once again to be more than a cultural festival: it stood as a concrete expression of how the Chamber supports the visibility and competitiveness of Italian businesses in Japan.

ICCJ extends its sincere thanks to its members, partners, performers, and the wider community whose participation made this milestone edition possible. With the success of the 10th edition, the Chamber looks ahead to continuing this celebration of Italian excellence in the years to come.



Source: Italian Chamber of Commerce in Japan

RECORD JAPANESE STARTUP PARTICIPATION AT NEXUS 2026

A record of 14 Japanese startups participated in “Nexus Luxembourg 2026” Luxembourg’s flagship technology and innovation event that took place on 10–11 June 2026 in Luxembourg City.

The participating companies represented some of Japan’s most promising deep-tech innovators across AI, robotics, mobility, healthcare, sustainability, and advanced manufacturing. By categories, participating startups included:

Data & AI

These companies are developing advanced AI solutions, data platforms, and quantum computing technologies for enterprise and research applications : **CuonCrop Inc.**, **Definer Inc.**, **Gigalogy Inc.**, **QunaSys Inc.**

Green & Climate Tech

These startups focus on biotechnology, energy efficiency, climate cooling, and sustainable innovation: **Emulsion Flow Technologies Inc.**, **Jikan Techno Co., Ltd.**, **MiiBio Inc.**, **MK PLUS Co., Ltd.**, **SPACECOOL Inc.**

Industry 4.0

These companies are driving innovation in smart manufacturing through advanced materials engineering, AI-powered digital production systems, precision robotics, and next-generation sensing technologies: **Archilys Inc.**, **Arum Inc.**, **Metasensing Inc.**

HealthTech & Digital Health

The company develops next-generation waterless hemodialysis solution: **Physiologas Technologies Inc.**

Smart Mobility & Autonomous

The company is developing open-source autonomous driving solutions: **TIER IV, Inc.**

During Nexus 2026, startups showcased their technologies through exhibitions, pitching sessions, and networking with European corporates, investors, and institutions, alongside an ecosystem tour of Luxembourg’s innovation hubs and incubators to foster cross-border collaboration.

Now in its third edition, Nexus Luxembourg continues to grow as a key European tech gathering, highlighting Japan–Europe collaboration and Luxembourg’s role as a gateway for Japanese innovation into Europe.

Building on the Nexus 2026 experience, the Luxembourg Trade and Investment Office Tokyo will host a “European Expansion Strategy for Startups” event on 10 July in Tokyo, featuring participating startups sharing first-hand insights, lessons learned, and practical strategies for European market expansion via Luxembourg. Source: Luxembourg Trade and Investment Office Tokyo

➔ <https://luxembourgtradeandinvest.com/ja-jp/our-international-network/ltio-tokyo>



LUXEMBOURG-JAPAN BUSINESS NETWORKING EVENT

10 JULY 2026, TOKYO, JAPAN

An event on European market expansion and Luxembourg–Japan business cooperation will take place in Tokyo.

Organised by the Luxembourg Trade & Investment Office and Belgo-Luxembourg Market Council, it will feature practical insights from companies active in Luxembourg and participants involved in Nexus Luxembourg 2026.

The event aligns with two key objectives: supporting innovative Japanese companies in establishing a presence in Luxembourg as a gateway to the European market, and assisting Luxembourg-based companies in developing business activities in Japan. The programme will feature speakers from Japanese companies already operating in Luxembourg, sharing practical experiences and lessons learned from their market entry and expansion. These insights aim to provide valuable guidance for organisations exploring international growth opportunities in Europe.



Source: Pasona Group ➔ <https://afternexusluxevent.peatix.com>

In addition, the event will gather a wide range of stakeholders, including representatives from governmental institutions, embassies, and the business community. It will offer a platform for dialogue, knowledge exchange, and the development of new partnerships.

Participants interested in EU–Japan cooperation, overseas expansion, and innovation are invited to attend and engage in networking and business matching opportunities during the event. The gathering provides a valuable occasion to connect with key actors and explore potential collaborations within the Luxembourg and European ecosystems.

BLCCJ NIPPON EXPORT AWARD 2026-2027

The Belgian-Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce in Japan (BLCCJ) is organizing the 13th edition of the Nippon Export Award.



With this prize the BLCCJ wants to reward SMEs or large companies that have made significant achievements in exporting to Japan, importing into Japan, or distributing within Japan, Belgian-Luxembourg products or services.

Where and when?

The application deadline is Friday 4 September 2026.

In September the BLCCJ will select 3 finalists who will be invited to make a presentation for a professional jury in October.

The winner will receive an award, can use "winner of the Nippon Export Award" and the logo on their materials, and will be commemorated with an award ceremony at the Belgian or Luxembourg Embassy before the end of the year.

Conditions for Application

- The award is open to any company exporting to Japan, importing into Japan or distributing within Japan, Belgian-Luxembourg products/services.
- Companies must have been actively exporting to Japan, importing into Japan or distributing within Japan for a minimum of 3 years.
- Previous winners can reapply 4 years after their last participation with a different brand or service.
- Applicants do not need to be a BLCCJ member.
- Companies without representative office in Japan are also eligible.

Selection Criteria

The winning company will have shown outstanding export achievements.

The selection criteria are:

- The presence in the Japanese market and the company significant achievement (either growth or size) in trade with Japan.
- Showing vision in new niche markets, daring innovation to embark on new opportunities.
- Perseverance in the conquest of the market, adaptation of the products and services to the Japanese taste and standards.
- Originality of approach (marketing, distribution, environment protection, design, research...)
- The company's spirit (marketing, merchandising...)

For more information, please contact the BLCCJ office: info@blccj.or.jp Tel: +81-(0)3-6457-8662 Source: BLCCJ

➔ <https://blccj.or.jp/nippon-export-award>

ITALIAN PAVILION AT INTERIOR LIFESTYLE TOKYO 2026

Interior Lifestyle (Tokyo Big Sight, 10-12 June 2026) is Japan's leading international trade fair dedicated to home furnishings and interior accessories, reserved exclusively for industry professionals. A key event for importers of high-end and upper-middle-range products.

Italian design is highly appreciated in Japan for its ability to combine quality, aesthetic refinement, functional performance and environmental responsibility. In this market, strong emphasis on sustainability and ergonomic design represents a significant competitive advantage and a decisive factor in product selection. The excellence of Italian craftsmanship in furniture and design is highly valued by end consumers, local architects, interior designers, and contractors.

Within this context, the Italian Trade Agency has organized a national pavilion (108 sqm, arranged across two exhibition islands) hosting eight companies, among the sector's leading representatives.

The Italian Pavilion showcased a carefully curated selection of products, including interior design accessories, plexiglass chairs, outdoor furniture, traditional wood inlay craftsmanship, and Murano glass lighting solutions.

On the morning of 11 June, at the Lifestyle Salon seminar area, in line with Italian Design Day 2026's theme - "RE-DESIGN: Regenerating spaces, objects, ideas, and relationships" - **Italian Design Japan (IDJ)**, the newly established non-profit association of Italian architects, designers, graphic artists, and creatives active in Japan, hold the conference "Re-designing Space and Ideas: The Italian Perspective".



As part of the broader mission to promote Italian excellence and strengthen international trade relations, Interior Lifestyle Tokyo 2026 has been selected as one of the strategic initiatives within **Opportunity**, the business acceleration program launched by ITA and the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. The program is designed to connect foreign buyers, distributors, and entrepreneurs with the expertise and excellence of Made in Italy, through a dedicated platform to encourage active participation in ITA promotional initiatives and support the development of commercial relationships with Italian companies.

Source: Italian Trade Agency Tokyo Office ➔ <https://ice-tokyo.or.jp/events/interiorlifestyle2026/>

MEET KYOTO: GLOBAL INNOVATION AND BUSINESS GROWTH AT VIVATECH

17-20 JUNE 2026, PARIS, FRANCE

Kyoto City will participate in Viva Technology 2026, one of the world's largest startup and technology exhibitions, to be held in France next week. Together with highly promising startups possessing cutting-edge technologies garnering global attention and strong growth potential, Kyoto is committed to accelerating their business expansion into the European market, particularly in France.

For many people around the world, Kyoto is synonymous with history, culture, and tourism. However, beyond this iconic image, Kyoto stands as one of Japan's leading academic and research hubs, home to numerous prestigious universities. Built on a foundation of traditional craftsmanship, Kyoto has consistently fueled innovation to spawn world-class global enterprises, creating a unique and globally connected business ecosystem. At this year's VivaTech, the city delegation will be showcasing four promising Kyoto-based startups seeking to expand into the European market, in fields such as decarbonization, AI, and deep tech.

The organizers look forward to highlighting the immense potential of Kyoto's startup scene and the city's vibrant business appeal.

Additionally, at the Japan Pavilion, over 30 startups from across Japan will take the stage throughout the three-day event. HORIBA, Ltd., one of Kyoto's globally renowned companies, will also present its initiatives in open innovation.

If you are a startup already expanding your business in Europe and are now looking to explore opportunities in Asia or build strategic networks in the region, the organizers warmly invite you to stop by Kyoto's booth to share your vision with them.



The organizers sincerely look forward to welcoming you to Kyoto soon. In the meantime, let's start a conversation about new business possibilities at VivaTech, they would love to hear your story.

Source: Kyoto City - Industry and Tourism Bureau, Business Attraction Promotion Office

➔ <https://investkyoto.city.kyoto.lg.jp>

➔ <https://kyotostartup.jp/en>

TOKYO BUSINESS SUMMIT 2026 TO BUILD PARTNERSHIPS AND OPPORTUNITIES ACROSS JAPAN

30 NOVEMBER - 2 DECEMBER 2026, TOKYO, JAPAN

Organized by the French Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Japan (CCI France Japon), in partnership with Nikkei Inc. and under the patronage of the French Embassy in Japan, the Business Summit stands as a key meeting point for economic stakeholders engaged between Europe and Asia.

The 2026 edition will take place on December 1st in Tokyo, under the theme: "Japan, the hub for strategic partnerships in Asia." The event will highlight Japan's role in fostering concrete partnerships in Asia, bringing together companies, decision-makers, and experts around operational challenges: collaboration, innovation, and scaling. For French and European companies, Japan represents a strategic gateway to develop projects in Asia within a reliable, structured, and sustainable environment. Japan stands out for the strength of its economic environment, the quality of its industrial ecosystems, and the depth of its relationships across Asia. It now represents a strategic anchor point for structuring collaborations between European stakeholders and Asian markets.



In addition to the main conference, the Summit also features several major side events, including:

- Gateway to Asia, a program designed to support companies and entrepreneurs from all countries and sectors in entering the Japanese market.
- Student Forum, a platform for dialogue between young talent and leading companies.
- Meet & Connect, a networking event dedicated to startups.

Source: CCI France Japon

➔ <https://www.cci.fr.jp/en/business-leaders-forum/business-summit-0611/japon-tremplin-asie>

EUROPEAN INNOVATORS GATHER AT EU PAVILION, WHX OSAKA 2026

30 JUNE - 4 JULY 2026, OSAKA, JAPAN

The EU Business Hub will make its inaugural appearance at World Health Expo Osaka 2026, hosting the EU Pavilion to connect Japanese companies with leading European innovators.

EU BUSINESS HUB
Japan



Located in Hall 6, Zone B (booth B-1502), the pavilion will feature approximately 50 European SMEs and start-ups selected for excellence in products, technologies, resources, and strategic approach.

Exhibitors will showcase advanced solutions across Digital Health and Health IT, Medical Equipment and Devices, Imaging and Diagnostics, Pharmaceuticals and Drug Development, Regenerative Medicine, Disposables and Consumer Goods, Manufacturing and Design, Healthcare and General Services, and Wellness and Prevention.

The initiative aligns with Japan's Society 5.0 vision and ongoing digital transformation in healthcare, addressing challenges posed by a super-aging society and enabling access to transformative European technologies and expertise. The participating companies aim to offer solutions tailored to the Japanese market and to foster long-term, strategic partnerships.

To encourage collaboration, the EU Business Hub will join networking receptions on 1 July at Quintbridge providing informal settings for exhibitors, attendees, and industry leaders to meet, exchange ideas, and explore partnerships. Prospective Japanese partners are strongly encouraged to register on the b2match and WHX platform, which facilitates pre-scheduled, one-on-one meetings with European companies visiting Japan specifically to identify new opportunities.

Registration enables tailored matches aligned with business needs, direct access to cutting-edge European innovations, and efficient advance planning for meetings, maximizing the impact of participation.

Visitors to the Pavilion will have the opportunity to experience European innovation first-hand, connect with visionary companies, and discuss potential collaborations; professional interpreters will be available to ensure seamless communication.

Additional information is available from the Delegation of the European Union to Japan and the EU Business Hub.

[Register here](#) for the Matchmaking Event on 1 July.

[Register here](#) for Business Matchmaking at World Health Expo Osaka 2026 (2-4 July).

Source: Deloitte

➔ <https://japan.eubusinesshub.eu/en/missions-catalogue/eu-business-hub-world-health-expo-2026-0>

ENGINE FORUM KOBE 2026 PROMOTES INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION IN NEXT-GENERATION ENGINES

17-18 NOVEMBER 2026, KOBE, JAPAN

"Engine Forum Kobe 2026" will be held at the Kobe International Exhibition Hall in Japan. Organized by advanced business events (abe), the forum is strongly supported by local governments and organizations, including Hyogo Prefecture and Kobe City.

This year, the forum focuses on "Next-Generation Engines and Turbines" utilizing new energy sources, aiming toward a carbon-neutral society by 2050. Key topics include decarbonization, electrification, hydrogen technology, and green energy.

The event serves as a platform to discuss common technological challenges and business opportunities across various industries, such as aerospace, maritime, automotive, and power generation.

The exhibition will feature numerous companies possessing outstanding technologies and products. Attendees can expect to discover advancements not only in the precision machining of aircraft engine parts but also in high-performance materials for extreme environments, 3D printing technologies, and hybrid system controls. By bringing together domestic and international engine manufacturers, suppliers, and related institutions, the forum aims to foster new business negotiations and joint research projects.



The organizers highly expect this open matching environment to create innovative supply chains and drive the practical application of next-generation technologies.

Professionals, researchers, and organizations from European countries are warmly invited to participate in Engine Forum Kobe 2026. This event presents a unique opportunity to build international networks and explore collaborative research and business partnerships in the evolving engine and turbine sectors.

Source: Hyogo Prefectural Government - Business Promotion Division ➔ <https://www.kobe.bciaerospace.com/en>

TOKYO OPENS **LAUNCHPAD FOR FOREIGN DEEP TECH COMPANIES**

The Tokyo Metropolitan Government has announced the new “Deep Tech Tokyo Launchpad” programme for fiscal year 2026, offering substantial financial and business support to highly innovative foreign deep tech companies seeking to establish and expand operations in Tokyo.

This highly competitive programme provides 5 selected companies with up to JPY 100 million (approx. EUR 600,000) in subsidies over a three-year period, alongside tailored business development support.

Eligible expenses include company incorporation costs, consultancy services, recruitment, personnel expenses, and business matching activities. Subsidy coverage will decrease gradually over time, from up to 80% of eligible expenses in the first year to 40% in the third year.

In addition to financial assistance, participating companies will gain access to Business consultancy, PR support, business matching, support with grant applications and administrative procedures. The programme specifically targets deep tech sectors such as: Quantum technologies; Robotics; AI and data science; Green transformation (GX) and energy; Biotechnology; Advanced materials; Digital and cyber security; Food tech; Aerospace; Fusion energy; Semiconductors and electronic devices; Healthcare and life sciences.

To qualify, applicants must not yet have established a legal entity in Japan at the time of selection decision and must commit to setting up operations in Tokyo by March 2028. Selected companies are expected to engage in activities contributing to Tokyo’s innovation ecosystem, including collaboration with local SMEs, Proof of Concept (PoC) projects, joint research, and technology development partnerships.

Application period: 14 May – 30 Sept 2026

Selection process: Oct–Nov 2026 (tentative)

Announcement of selected companies:

Early December 2026 (tentative)

Source: Tokyo Metropolitan ➔ <https://www.deeptech-tokyo.metro.tokyo.lg.jp>



TRILATERAL AI SYMPOSIUM IN TOKYO

27-28 OCTOBER 2026, TOKYO, JAPAN

The trilateral symposium “Operationalizing AI: Safe, Efficient, and Privacy-preserving AI Systems at Scale” brings together leading minds from Japan, France, Germany and other countries to shape the future of trustworthy AI.

Building on the success of four trilateral AI Symposia (2018, 2020, 2022, 2024), this flagship series has engaged over 2,000 participants and connected more than 300 expert speakers in past editions across academia, industry, and policy. The symposium will explore cutting-edge approaches for deploying AI systems responsibly at scale—and spark new collaborations that strengthen international AI innovation. It is organized by the Embassy of France in Tokyo, AI Japan R&D Network, DWIH Tokyo with the Delegation of the European Union to Japan as a co-organizer.

Call for Poster Presentations

Researchers, practitioners, and enthusiasts are invited to showcase their work and project ideas for international collaboration in a poster session at this upcoming trilateral AI symposium on 27-28 October in Tokyo. The call is open to anyone wishing to participate in the symposium in Tokyo; online-participation is not possible. Call deadline: 26 June 2026.

Source: German Centre for Research and Innovation Tokyo (DWIH Tokyo) ➔ <https://www.dwih-tokyo.org/ai5/>



CONFERENCE AND PUBLICATION - ECONOMICS OF AGEING: JAPAN IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

27 JULY 2026, TOKYO, JAPAN

The Journal of the Economics of Ageing’s special issue will be presented at University of Tokyo.

This issue gathers a dozen papers and offers an overview on demographic challenges and academic literature, namely a comparative study of population ageing and the socio-economic implications between France and Japan. 6 papers are related to macroeconomics: impact on aggregate final consumption, fiscal implication under population aging in Japan, ageing workforce. And 4 papers are related to older workers and long-term care. This publication will hopefully give valuable insights for cross-country comparisons, interactions between labor and care giving and in a way the impact of industrial robots and service robots on long-term care policies, to be studied in the European Union also facing demographic challenges as shown in the European-Japanese Innovcare project.

Source: Fondation France-Japon de l'EHESS ➔ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/special-issue/10JSQ7VW7W7>

PARTNERING OPPORTUNITIES



JAPANESE COMPANIES LOOKING FOR PARTNERS IN THE EU ➔ <https://www.eu-japan.eu/een/opportunities>

REQUEST FOR DISTRIBUTORS

Sector: tools

A Japanese SME specializing in low-profile screws is seeking sales partners in Germany under a commercial partnership agreement
Profile ID: **BOJP20260317019**



REQUEST FOR DISTRIBUTOR

Sector: food

Japanese exporter of matcha green tea is looking for EU partners
Profile ID: **BOJP20260413008**

REQUEST FOR DISTRIBUTOR

Sector: nanotech, testing

A Japanese company offers a nano indentation tester under a commercial agreement.
Profile ID: **BOJP20250520003**



SERVICES OFFERED

Sector: transportation, logistics

A Japanese company offers export coordination and logistics support services
Profile ID: **BOJP20260430001**

SERVICES OFFERED

Sector: software engineering

Japanese provider offers digital transformation and artificial intelligence development
Profile ID: **BOJP20260427020**

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER OFFERED

Sector: healthcare

Copper oxide coating technology from Japan against nosocomial infections
Profile ID: **TOJP20250303003**

ENTERPRISE EUROPE NETWORK EVENTS

B2B OPPORTUNITIES FOR EU AND JAPANESE SMES ➔ <https://een.ec.europa.eu/events>

MATCHMAKING@GITEX AI EUROPE



30 June – 3 July 2026, hybrid,
Berlin, Germany
Sector: ICT
Registration deadline:
30 June 2026

➔ <https://www.b2match.com/e/gitex-2026>

Within the frame of the second edition of GITEX AI EUROPE 2026, Berlin Partner is organizing a hybrid B2B matching event targeting entities active in all key digitalization topics: from AI, cloud solutions, 5G, and blockchain to cybersecurity, telecommunications, climate tech, and future mobility, all of which are shaping Europe's digital future.

WINDENERGY MATCH 2026

23-29 September 2026, hybrid, Hamburg, Germany
Sector: wind energy
Registration deadline: 29 September 2026



Organized by WTSH, the matchmaking event held alongside WindEnergy Hamburg trade fair, connects exhibitors and visitors through structured 1:1 meetings and supports international business and technology cooperation in the wind and renewable energy sectors. Focus areas for this edition: Wind energy (onshore, offshore, repowering and recycling); Power-to-X, energy storage and system integration; Hydrogen; Other renewable energy technologies.

➔ <https://www.b2match.com/e/windenergy-match-2026>

15TH MICRO & NANO EVENT 2026

1-2 October 2026, Besançon, France
Sector: nanotech
Registration deadline: 1 October 2026



Micro & Nano Event has been organised since 1998 in the framework of Micronora, precision and microtechnology trade fair. The event will feature various activities and provide a unique opportunity for professionals to explore emerging technologies, share knowledge and ideas of projects, develop new business relationships.

➔ <https://www.micro-nano-event.eu/en/>



DATE/LOCATION	DETAILS	CONTACTS
17 June 2026 Tokyo, Japan	SEMINAR The Current State and Future Prospects of Japan-EU Defence Industry Cooperation	https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_8L2tmwUkTI-fdpOacRgE3A
5-9 October 2026 Tokyo, Japan	BUSINESS MISSION Biotech Business Mission Application deadline: 19 June 2026	https://www.eu-japan.eu/events/biotech-mission
13-16 October 2026 Tokyo, Japan	BUSINESS MISSION Digital Business Mission Application deadline: 18 June 2026	https://www.eu-japan.eu/events/digital-mission
19-23 October 2026 Nagoya, Japan	TRAINING MISSION World Class Manufacturing Application deadline: 8 July 2026	https://www.eu-japan.eu/world-class-manufacturing
14-18 December 2026 Tokyo, Japan	BUSINESS MISSION Nanotech Business Mission Application start: coming soon	https://www.eu-japan.eu/business-missions-japan
16-19 February 2027 Tokyo, Japan	BUSINESS MISSION Smart Factory & Robotics Business Mission Application start: this autumn	https://www.eu-japan.eu/events/smartfactory-robotics-mission/
1-5 March 2027 Nagoya, Japan	TRAINING MISSION World Class Manufacturing II Application start: this autumn	https://www.eu-japan.eu/world-class-manufacturing
17-19 March 2027 Tokyo, Japan	BUSINESS MISSION Space Business Mission Application start: this autumn	https://www.eu-japan.eu/events/space-mission
23-26 Mar 2027 Tokyo, Japan	BUSINESS MISSION Green Business Mission Application start: this autumn	https://www.eu-japan.eu/events/green-mission
27-30 April 2027 Tokyo, Japan	BUSINESS MISSION Defence Business Mission Application start: TBC	https://www.eu-japan.eu/events/defence-mission



EU-Japan Centre
for Industrial Cooperation
一般財団法人日欧産業協力センター

The EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation was established in 1987 as a core organization to implement industrial cooperation between the EU and Japan. It aims at promoting all forms of industrial, trade and investment cooperation between the EU and Japan and at improving EU and Japanese companies' competitiveness and cooperation by facilitating exchanges of experience and know-how between EU and Japanese businesses.

This quarterly newsletter is produced by the EU-based office of the EU-Japan Centre, and is intended to provide EU/Japan-related news.

ANY EU-JAPAN-RELATED NEWS?

Feel free to contact us if you would like your EU-Japan-related news/event to be announced in our forthcoming newsletter : newsletter@eu-japan.eu

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