

EU special

EU proud to be 'United in Diversity'

Viorel Isticioaia-Budura
AMBASSADOR OF THE EUROPEAN UNION TO
JAPAN

I am delighted to have this opportunity to address the readers of The Japan Times as the European Union (EU) marks Europe Day. On May 9, 1950, some five years after the end of yet another terrible war that brought death and destruction to the European continent, then French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman put forth his vision for a more peaceful, stable and prosperous Europe.

In what has since come to be known as the Schuman Declaration, he called for the creation of a system to jointly manage coal and steel among European nations so as to make war impossible. His vision laid the foundations for the EU we know today: a unique mechanism under which Member States hand over part of their sovereignty and jointly decide on key policies that not only impact their citizens, but, with the Lisbon Treaty of 2009, now also allows the EU to speak and act as one on the global stage on a broad range of policy issues.



A project that began with six countries has since evolved into a truly European project, bringing together 28 nations with a total population of more than 500 million. Nineteen of them currently use the same currency, the euro, one of the most tangible symbols

of European unity. And despite its size, the EU remains proud that it lives up to its motto, "United in Diversity," as Europe strongly believes that its diversity is one of its greatest strengths.

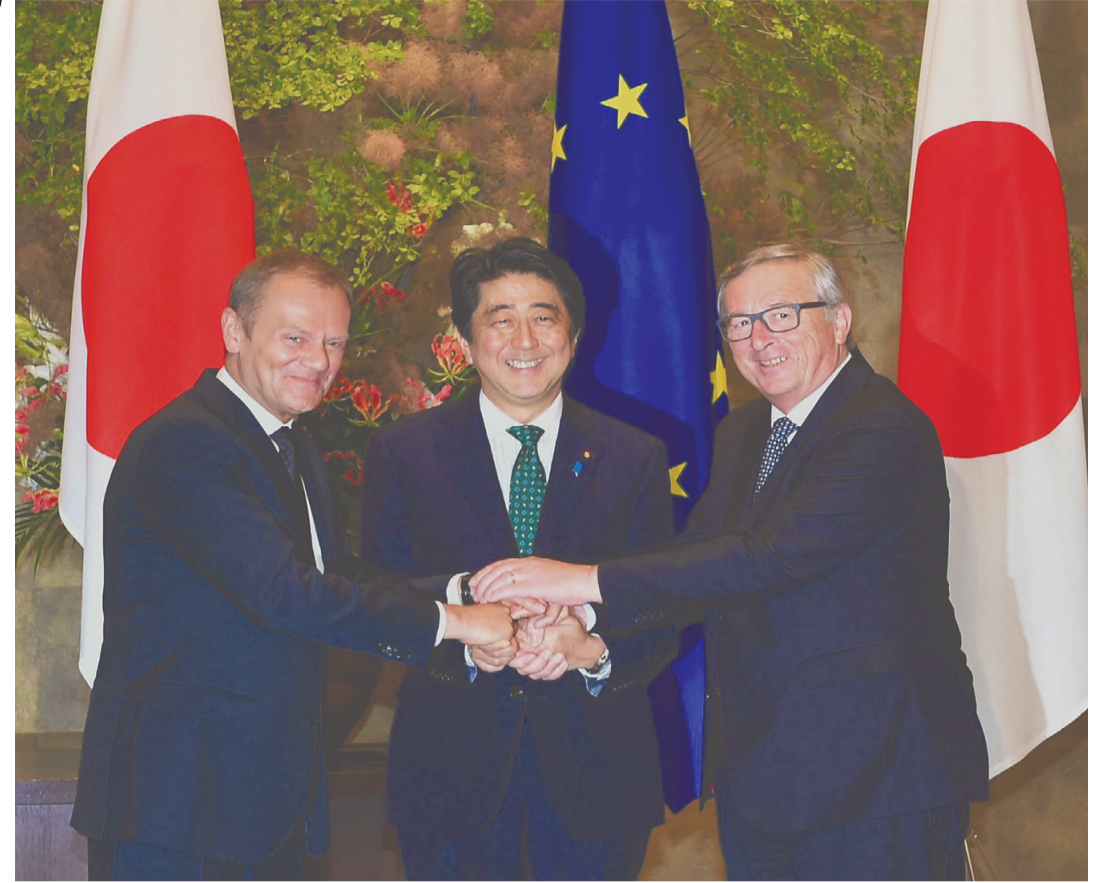
It is this scale, as well as the numerous policy areas in which the EU works together and acts as one, that makes the EU a fitting member of the Group of Seven. With Japan holding the presidency of the G-7 this year, in addition to European Council President Donald Tusk and European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker taking part in the Ise-Shima summit later this month, we will be seeing many European Commissioners visiting.

We have already had the pleasure of having EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission Federica Mogherini here for the foreign ministers' meeting that was held in Hiroshima in April, as well as Agriculture and Rural Development Commissioner Phil Hogan for the Niigata agricultural ministers' meeting. Additionally, Vice-President Andrus Ansip, in charge of the digital

single market, participated in the Takamatsu ICT ministers' meeting and Climate Action and Energy Commissioner Miguel Arias Canete was here for the Kitakyushu energy ministers' meeting.

We are happy to discuss with our G-7 partners the wide range of topics that Japan has set for its presidency agenda. Issues such as the global economy, counter-terrorism, refugees and migration are all of keen interest to Europe, and I am certain the EU will be an active participant in the discussions.

As for EU-Japan relations, we are all aware of the significance of the two bilateral agreements currently under negotiation, the strategic partnership agreement and the free trade agreement. On the latter, in particular, leaders on both sides have stated the importance of a highly comprehensive and ambitious agreement to be concluded as soon as possible. If there is sufficient political will, I am certain that a deal, one that benefits both our economies, by the end of this year is within reach.



European Council President Donald Tusk (left), Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker join hands at the 2015 EU-Japan Summit on May 29 in Tokyo. EUROPEAN UNION



Federica Mogherini, European Union high representative for foreign affairs and security policy and vice-president of the European Commission (left) and Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida shake hands on April 10 in Hiroshima during a meeting of G-7 foreign affairs ministers. EUROPEAN UNION

Strongly committed to doing business in Japan

Danny Risberg
CHAIRMAN, EUROPEAN BUSINESS COUNCIL IN
JAPAN (EBC)

The European Business Council in Japan (EBC) is delighted to have this opportunity to address readers of The Japan Times on Europe Day. As the trade policy arm of European national chambers of commerce and business organizations in Japan, we have deep roots in the European Union, yet also a strong commitment to Japan and a real stake in its future. That is why the EBC works for structural and regulatory change to the Japanese economy that will both improve the trade and investment climate here and benefit Japanese consumers.

We are keenly aware that, some seven years on from the global financial crisis, the Japanese and EU economies still face significant challenges, not the least of which are low levels of growth at home and fierce competition from abroad. For



companies, these challenges translate into relentless pressure to improve operating efficiency, innovate and create new markets. A business environment that supports such efforts is vital to success. We have therefore greatly appreciated recent reforms in Japan that have lowered

corporate tax and improved corporate governance. We also have welcomed initiatives to boost inward investment, increase female participation in the workforce, facilitate visas for highly qualified foreigners and upgrade healthcare and tourism facilities.

But these reforms are not enough. Regulation in Japan still frustrates innovation and creates unnecessary bureaucracy. It often takes longer for new products — whether domestic or foreign — to be approved here than in any other developed country. The consequences vary, depending on whether the delay concerns, say, new food products or innovative medical equipment, but in all cases consumers lose out — for no good reason. The EBC has for years been pressing the Japanese government to remedy this situation, but improvements have been too patchy and slow to make a real difference. Now, we have the chance of an EU-Japan Free Trade Agreement/Economic Partnership Agreement (FTA/EPA) to

change all that. Negotiations toward an FTA/EPA were launched back in March 2013, aiming to address "all issues of shared interest in order to stimulate economic growth both in Japan and in the EU." Now, some three years and sixteen rounds of negotiations later, there are signs that an agreement is in sight. With the right content, it could boost mutual trade, open up new markets, and stimulate flows of investment, goods, services, technology and expertise. This will only happen if the agreement is sufficiently ambitious and comprehensive to satisfy the interests of both sides, so we recognize that a deal cannot be rushed, but stress that the longer the negotiations take, the longer the economies on both sides must wait to benefit.

The fact is that an ambitious and comprehensive FTA/EPA could set the EU and Japan on a path to greater prosperity. The EBC urges both sides to seize this golden opportunity and give us all something to celebrate!

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EU special

Showcasing a wide range of EU filmmaking talent

Rieko Suzuki
SPECIAL TO THE JAPAN TIMES

EU Film Days in June and July is a unique festival that brings the best of European cinema to audiences in Japan.

Celebrating its 14th year, EU Film Days is being held as part of EU-Japan Friendship Week, which promotes people-to-people exchanges between the EU and Japan. EU Film Days 2016 will be an especially exciting occasion as it will be the very first year that every member state of the European Union with an embassy in Japan will have films shown.

Many of the selected films are being shown for the first time in Japan. The films have been chosen to exhibit the wide range of filmmaking talent in the European Union, as well as to showcase the EU's cultural diversity and vibrancy.

The film festival will be held at the National Film Center at The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, from June 18 to July 10, and at The Museum of Kyoto from June 25 to July 15. The organizers are EU member state embassies in Japan; the Delegation of the European Union to Japan; the National Film Center, The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, and The Museum of Kyoto.

Thirty-one programs can be enjoyed in their original language with either Japanese or English subtitles, or both. Films, including "The Wall," directed by Julian Polsler from Austria, "Cowboys," directed by Tomislav Mrcic from Croatia and "The Road Uphill," directed by Jean-Louis Schuller from Luxembourg, are just some of the featured titles. Details on all entries can be found on the EU Film Days 2016 website at <http://eufilmdays.jp/en/lineup>.

Quite a few of the programs have Japanese subtitles, including Danish film "The Absent One," directed by Mikkel Norgaard, "Other Girls," directed by Esa Illi from Finland, "The Tree," directed by Sonja Proscenc from Slovenia and "Liza, the Fox-Fairy," directed by Ujj Meszaros Karoly from Hungary.

For families with small children, a



EU Film Days 2016 official flyer
EU DELEGATION TO JAPAN

selection of short animation films for children from Latvia, directed by various directors, is highly recommended. There will be nine short animated films for children without dialogue; eight of which are Japan premieres.

"Laughter" is a universal language and comedy selections such as "Family Film," directed by Olmo Omerzu from the Czech Republic and "Spy Time," directed by Javier Ruiz Caldera from Spain, will let visitors feel closer to those countries by sharing the laughter.

Viewing films that have connections to Japan are well suited for EU Film Days held in Japan, with some of the films having Japanese actors or staff. The Romanian film "The Japanese Dog," directed by Tudor Cristian Jurgiu, that will be shown with both English and Japanese subtitles, features a Japanese actress. Scheduled viewings in Tokyo are from 10:30 a.m. on June 18 and from 7 p.m. on June 21 and from 6 p.m. on June 25 in Kyoto. Bulgarian film "Viktoria," directed by Maya Vitkova, was created with a Japanese art director. Scheduled viewings

in Tokyo are from noon on June 23, 3:30 p.m. on June 25, 6:30 p.m. on July 5 and from 1:30 p.m. on July 7 in Kyoto.

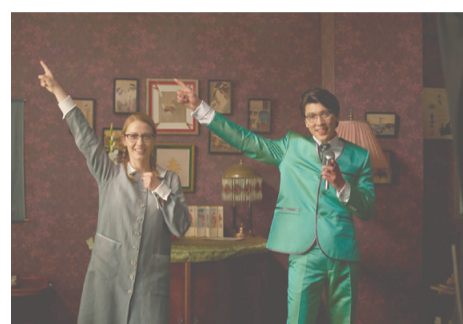


Among the highlights of the 31 programs in the EU Film Days 2016 are (clockwise from top right) "Other Girls" from Finland; "Liza, the Fox-Fairy" from Hungary; "Spy Time" from Spain (comedy); "Family Film" from the Czech Republic (comedy); "The Road Uphill" from Luxembourg; "The Absent One" from Denmark

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in one of the special programs, a documentary screening of the Latvian film "Ruch and Norie" features a Japanese student as one of the two leading figures.

Special programs are something that can rarely be seen at regular theater viewings, but are often shown at film festivals. EU Film Days 2016's special programs include a lecture by



one of the visiting film directors, Andrzej Jakimowski, at 4:45 p.m. on June 19 in Tokyo; a sneak preview of the documentary "Hollywood Banker" (scheduled for release in July in Japan) on June 18 at 10:30 a.m. in Tokyo, and at 4 p.m. on July 3 in Kyoto; the documentary "Ruch and Norie" at 2 p.m. on July 9 in Tokyo, and at 3:45 p.m. on June 25 in Kyoto; and a presentation of new developments on the European short animation scene combined with a screening of relevant films on June 21 at 4 p.m. in Tokyo.

For Tokyo viewings, tickets per screening are ¥520; ¥310 for university, college and high school students and seniors (aged 65 and over); ¥100 for elementary and junior high school students; and free for disabled persons (with one companion). Tickets will be sold at the reception desk of Cinema 1 and are only valid for the screening for which they are sold and may not be used for another screening or on another day.

Tickets are sold 30 minutes before the screening starts until the hall is



"Little Ruddy" is one of nine short animated films for children from Latvia. EU DELEGATION TO JAPAN

Only one ticket per person per show can be issued, and no entry is permitted after screenings start.

The fee at the Kyoto venue is ¥500 for general admission, ¥400 for university students, and free of charge for elementary, junior high and high school students. The fee also covers the general entry fee of the Museum of Kyoto.

For more information, visit the official website at www.eufilmdays.jp.

Education fair offers the chance to explore opportunities and benefits of Europe study

Mami Maruko
STAFF WRITER

What is the allure of studying in Europe? What are the merits of getting a higher education overseas?

There will be answers to these questions and more at the fifth European Higher Education Fair, which is organized by the Delegation of the European Union to Japan and will be held on June 11 and 12.

The fair provides an excellent opportunity for Japanese students and researchers who are interested in studying in countries with a variety of diverse cultural backgrounds to see what kind of opportunities are out there for them.

The fair will take place on June 11 at Campus Plaza Kyoto and on June 12 at Meiji University's Surugadai Campus in Tokyo. Approximately 60 higher education institutions, as well as several embassies and education promotion agencies, will offer attendees the latest information on the many study programs and courses that are available.

The event is co-organized by Campus France, the German Academic Exchange Service, Meiji University,

The Consortium of Universities in Kyoto and the city of Kyoto.

A total of 16 European countries will participate in the fair, including 15 EU member states and Switzerland. At the Kyoto event, 11 countries will participate — the highest number to date in Kyoto.

Richard Kelner, the person in charge of education for the delegation, explained that it's a win-win event for both the academic institutions from Europe and the Japanese students. He said that it's quite a rarity for the students to have the chance to talk to representatives from so many European countries at one event.

Regarding participant numbers, the 2015 fair saw 1,500 visitors attending over three days, compared to 1,300 for the first fair in 2012, with the number increasing steadily throughout the years. The first event was held in Tokyo and Kobe, but after 2013, the fair has been held in Tokyo and Kyoto.

The fair will offer presentations by institutions at their individual booths, as well as seminars on scholarship opportunities and on the links between studying overseas and potential careers.

EU programs open to students and researchers such as Erasmus+ and those under the Horizon 2020 frame-

work will also be promoted at the fair.

Of special note are alumni panel discussions that will be held for the second time — following on their success at last year's event.

Kelner notes that the alumni all agree how valuable their experiences studying in Europe were. He stressed that the organizers hope listening to testimonials from people who have actually gone through the experience of studying in Europe and have landed good careers will be of interest to students visiting the fair.

Last, but not least, there will be a networking event for European and Japanese universities on June 13 at the delegation, where European representatives can meet Japanese university representatives to discuss possibilities for future links and cooperation.

European Higher Education Fair 2016 The Tokyo fair takes place on June 12 (1:30 p.m.-7 p.m.) at the Meiji University Surugadai Campus, while the Kyoto fair takes place on June 11 (noon-6 p.m.) at Campus Plaza Kyoto. Admission is free.

For more information, call the EU Delegation to Japan at 03-5422-6001, or visit www.ehef-japan.org or www.facebook.com/EUryugaku.



Students talk with the representatives of academic institutions during the European Higher Education Fair in May 2015. EU DELEGATION TO JAPAN



(Clockwise from above): German Ambassador Hans Carl von Werthern visits EHEF 2015; "Study in Europe" pamphlets on display at the 2015 fair; Students listen attentively to academic institution representatives explaining the merits of studying in Europe. EU DELEGATION TO JAPAN



Working to improve gender equality in various sectors

The gender equality issue is one of the European Union's founding values, which it has endeavored to tackle for more than half a century.

It began in 1957, when the principle of equal pay for equal work became part of the Treaty of Rome, which created the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Community.

Although inequalities still exist to some extent today, including women still being over-represented in lower paid sectors and under-represented in decision-making positions, the EU's achievements in fostering equality between women and men have helped to change the lives of many European citizens for the better.

Some encouraging trends include the increased number of women in the labor market and their progress in securing better education and training.

The EU has made significant progress over the last several decades, mainly due to equal treatment legisla-

tion, gender mainstreaming (integration of the gender perspective into all other policies) and specific measures for the advancement of women.

Additionally, the "Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016-2019" was published in December, a follow-up and prolongation of the "European Commission Strategy for Equality Between Women and Men 2010-2015." It sets the framework for the commission's future work toward improving gender equality.

The strategic engagement focuses on the following five priority areas: increasing female labor market participation and equal economic independence; reducing the gender pay, earnings and pension gaps and thus fighting poverty among women; promoting equality between women and men in decision making; combating gender-based violence and protecting and supporting victims; and promoting gender equality and women's rights across the world.

Additionally, the strategic engage-

ment sets out objectives in each of these priority areas and identifies more than 30 concrete actions. It reaffirms commitment to gender mainstreaming: a gender equality perspective will be integrated into all EU policies, as well as into EU funding programs.

The engagement also includes the implementation of the gender equality dimension in the Europe 2020 Strategy, which is the EU's growth strategy to be reached by 2020. It includes five ambitious objectives on employment, innovation, education, social inclusion and climate and energy.

The EU hopes to engage further with Japan, a like-minded partner, as it continues to promote gender equality in the coming years.

For more information on the EU's initiatives related to gender equality, visit ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/.