

EURO BIZ JAPAN

JANUARY 2020

➤ **10 years, 120 issues,
one major milestone**

A decade of Eurobiz Japan

➤ **From milestone to
milestone**

*Ambassador of Austria to Japan
Hubert Heiss*

**DARREN MORRISH,
GENERAL MANAGER OF PULLMAN
TOKYO TAMACHI AND PULLMAN
AREA GENERAL MANAGER FOR
EAST JAPAN**

SOMETHING DIFFERENT

*Pullman Tokyo Tamachi offers
an alternative to the typical
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10th
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The Mission of the European Business Council

To promote an impediment-free
environment for European business
in Japan.



10

**SOMETHING
DIFFERENT**

By Toby Waters





First Focus

At the end of last year, in a street exhibition called *Akira Art of Wall*, Parco Shibuya featured work by Katsuhiro Otomo from his acclaimed Japanese manga *Akira*.

The manga, which ran from 1982 to 1990 and helped spark global interest in the art form, is set in a post-apocalyptic Tokyo peopled with revolutionaries and those with powerful telekinetic abilities — in what is now our present day. Otomo accurately predicted our current historical moment by having part of the plot take place during the lead-up to the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games.

Here's hoping he got the rest of it wrong.

Photo by Dick Thomas Johnson
www.flickr.com/



Writing in and about Japan since 2000, **Gavin Blair** contributes articles to magazines, websites and newspapers in Asia, Europe and the US on a wide range of topics, many of them business related.

➔ *“A couple of years back, on 14 February, I was reminded that Valentine’s Day in Japan is still largely a female to male chocolate-giving event when the only other customer buying roses at my local flower shop was also a foreigner. Roses in hand, I stopped off to buy some Champagne, only to be asked by the shop owner — completely straight-faced — ‘Are you celebrating something?’”*



Tokyo journalist **Tim Hornyak** has covered technology in Japan for IDG News, CNET, *Scientific American* and other media. He is the author of *Loving the Machine: The Art and Science of Japanese Robots*.

➔ *“Like countless other working adults, I get back pain now and again, and sometimes it’s debilitating. Now, strength-boosting exoskeletons are on the market for as little as ¥149,600. Workplace and even consumer versions of wearables that take a load off are starting to catch on.”*



Francesco Formiconi is the executive director of the EBC. He leaves his position at the end of this month in order to pursue a new career in the fashion industry.

➔ *“The meeting of the European Business Organisation Worldwide Network, which was held in Tokyo for the very first time last month, was a great success in terms of strong attendance, topics covered and flawless organisation. The EBC worked together with the EU Delegation and the EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation truly as ‘One Team’”.*



Since 2003, **Aya Kamikawa**, an independent politician, has served as a councillor for Setagaya Ward, the most populous district of Tokyo. She is the first openly transgender person to hold elected office in Japan.

➔ *“For the past 16 years, I have been working to improve the rights of Setagaya Ward’s minorities, including the handicapped, the elderly, and the LGBT community. As a transgender woman, I am outraged by the government’s inhumane requirements for people to change their gender in Japan, but I believe that it won’t be long before they will be overturned.”*

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The EBC is the trade policy arm of 15 European national chambers of commerce and business associations in Japan

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Eurobiz Japan welcomes story ideas from readers and proposals from writers and photographers. Letters to the editor may be edited for length and style.



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FROM EUROBIJ JAPAN

TEXT BY ANDREW HOWITT

At the dawn of a new decade

This month marks 10 years since the publication of the first issue of *Eurobiz Japan*. Throughout the decade, our magazine — the mouthpiece of the European Business Council in Japan (EBC) — has consistently and proudly put a spotlight on the successes and challenges of European firms doing business in Japan.

It's also been exciting to follow and document the strengthening relations between the EU and Jaapan. Year after year, we have paid close attention to the progress of the EU–Japan Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) — the world's largest trade deal, initially proposed by the EBC in 2006 — culminating in its entry into force last February. The EU and Japan have never been closer, economically, politically or socially. At the dawn of this new decade,

they are working to ensure that the next 10 years are characterised by even greater collaboration and prosperity.

In “10 years, 120 issues, one major milestone”, I look back over the first decade of the magazine's history. Read the full story on page 14.

We decided to set a positive tone for the new decade with a story about love — or, more accurately, about the European firms helping to bring a little romance to Japan at this time of year. Read Gavin Blair's “The business of love” (page 18) to find out about how you can sweeten your Valentine's Day.

With a newly appointed EU Commission in place, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe reaching the end of his tenure, and the implementation of the EPA needing to be monitored, there will be a great deal for *Eurobiz Japan* to cover in the coming years.

Happy New Year from all of us at *Eurobiz Japan*. I hope everyone builds stronger relationships and finds greater prosperity as this decade unfolds. ●

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INVESTING IN JAPAN

TEXT BY TOBY WATERS

PHOTOS BY MICHAEL HOLMES





SOMETHING DIFFERENT

Pullman Tokyo Tamachi offers an alternative to the typical international hotel

In the mid-19th century, George Pullman founded the luxury railroad manufacturing business the Pullman Company, which is credited with building the US's first sleeping cars. What began as a firm that built exceptional trains has today become a global hotel chain. But what hasn't changed is Pullman's offer of comfort and style on a smaller, more personal scale.

"Large hotels seem to be everywhere throughout the market here in Japan — we want to offer our guests something different," says Darren Morrish, general manager of Pullman Tokyo Tamachi and Pullman's area general manager for East Japan. "We are small and personalised, with a unique blend of design, creativity and individualism."

With this distinctive brand image, Pullman has succeeded in adapting well to the

changing tastes of the world's travellers. Since its acquisition by French hotel group Accor, it has expanded to become a family of 143 hotels, seeing significant growth especially in Asia, where people have a high level of awareness of the brand. Pullman's focus today is on catering to its core demographic of guests.

"When you stay with us, you're not considered a small part of our business, you are considered our only business"

"They're very experienced travellers, from their late-twenties to their mid-forties, who know what they're looking for — we call these people international nomads," explains Morrish. "What's interesting about our brand is how well it bridges both leisure and business."

Pullman Tokyo Tamachi is well suited to meet the needs of the growing number of "bleisure" travellers. Morrish notes that it isn't unusual to see someone doing sketches in The Junction, one of the hotel's bars, sitting next to someone in a suit sending e-mails on their phone, or for guests to be playing a game of ping pong across the hall from where a meeting is taking place.

Firms are increasingly choosing to hold meetings and events at the hotel because of this more relaxed atmosphere. Its event rooms — smaller and more intimate than the typical event space in Tokyo — accommodate up to 80 people and allow for more flexibility and greater personalisation.

"Most international hotels in Tokyo have big meeting spaces or ballrooms," he says. "But we target smaller think tank or executive-style meetings. When



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you stay with us, you're not considered a small part of our business, you are considered our only business."

As an exciting, fast-growing hotel, the Pullman brand is a perfect match for Tamachi, which Morrish describes as one of Tokyo's "most promising up-and-coming neighbourhoods".

"This area is going to be completely transformed in the next 10 to 15 years," he says. "The majority of people today might not even think of staying in Tamachi, but as it's on the Yamanote Line, it's only 10 minutes to both Tokyo Station and Roppongi Station. People might find that this is exactly what they're looking for."

One of Morrish's main goals is to make sure that the hotel is a destination not only for global travellers, but also for locals. And he is accomplishing this through Pullman Tokyo Tamachi's top-class restaurants and bars to tempt the area's residents and workers to come inside.

KASA, the hotel's flagship restaurant, provides a dining experience uncommon not just in Tamachi, but in Tokyo, as well. Its cuisine is an Asian-Mediterranean fusion, with the menu changing every two to three months. All the food is created under the direction of Executive Chef Koji Fukuda.

"He's a Japanese national who did a lot of his training overseas in Australia and New Zealand," Morrish says. "He came back to Japan and worked in a number of well-known standalone restaurants. He has also built up a strong following among both Japanese diners and the foreign community."

KASA distinguishes itself from other hotel restaurants across Tokyo with its sophisticated cuisine at affordable



prices. It is also an ideal spot for those who are health-conscious and looking for something different to the buffet-style dining typical at large hotels. The shift away from the image of the quintessential hotel restaurant is also reflected in its stylish design, the relaxed uniforms of the employees and its accommodating opening hours.

"We don't have a down time," Morrish explains. "We're open from 6:30 in the morning until 11 o'clock at night. There're people constantly coming and going."

For those who want to unwind after work or have a drink after dinner, the Platform 9 cocktail bar is another hidden gem in Pullman Tokyo Tamachi. The name was inspired by Tamachi Station — since guests can watch trains coming and going along its eight railway lines from the bar's rooftop terrace — as well as Pullman's origins as an upscale railway company. Despite this legacy of luxury, the bar is keen to avoid the stuffiness common to many hotel bars in the city.

"Tokyo has some fantastic cocktail bars, but they're quite formal," Morrish says. "Even though our bar is quite small, we used a consulting company that has built some of the hottest bars around the world to embed an informal culture and differentiate Platform 9 from all those other fantastic bars."

It's a bar with a difference in other ways, too. The cocktail menu makes use of a number of traditional Japanese flavours, such as *yuzu*, *umeboshi* and even seaweed. These are combined with international liquors

"Having street art on a wall in a five-star hotel is definitely something that is not the norm in Tokyo"

to create cocktails that are as memorable as they are innovative. It also keeps customers coming back thanks to the art installation on one of its walls, which is regularly replaced.

"We incorporate street art by up-and-coming new artists," Morrish explains. "Once every four months, we bring in an artist and say, 'There's your canvas, do as you please'. Having street art on a wall in a five-star hotel is definitely something that is not the norm in Tokyo."

While it may not be as large in size as other hotels in the capital, the Pullman Tokyo Tamachi is at the forefront of service, design and dining experiences that satisfy today's travellers. It's a good reminder that the best things do come in small packages. ●



10 YEARS, 120 ISSUES, ONE MAJOR MILESTONE

A decade of *Eurobiz Japan*

This month, *Eurobiz Japan* celebrates its 10th anniversary.

It marks a decade of coverage on the strengthening of ties between the EU and Japan. It marks a decade as the mouthpiece of the European Business Council in Japan (EBC), advocating for an impediment-free environment for European businesses in Japan. It marks a decade of professionally written stories that have informed decision-makers on policy and business developments in both Japan and Europe.

“The value of this publication, both in terms of its content and its quality, is evident,” says Michael Mroczek, chair of the EBC. “It is the only English-language magazine with a focus on European business in Japan. This uniqueness makes it irreplaceable.”

Every month, the magazine reaches tens of thousands of readers across more than two dozen industries. In addition

to being delivered to all members of Japan’s Diet, *Eurobiz Japan* is distributed to the members of 15 European chambers of commerce, EBC members, European embassies and the Delegation of the European Union to Japan. It is also available at exclusive clubs such as the Tokyo American Club and the Roppongi Hills Club; the Foreign Correspondents’ Club of Japan; luxury hotels; serviced offices and apartments; and in an American Airlines’ VIP lounge.

“*Eurobiz Japan* has been a vital tool to reach out to a wider audience and communicate trade policy advocacy in an engaging and

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easy-to-understand way,” says Bjorn Kongstad, policy director at the EBC. “It raises the profile of the EBC and complements the other activities of our organisation very well.”

The EBC launched the magazine in January 2010 with the goal of communicating its message more clearly to the Japanese government and deepening connections among its members. The *Eurobiz Japan* project was initiated by Tommy Kullberg, a former chairman of the EBC, who felt deeply about the importance of strong communications and PR.

“Our mission is to take on tasks that cannot be addressed by individual companies and chambers,” Kullberg wrote in the inaugural January 2010 issue. “We aim to reduce all the trade obstacles and regulatory issues that EU companies face in Japan. I hope this magazine can reach out to the members of the EBC and that they will let us know about the issues that matter to them.”

Paradigm, a digital creative agency based in Tokyo, created *Eurobiz Japan* and has published it since the beginning.

“How the world communicates has changed a lot since Paradigm was founded as a print publishing company 28 years ago, and the volume of print media being produced has dropped dramatically,” says Vickie Paradise Green, president of Paradigm. “But print was my first love, so having the

“The value of this publication, both in terms of its content and its quality, is evident”

“*Eurobiz Japan* has been a vital tool to reach out to a wider audience and communicate trade policy advocacy in an engaging and easy-to-understand way”

opportunity to successfully publish *Eurobiz Japan* for the past 10 years has been a joy for me.”

Over the magazine’s 120 issues, there are countless highlights worth mentioning. Feature articles have included interviews with politicians, diplomats and entrepreneurs from both Europe and Japan, as well as CEOs from industries as diverse as automotive, liquor, pharma, hospitality, retail, construction, cosmetics and telecommunications.

“Securing Rakuten founder Hiroshi Mikitani for the cover in March 2010 – only our third issue

– is certainly memorable,” states Green. “In April 2011, we had a writer travel to Fukushima to photograph and write a feature about the earthquake as our cover

story. No other English-language magazine published in Japan did this. Getting Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike on the April 2017 cover was a real coup, as was getting Cecilia Malmström, former EU commissioner for trade, in April 2019.”

Since its launch, *Eurobiz Japan* has been committed to producing a publication that is visually striking and has excellent design. In April 2016, the look of the magazine underwent a transformation when it was redesigned. Every visual element, including the magazine’s logo, colour palette, grid and typography, was rethought to create an even smarter and bolder design

But, in spite of the changes to the magazine over the past decade, *Eurobiz Japan* has stayed faithful to its mission to inform and advocate.

An experienced group of professional writers, who work for a variety of respected global publications, and gifted photographers ensure that it maintains a very high standard in the content it brings to its readers. And, as *Eurobiz Japan* is wholly dependent on ad revenue, the

magazine is indebted to its advertisers and dedicated sales team who make the magazine possible month after month.

The EBC is eager to see the magazine con-

tinue in its mission for many more years to come.

“It’s my hope that *Eurobiz Japan* will keep raising the profile of European businesses in Japan and, at the same time, speak as the official voice of the EBC in the context of greater and greater cooperation between Japanese and European companies here and in third markets,” says Mroczek. “With the conclusion of the EPA, and Europe’s renewed interest in Japan, I’m very optimistic that the magazine has the potential for another ten successful years – and milestones beyond.” ●

**EURO
BIZ JAPAN**



The business of love

European firms help to stoke the flames of romance in Japan

Japan has a long and rich tradition of taking elements of other cultures, putting a different spin on them and then embracing them as their own. St. Valentine's Day fits firmly into that category. A day to celebrate romantic love — the roots of which are thought to be in the story of a Christian martyr who married couples in secret in ancient Rome — has morphed into an orgy of chocolate-giving, most of it having little to do with *amour*.

The origins of Valentine's Day are intertwined with the Roman spring and fertility festival of Lupercalia, which was observed on 14 February. *Parliament of Fowls*, a poem by Geoffrey Chaucer written in the late 14th century, is the earliest recorded reference to "seynt valentynes day" being a time for lovers. By the 18th century, Valentine's Day cards were being sold and it gradually became an occasion to profess love.

The day's introduction to Japan is credited to a White Russian émigré Fedor Dmitrievich Morozoff, who founded a confectionery company in Kobe in 1931. Morozoff Ltd. ran an advertisement for Valentine's Day chocolates in a publication aimed at foreign residents in 1936, though it was not until after the Second World War that Japanese manufactur-

ers and department stores got in on the act and the practice began to spread to the local population.

The custom became largely one of women giving chocolates to male colleagues, classmates, teachers and friends. Those chocolates that were presented to the objects of women's affections made up a much smaller percentage of the total. At the end of the 1970s, Japan's national confectionery industry group came up with the idea of White Day, to be held a month later on 14 March, as an occasion for men to return the favour with yet more chocolate. Just doubling the amount of chocolate sold would have been a clever enough move, but they somehow convinced the men that the proper response was to spend two to three times the value of what they had received on 14 February.

These non-romantic gifts all came to be labelled *giri-choco*, or obligation chocolates, to distinguish them from *honmei-choco*, those given to sweethearts or crushes. But over the

years, the appeal of such obligatory giving has waned.

"Women used to have to give more expensive chocolates to bosses and then somewhat less expensive ones to *buchos* or *kachos* [department and section chiefs]. But then they had to give back at least double what they received, so the bosses weren't all that pleased anymore," says Andre Zimmermann, head of Lindt & Sprüngli Japan, the local operations of the storied Swiss chocolatier.

White Day has been "on the way down for the last 10 years," notes Zimmermann, though it still marks the end of what could be referred to as chocolate season in Japan, beginning with Halloween, a celebration that has been on the up

"The percentage of those ... who buy a little luxury chocolate as a reward for themselves is increasing"





4

Japan is now the fourth-largest champagne market in the world

recently, and carries on through Christmas. February accounts for a significant proportion of annual chocolate sales in Japan, and one that is considerably higher than in other markets, according to Zimmermann.

The shift away from obligation chocolates has been compensated for by the rise of *tomo-choco* for friends, and *jibun-choco*, where “people treat themselves to something nice”, notes Zimmermann.

Lindt & Sprüngli doesn’t take part in the major chocolate fairs, such as the international

“Champagne is becoming more and more popular in Japan to celebrate romantic moments, such as Valentine’s Day”

percentage of those who give chocolate to friends and family to convey everyday appreciation and those who buy a little luxury chocolate as a reward for themselves is increasing,” says Murata, who adds that, “Valentine’s is one of the seasons with the highest demand for Kit Kat products in Japan.”

Although Nestlé doesn’t release figures, “Kit Kat sales in Japan during the Valentine season are ranked higher than in other countries,” notes Murata.

Although Christmas Eve remains more of a date night than Valentine’s Day in Japan, the occasion is not all about chocolate.

“Champagne is becoming more and more popular in Japan to celebrate romantic moments, such as Valentine’s Day,” says Bruno Yvon, president of MHD Moët Hennessy Diageo K.K., who notes that Japan is now the fourth-largest champagne market in the world. “Moët & Chandon Rosé Impérial is a favourite choice. Every year in February, we release — for this occasion — a limited edition of this famous blend. Special menu pairings are offered in restaurants.”

The limited-edition bottles are also available in department stores.

Yvon adds: “Champagne is becoming more and more an integral part of this celebratory moment in Japan, accompanying a fine meal or as a gift to a loved one.” ●

Salon du Chocolat, which this year runs in Shinjuku from 27 January to 2 February and features numerous chocolatiers from Europe and beyond. Instead, it promotes its products, including Valentine’s specials, at its own shops and through seminars and tasting events.

Nestlé Japan launched a premium Kit Kat for Valentine’s Day on 15 January, the KITKAT Chocolatory Ruby 2020 Assortment, made with ruby chocolate. Developed by Swiss chocolate manufacturer Barry Callebaut and first brought to market in 2018, ruby chocolate is being used for this year’s Valentine’s Kit Kat and is available online, at seven department stores and various pop-up shops. The two-bar assortment is topped off with nuts and berries, and it comes in a special presentation pack at ¥1,200 plus tax.

KITKAT Chocolatory is the world’s first Kit Kat specialty store, according to Nestlé, which has been developing new products since 2003 under the supervision of Yasumasa Takagi, the award-winning owner and head chef of Le Pâtissier Takagi.

Nestlé also recognises the move away from *giri-choco*, according to company spokesperson Atsushi Murata, and has positioned the KITKAT Chocolatory products accordingly.

“The demand for chocolate for Valentine’s Day in recent years is diversifying. The



From milestone to milestone

Ambassador of Austria to Japan Hubert Heiss

Last year was an important milestone in diplomatic ties between Austria and Japan as they celebrated 150 years of bilateral relations, holding numerous events in both countries to mark the occasion. Ambassador of Austria to Japan Dr Hubert Heiss spoke with *Eurobiz Japan* about some important high-level visits that took place during this special year, as well as areas of focus for the embassy in this Olympic year.

Could you tell me about the visit of Japan's Princess Kako to Austria in September?

Her Imperial Highness stayed for four days in Vienna and had some politically important visits with Federal President Alexander Van der Bellen and Federal Chancellor Brigitte Bierlein. On these occasions, the princess conveyed the best wishes of His Majesty the Emperor and expressed the desire for continued friendship between our two nations and peoples.

She also visited a number of sites with special connections to Japan, such as the Japanese School, which was established

in 1978; the Institute for Japanese Studies at the University of Vienna; and the Japanese Garden of Schönbrunn Castle. She also attended a few events that had been organised especially for her, including a performance by the Vienna Boys' Choir, a demonstration at the Spanish Riding School and ballet at the Vienna State Opera.

With her noble and charming personality, she made a great impression on the general public and the media in Austria.

What did President Van der Bellen do during his visit to Japan in October?

He was invited to attend the enthronement of Emperor Naruhito on 22 October. The president was particularly impressed by the sober, solemn and spiritual nature of the proceedings, as well as the millennia-long traditions behind them.

While he was here, he also opened an exhibition called "The Habsburg Dynasty: 600 Years of Imperial Collections" at the National Museum of Western Art in Tokyo – part of the 150th anniversary celebrations – and visited the Tsurugaoka Hachimangu Shrine complex in Kamakura, where he was welcomed and escorted around the grounds by the chief priest.

President Van der Bellen also gave a keynote speech at the Austria Connect Japan business forum, which takes place every two years, and opened the Vienna products exhibition. He then met with the Japanese government advisor on alternative energy sources, Mr Shigeru Muraki, and visited the Smart Energy Networks Park in Tamachi, Tokyo.

What are your goals for the embassy in 2020?

The Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games are very much at the centre of our attention at the Austrian Embassy, as they are for the whole world. A very prominent location in Shibuya has been chosen for the Austria House pavilion, which will host all sorts of activities and events for the public during the Games.

We also appreciate the support of Japanese host cities for Austrian athletes, including

“Her Imperial Highness ... expressed the desire for continued friendship between our two nations and peoples”



ROBERT WALTERS JAPAN

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Hanamaki in Iwate Prefecture, Saijo in Ehime Prefecture, Azumino in Nagano Prefecture and Fuchu in Tokyo Prefecture. They all have long-standing relationships with Austria – through their partner city cooperations with Austrian towns – some of which date back several decades. The Games will provide a magnificent backdrop for highlighting Austrian excellence, not only in the field of sports but also in culture, science and technology. Austria is ready to contribute to this global celebration of peace and international encounters, hosted here in Japan.

How are you seeing the EU–Japan Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) benefiting Austria and Austrian businesses?

Among the main beneficiaries are certainly Japanese consumers, who now have access to Austrian wine, fruit juice and other foodstuffs either free of import duties or at reduced rates. In addition, our important wood exports to Japan are



“The Games will provide a magnificent backdrop for highlighting Austrian excellence”

becoming more competitive, thus lowering prices for construction and housing in Japan.

We also consider the EPA to be a welcome framework to present Austria as a destination for investments. We have specialised lawyers, tax accountants and forwarding agents for all of Europe, our national airline serves cities throughout central and eastern Europe, and we have one of the most business-friendly corporate tax environments. This makes Austria an excellent location for international businesses. On top of that, Vienna has been ranked the most liveable city in the world by the Economist Intelligence Unit 10 years in a row.

Could you tell me about the strategic partnership agreement that was signed between Kyoto University and the University of Vienna?

The agreement was signed on 8 October, and it elevates the institutions’ partnership to a new level. It serves to expand cooperation and foster further academic exchange. A number of collaborations are already in place in a variety of fields, for example in comparative social politics, computer science and knowledge engineering, cognitive biology, Asian studies, materials science and materials chemistry. Future collaboration may include activities such as joint seminars, mobility fellowships and mutual research and teaching visits.

Although Austria is now in a time of transition, what are your hopes for the country?

Since June of last year, we have had an unusual situation in Austria. We have had a caretaker government, which consisted of many experts and former judges, that was well received by the population, but it imposed restrictions on itself and said it would not make any major decisions.

Following an election in late September in which the People’s Party and the Greens were successful, intensive negotiations took place between the two parties to form a new coalition government. This was politically challenging, since these parties come from very different starting points in many crucial areas, such as immigration, climate change and business environment.

During the last days of 2019, we had a breakthrough in the negotiations. The negotiators were smart enough not to seek compromises on all topics. Instead, they decided that each side should have its say in their respective core competences: the Greens in areas such as climate change, environment, transport, energy, and transparency, and the People’s Party in areas such as the economy and the budget, foreign and European affairs, and homeland security. This type of cooperation is an absolute novelty in Austria – and possibly in Europe and the rest of the world.

I am glad that we now have a government capable of acting with a stable majority in parliament. This is also of great importance with regard to Austria’s participation in the decisions that are being made at the European level. ●



Vienna has been ranked the most liveable city in the world by the Economist Intelligence Unit

10

years in a row



Austria

September 2019

Japan's Princess Kako visits Austria to celebrate 150 years of diplomatic ties between the two countries. It is her first official overseas trip.

October 2019

The University of Vienna and Kyoto University sign a comprehensive cooperation agreement to expand existing research collaborations and increase the mobility of students, researchers and staff. It is the first time Kyoto University has signed such an agreement.

January 2020

Austria celebrates the 25th anniversary of its membership in the EU. It joined on 1 January 1995, following a referendum the previous year in which 66.6% voted in favour of joining.

January 2020

A new coalition government of the Austrian People's Party and the Green Party is sworn in. It is Austria's first government with a majority of female cabinet members.



Population

8,793,370 (July 2018 estimate)

Urban population: 58.5%

42.1% are 25-54 years of age



Did you know?



- The Austrian Alps comprise 62% of Austria's total area.
- Zwentendorf Nuclear Power Plant is the only nuclear power plant in the world to be fully built but never used, after a referendum saw 50.47% vote against it going into operation.

- Founded in Vienna in 1752, Tiergarten Schönbrunn is the oldest continually operating zoo in the world.
- Eisriesenwelt, located in the town of Werfen, is the world's largest ice cave at more than 42km long. Its name means world of the ice giants.



Trade with Japan

Exports to Japan: €1.48 billion

Imports from Japan: €1.05 billion

SOURCE: EUROSTAT, 2018

Main exports to Japan

Vehicles, other than railway; machinery; wood and articles made of wood; optical, photo, technical and medical apparatus; pharma products; electrical and electronic equipment.



Insights

from Advantage Austria

The Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games will be a highlight this year, with Austrian hospitality houses open to the public for the duration of the Games. As the local partner for Austria's Olympic and Paralympic committees, Advantage Austria is fully engaged in making these two houses a showcase for Austrian *omotenashi* (hospitality) for all Japanese and foreign visitors who drop by.

We will also organise Austrian startup presentations focused on lifestyle, sports, hospitality and wellness solutions during the Olympics, and on rehabilitation technologies and services during the Paralympics.

INGOMAR LOCHSCHMIDT,
COMMERCIAL COUNSELLOR AT THE
AUSTRIAN EMBASSY AND HEAD OF
ADVANTAGE AUSTRIA TOKYO



“Japanese companies continue to show a strong interest in Austrian products”





BUSINESSES FROM ...

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A look at some companies from the region



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Alain Delfosse

Choosing the road
less travelled



In 1992, just one year after the collapse of the USSR, Alain Delfosse and a friend from university decided to spend a month travelling around Romania and Bulgaria, before returning to their hometown of Zurich. But on the way, they discussed going through Slovakia to the border with Ukraine to see if they could get into the country while it celebrated the first anniversary of its independence.

“I had \$600 in my pocket, a few boxes of cigarettes and a map of Eurasia,” he says. **“Equipped only with these essentials, we headed for the border.”**

The Ukrainian border guards, impressed by their reason for wanting to enter the country, granted them a two-week visa. And, starting with this trip to Kyiv, so began a three-month journey across the former

Soviet Union and parts of Asia — perhaps proof that Delfosse is happiest when taking the road less travelled.

“It was great — everything was in blue and yellow, the colours of the Ukraine flag,” he remembers. “Then we met some students who said, ‘Do you realise that now the Soviet Union is no more, there are all these different countries — Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Russia — with no border control?’ And we thought, ‘Well, here we go.’”

Using their map to track their progress, the friends travelled through countries such as Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, then followed the trans-Siberian route to Vladivostok before sailing to Japan, where Delfosse would relocate permanently in 2003. Today, he is the Japan country manager at SWIFT, one of the world’s largest financial transaction network providers, with several trillion dollars going through its network daily.

“all of a sudden, he took out his pistol and started to shoot”

vodka to help pass the four-hour drive.

“Then, all of a sudden, he took out his pistol and started to shoot out of the window into the wilderness around the Pamir mountains,” Delfosse recalls.

“He asked me if I wanted to try, stopped the car, and handed me his Red Army pistol. I shot it a few times — I remember there was a lot of recoil.”

These days, when Delfosse is in the mood for a drink, he’s more likely to have a glass of wine. Recently, when he was visiting his father’s small winery in Hungary, he was converted to the joys of making wine at home.

“We did everything from the harvesting to the bottling,” he says. “The grape type we used was Pinot Noir. Not very sophisticated, but it makes a very solid table wine.”

As a hobbyist winemaker, Delfosse has gained a new understanding of and appreciation for wine. He can ensure that his wine is suitable for vegan friends and continues to be amazed by the magic of the fermentation process. But what he likes the most about making wine from scratch is how it brings people together.

“This year, we made 200 litres of wine. It’s not much, but it’s enough to give away to friends,” he says. “The neighbours were all there too; it was a community thing. It was very messy and lots of hard work — I loved it.”

Taking the road less travelled can certainly be fun and enlightening, but it’s always more enjoyable to travel along it with friends. ●

Do you like natto?

Time spent working in Japan:
17 years.

Career regret:
It would have been great to have had a mentor.

Favourite saying:
“True knowledge exists in knowing that you know nothing.” — Socrates.

Favourite book:
The Lord of the Rings by J. R. R. Tolkien. It’s all about adventure, friendships and travel. This book will still be read in 500 years.

Cannot live without:
Family. My partner is a lawyer from Australia, and we have a French bulldog.

Lesson learned in Japan:
Customers are very demanding here, so I’ve learned to keep my focus on product and service quality.

Secret of success in business:
Be open, listen to your staff and customers, be curious and always keep learning.

Favourite place to dine:
I love Vineria Ciao dal Chiodo in Tamachi. But for places that are dog-friendly, there’s a great burger place in Yoyogi called ARMS.

Do you like natto?:
You know what? I actually quite like it. If you gave me the choice between Vegemite and natto, I’d pick natto.



Insurance

Sound strategies

Advocacy is the main activity of the EBC's committees, but that's not all members spend their time on. The committees also serve as forums for sharing information and best practices.

While the Insurance Committee has two dense pages of advocacy issues in the 2018 EBC white paper, committee chair Kazutaka Matsuda says his group isn't spending much time on them these days. Instead, many of the members' efforts are focused on trying to determine the expectations Japanese regulators at the Financial Services Agency (FSA) have of insurance companies.

"We are looking at what the FSA's focus is going to be next," he says. "Some members are thinking about offering new products, strategies, etc. So, rather than just talking about lobbying issues, I think our first priority is to think about our strategies."

A good example of this involves "term insurance" products. These policies are sold in Japan to small and medium-sized businesses and are designed not only to provide the policyholders with insurance protection, but tax benefits as well. However, the FSA has claimed that when insurance

providers sell the products, they too often emphasise the tax advantages over insurance protection.

"In their guidelines, they said that only explaining the tax issue wasn't acceptable, and that the industry needs to change its sales style," explains committee member Kenzo Nishimura of NN Life. "But for us, the standard is not clear."

Matsuda notes that it's the providers who have to figure out "the extent we need to explain things to the FSA and how much regulation will be involved in the approval process".

As with all other types of new and sophisticated insurance products, the situation is a balancing act between innovation, future challenges and protecting the customer's needs, according to the chair.

"These are the key elements we need to look at," he says, adding that his industry is required to consult with the FSA considerably more now than in the past.

Japan's demographics are a big factor. The population is ageing, so the social security system is coming under greater financial strains. Thus, the FSA is looking to insurance products, particularly health-related ones, as a potentially effective way of helping citizens survive financially in a greying society.

Matsuda, of AXA Life Insurance Co., says insurance companies are proposing innovative new products to fill this need.

"Based on lifestyle changes, technology and digitalisation, all the players are thinking more about new services, especially in health-services areas like nursing care."

In the meantime, he says, "The FSA wants to know what we're thinking, in terms of new services for customers."

For another committee member, Yuka Fuji of Cardif Japan, the main issue is the influence large Japanese insurers can have on banks, due to their shareholdings in the institutions. Her company's main business is credit protection insurance, whereby it is contracted by a bank to insure its individual mortgage customers, who number in the tens of thousands.

The fear is that the insurers' influence may sway the bank's decisions on their selection of insurance products.

"There is only one insurance contract with a bank, as they are the policyholder," she explains. "But there are 20,000, 30,000 or even more borrowers who join on as the insureds, so the transaction is huge. If the contract is lost, it could have a significant adverse impact on us."

The EBC is calling for such partnerships between banks and insurers to be based on "quality of products and services", and not on equity relationships.

Regardless of the type of product, insurance is expected to play an increasingly important role in Japan in the future, according to Matsuda.

"Insurance companies," he says, "are always thinking about what we can do for our customers and society, based on our data, experience and skills." ●

Kazutaka Matsuda is executive officer, general counsel, Legal & Compliance at AXA Life Insurance Co. and chairperson of the EBC Insurance Committee.

Advocacy issues

➔ Solvency

Japan should quicken the pace of its reforms to align its solvency standards with global standards.

➔ Product approvals

Instead of pre-approval, insurers should be allowed to register their products under a newly established system to enhance products' innovation.

➔ Fair competition

In light of the strong influence Japanese insurers have over Japanese banks, competition should be based on the quality and selection of products, rather than on shareholding relationships.



The Agenda

**JAN
30**POLISH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND
INDUSTRY IN JAPAN**PCCIJ New Year's
Party**

TIME: 18:30 to 21:00
VENUE: Embassy of the Republic of
Poland in Tokyo
FEE: ¥5,000 (for members), ¥6,000
(for non-members)
CONTACT: secretariat@pccij.or.jp

**FEB
18**GERMAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND
INDUSTRY IN JAPAN**German SME
Industrie 4.0**

TIME: 13:00 to 16:00
VENUE: Toranomon Hills Mori Tower, 4F
FEE: Free
CONTACT: emitsumura@dihkj.or.jp

**FEB
6**IRELAND JAPAN CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE**IJCC Joint Networking
Event with the ACCJ
2020**

TIME: 19:00 to 21:00
VENUE: Irish Ambassador's Residence
FEE: ¥5,500 (for members), ¥8,000
(for non-members)
CONTACT: secretariat@ijcc.jp

**FEB
20**SWISS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND
INDUSTRY IN JAPAN**Plastic Waste
and Corporate
Responsibility**

TIME: 12:00 to 14:00
VENUE: Shangri-La Hotel Tokyo,
The Pavilion (27F)
FEE: ¥6,500 or one SCCIJ 2020
voucher (for members), ¥8,000 (for
non-members)
CONTACT: info@sccij.jp

**FEB
17**BELGIAN-LUXEMBOURG CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE IN JAPAN**February Beer
Gathering**

TIME: 19:00 to 22:00
VENUE: Belgian beer café in Tokyo
FEE: Pay for what you drink
CONTACT: info@blccj.or.jp

**MAR
3**EMBASSY OF SWITZERLAND TO JAPAN,
SCCIJ AND IMD BUSINESS SCHOOL**3rd Switzerland-Japan
Economic Forum**

TIME: Imperial Hotel Tokyo
VENUE: Invitation only
CONTACT: info@sccij.jp

**MAR
5**SCCIJ AND THE JAPAN-SWISS SOCIETY**Japan-Swiss Spring
Ball 2020**

TIME: 18:00 to 22:00
VENUE: Imperial Hotel Tokyo, Banquet
Hall Fuji (3F)
FEE: ¥27,000
CONTACT: japanswiss@yahoo.ne.jp



A global gathering

The EBC hosts the EBO WWN for its annual general meeting

The European Business Organisation Worldwide Network (EBO WWN) was created 19 years ago to provide a platform for global and regional European business organisations (EBOs) to share best practices and to advocate for European businesses in third markets. It currently has 42 member organisations across five continents. The EBO WWN is supported by the European Commission's Directorate for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs – which also deals with international affairs – an arrangement that gives its members greater clout.

From 2 to 4 December, the organisation's annual general meeting was held in Tokyo – for the first time ever – and was organised by the European Business Council in Japan (EBC) at the Delegation of the European Union to Japan. Of the EBO WWN's 42 members, 28 representatives attended.

“Our organisational structures may vary – they can be chambers of chambers, chambers of members or a hybrid of the two – but what does not certainly change is the

mission of advocacy on behalf of European companies operating in third markets,” stated Jason Collins, chairman of the EBO WWN, at the end of a workshop on governance.

Japan was chosen to host the event in large part due to the entry into force of the EU–Japan Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) last February – and notwithstanding the fact that the EBC only joined this network less than a year ago. For the EBC, which is primarily advocacy-oriented, this was one of the most important international events it has ever organised. The decisive factors for the success of this meeting were the sponsorships and financial support we received from our members, including Mercedes-Benz, Nihon Michelin Tire, Airbus, BMW, LVMH, Moët Hennessy Diageo, Randstad,

B. Braun, Metro, Puratos and Siemens Healthcare.

Over the three days of the general meeting, EBO representatives had the opportunity to present their most recent projects; their challenges, in terms of governance and fundraising; and the potential opportunities presented by several free trade agreement (FTA) negotiations currently underway with the EU in many EBO WWN member countries. It was interesting to note that, apart from a few nations, such as Malaysia, the Philippines and Myanmar, many of the EBOs are in countries that

“It was a very productive meeting ... not only for understanding better the bilateral business opportunities arising from the EPA, but also the connectivity possibilities”



Members of the EBO WWN with Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike

have concluded, or have started negotiations on, an FTA with the EU.

The programme on the first day started with a morning of talks on Japan, the EPA and the EBC, and it was opened by a message from Ambassador of the EU to Japan Patricia Flor. Governor of Tokyo Yuriko Koike, who was also in attendance, welcomed the EBO WWN delegates and gave a talk highlighting the opportunities for Tokyo in 2020, the year it hosts the Olympic and Paralympic Games, as well as detailing the city's continuing efforts to establish itself as an international financial, economic and cultural hub. Then, after greetings from EBC Chairman Michael Mroczek, Director for Trade Policy at the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) Tetsuya Watanabe spoke about the importance that METI and the Japanese government place on the successful implementation of the EPA.

This session dedicated to Japan finished with an interesting exchange of experiences with three European businessmen – Karl Hahne of Häfele Japan, Carl Eklund of Höganäs Japan and Michael Loefflad of DKSH Japan, all long-time residents of the country – who explained to the delegates the peculiarities of doing business here and how the EPA has eased many longstanding challenges.

The remaining two and a half days of the general meeting were organised into closed sessions giving delegates the chance to take stock of the current state of the network, and to set out an initial agenda for increasing the EBO WWN's visibility and strategic engagement with EU institutions, as

About the EBO WWN

Key objectives

- To support the development of European business organisations (EBOs) in third markets
- To strengthen the links between EU institutions and EBOs in third markets
- To further EU economic diplomacy
- To encourage the production of position papers
- To assist the internationalisation of SMEs and micro-enterprises
- To promote a culture of cooperation within the EBO network
- To expand the EBO network

EBOs present in Tokyo for the annual general meeting

Ghana, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Ivory Coast, Japan, Macedonia, Malaysia, Moldova, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, the Philippines, Senegal, Singapore, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, and Trinidad and Tobago



EBC Chairman Michael Mroczek



Jason Collins, chairman of the EBO WWN



Governor of Tokyo Yuriko Koike



Ambassador of the EU to Japan Patricia Flor

well as other stakeholders, at this critical time of change – with a newly appointed EU Commission, its new priorities and the increase in opportunities to acquire more resources for the network.

Delegates also had the chance to attend a seminar on EU–Japan business collaborations in third markets. Jason Collins, EBO WWN chair, along with EBO WWN delegates Renato Pacheco (Brazil), Maximilien Lemaire (Ivory Coast) and Nele Cornelis (Singapore) shared their experiences in a wide-ranging panel discussion.

The three-day meeting ended with a site visit to TÜV Rheinland's laboratory facilities in Yokohama so that the delegates could see first-hand how different standards between Japan and the EU continue to have

an adverse impact on European businesses' operations here.

“It was a very productive meeting,” said Collins at the final session, “not only for understanding better the bilateral business opportunities arising from the EPA, but also the connectivity possibilities in third markets, which were so effectively showcased throughout.”

He concluded by thanking the EBC for organising such a successful event. ●

Francesco Formiconi is the executive director of the EBC.





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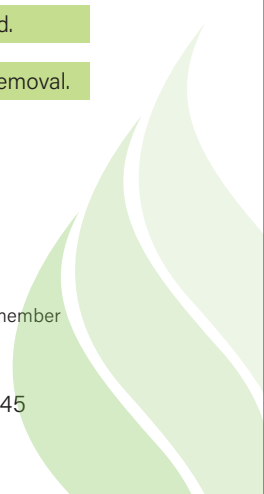
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Super strength for the masses

Exoskeletons are transforming the work place

When I was a kid, I loved an American TV show called *The Six Million Dollar Man*, which was about an astronaut who gains superhuman abilities after he's augmented with very expensive bionic eyesight and limbs. The \$6 million price tag for these bionics in 1973 would have been equivalent to some \$38 million in 2020. But, today, if you want to augment your body's strength you can just go to your local big box electronics shop and plunk down ¥149,600 for a powered exoskeleton.

That's the price for a standard Muscle Suit from Tokyo University of Science spinoff Innophys. Exoskeletons aren't bionics, which are integrated into the body — and they can't make you run fast, jump high or crush things like Steve Austin, the hero of *The Six Million Dollar Man* — but the Muscle Suit does allow you to lift up to 25.5kg with assistive force. Since the suit is powered by compressed air and pneumatic artificial muscles, it doesn't require electricity. It's also water-resistant and can be used outdoors. That can be very handy if you're lugging loads at a farm, factory or construction site, or even moving bedridden or paralysed people in a care facility.

sales of exoskeletons for industry use could grow ... to \$1.76 billion in 2028

The suits can also help people with disabilities.

The concept has been around for decades, but only in recent years have developers been given regulatory approval. There's also a greater need for them now. As Japan's workforce gets smaller and older, ageing workers are increasingly turning to these technological solutions. In 2015, Cyberdyne — a spinoff from the University of Tsukuba, which has its exoskeletons in automotive facilities throughout Japan — got the OK to distribute its Hybrid Assistive Limb (HAL) for Lumbar Support to workers in Europe, which is also grappling with an ageing working population.

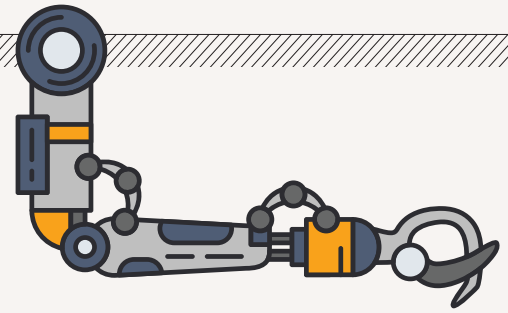
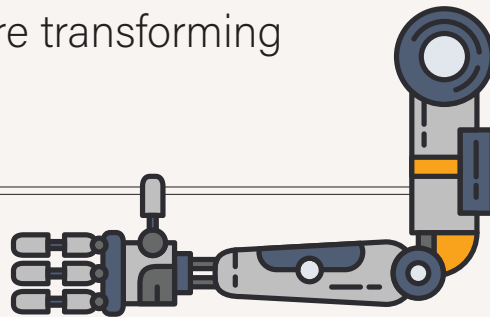
European companies are also vying for market share. German orthopaedics firm Ottobock got its start in 1919 making prosthetics for World War One veterans. In October 2018, it launched the

Paexo Shoulder, a 1.9kg harness that transfers overhead loads to the hips, easing the strain for people working in places such as factories and shipyards. Last year, it launched the Paexo Wrist and Paexo Thumb. The latter has been billed “the smallest exoskeleton in the world” and can ostensibly reduce thumb loads by up to 70%, which could help workers who have to perform repetitive plugging or inserting actions on assembly lines.

However, Ottobock is facing competition from Turin-based Comau, which teamed up with both the BioRobotics Institute of the Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies in Italy and Icelandic orthopaedics firm Ossur to produce MATE, a 3kg upper-body exoskeleton that assists workers doing repetitive lifting.

According to a forecast by ABI Research, sales of exoskeletons for industry use could grow from \$67.3 million in 2018 to \$1.76 billion in 2028, equivalent to more than 126,000 units. The biggest sign they're going mainstream in the work place is the Ford Motor Company deploying California-based Ekso Bionics' EksoVest in all its US plants. The device can deliver up to 6.8kg of lift assist per arm, which is valuable support for workers who have to lift with their arms over 4,000 times a day.

When it introduced the moving assembly line in 1913, Ford revolutionised mass production, making cars cheaper and transforming transport and society. Now, by adopting this new technology, the firm is helping to make un-augmented workers a thing of the past. ●

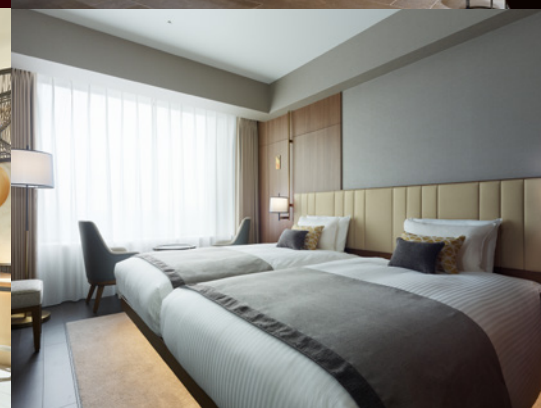
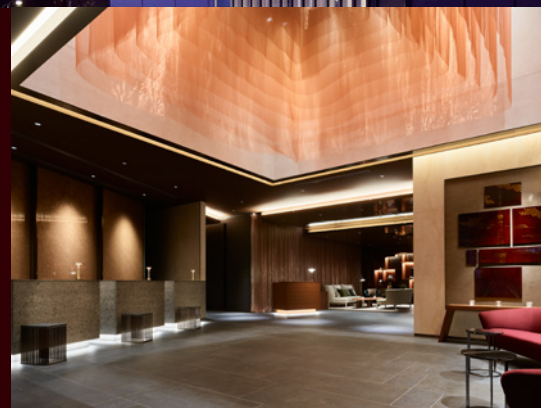




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20/20 vision

Business trends for the new year

At the start of both a new year and a new decade, it's time to make some predictions about what's ahead for Japan. Here are five 20/20 calls for the new business annum.

JAPAN CASHES IN

To build a cashless society, governments have to support retailers that promote alternatives to cash, offer incentives to customers and fully exploit the advantages of existing technology — and Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry is doing just that. A growing number of retailers are adopting cashless payment options and are giving customers a 5% rebate. Meanwhile, GlobalData estimates credit card transactions alone in Japan will hit ¥72.4 trillion in 2020, up from ¥68.1 trillion last year. Within seven years, the government's "Cashless Vision" expects to see non-legal tender transactions at 40%, with more point-of-sale (POS) terminals, contactless IC card readers, QR-code payment systems and crypto-currencies in use. Convenience store giant Lawson's says that already a quarter of its transactions are cashless — and rising — while retailer Aeon projects it will have 100,000 POS terminals by yearend.

MORE TANGIBLE TECH

Some 5.1 million people are employed by Japan's construction industry. It's a big number but is actually down 27% from a bubble-era peak. Investment in 2019 was the highest since 2000, but the industry faces an ageing and shrinking workforce, even if business continues to be as strong after the

Olympics — and that's far from likely. So, enter the robots, with some firms eyeing 75% automation in the coming years. R&D spending by construction firms jumped 15.5% last year, the highest among all Japanese business sectors, and is an investment certain to turn 21st century morning worksite calisthenics into less a scene from *Gung Ho* and more one from *Star Wars*.

EV-ENTUALLY

Electric vehicles (EVs) have been in Japan for a decade, but their market share is still thin compared with that of leaders such as Norway, which hit 50% for battery electric vehicles (BEVs) alone in 2019. But Japan's tipping point may soon come, as electrification spreads to models such as the smaller *kei* vehicles, accounting for 40% of the market. Major automakers predict a strong decade of BEVs, hybrid-electric vehicles (HEVs), plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs) and fuel cell electric vehicles (FCEVs), with some new models in gear ahead of the 2020 Tokyo Games.

SDGS & ESGS

Still hungry for acronyms? Well, the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) — international targets ranging from health and education to gender equality and climate action — will find even greater environmental, social and corporate governance (ESG) traction with everyone from Hello Kitty to the Keidanren (Japan Business Federation). Are SDGs more than talking points? Japan thinks so, after launching its Realizing Society 5.0 plan and calling for corporate follow-through.

THE PAPER CHASE

Japanese print media has begun to face a drop in readership — a trend already common overseas — and 2020 will see a pickup in the put-down. Yomiuri leads the world with morning newspaper circulation at 8.7 million copies, but overall Japanese newspaper circulation fell below 40 million for the first time and won't be coming back, as about 70% of daily newspaper readers are over 50. Nonetheless, Japanese obtain most of their essential information from newspapers and TV, doubting the reliability of online information, according to a government survey. TV news appeared less threatened, as average weekday TV time exceeded 2.5 hours, rising to over 3 hours on holidays.

And one final non-business prediction, based on hope alone, is that the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games will bring Japan a record medal haul, reinforce the nation's status as a peerless host following the success of the 2019 Rugby World Cup, and signal that Japan has the will to tackle the Reiwa Era's many challenges. ●



Fighting for minorities' rights

My work giving a voice to the voiceless in Setagaya Ward

Before I decided to run as a candidate in the April 2003 Setagaya Ward election, I had been living as a woman for years, but all of my government and ward identification documents had "male" on them. As a result, it was incredibly difficult for me to rent an apartment, to become a permanent employee and even to use my health insurance card. When I went to vote, I had trouble verifying my identity. Despite repeated efforts, the government wouldn't issue the identification documents I needed, so I struggled to access public services. I thought this was completely unreasonable.

In 2001, six transgender people filed a lawsuit against the government for not being able to change their gender on their family registers, and the case was dismissed the following year. Ultimately, the government wouldn't do anything, and the courts wouldn't either.

So, two months before the election in April 2003, I decided to run for office myself. Someone had to break into the world of politics who would listen to our needs, and I refused to waste any more time waiting for someone else to raise their voice.

After I was elected, I received a lot of attention from a variety of media outlets. In the face of all the discriminatory comments people were making about me, I was determined not to fail. I put on a confident face and decided to do everything I could for those who had cast a ballot for me.

Setagaya Ward has a population of 916,000, the largest of any of Tokyo's 23 wards and higher than the populations of seven of Japan's prefectures — which means it also has a large workforce and a large budget. And, because of its size, there are lots of minorities.

I have served Setagaya for five terms, and around 80% of my proposals have been accepted and adopted by the following year. To give a few examples of the changes I have been behind, it was at my suggestion that Setagaya now supports those who have had surgery for throat cancer or cancer of the larynx by providing subsidies for the rehabilitation of their vocal cords. Local governments across the country, covering more than 60% of Japan's population, have taken this as an example and begun a variety of similar aid schemes.

Also, I managed to convince the ward to replace the tactile

paving used to guide the blind throughout the ward to meet current safety standards. Previously, it had been very dangerous and led to some serious accidents. Other local governments are following our lead.

local government is really the frontrunner of policymaking and effecting change

Setagaya Ward started issuing partnership certificates to same-sex couples the same day as Shibuya Ward in November 2015. Since then, other local government offices across Japan have adopted this practice, covering more than 20 million people today.

I continue to work to secure equal rights for same-sex couples in Setagaya. If a heterosexual Japanese citizen loses a partner during a natural disaster, they are entitled to

¥5 million from the government to help them start rebuilding their lives — a policy that is completely separate from life insurance — with the costs divided between the federal government, the prefecture and the city or ward where they live. In light of the regulation prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation adopted in Setagaya last year, I argued in September that if a heterosexual common-law couple is entitled to this financial support, it is discriminatory for same-sex couples not to receive it as well. The other ward councillors agreed, and we are now working on the specifics of how the existing policy should be changed. We have asked the national government to follow suit.

What starts in one local government office has the potential to spread to the entire country. A lot of people see local government as being at the margins of

politics, but from my perspective, particularly in the context of a conservative federal government, local government is really the frontrunner of policymaking and effecting change. What can't be accomplished at the national level can be accomplished at the local level — especially when it

identity disorder” — there are five requirements: that you are over the age of 20, are unmarried, have no children under the age of 20, have undergone surgical sterilisation and have genitals that match your target sex. Every one of these is unjust. Compelling people to be sterilised is inhumane and something that must be abolished.

I believe that, in the coming years, that high hurdle for changing your gender will be lowered. But change won't come through the Diet; I'm sure it'll come through the courts. The current structure of the law already seems to be on its last legs. In a recent supreme court case — in which all four judges upheld the requirements for sex reassignment surgery and stated that, at present, they do not believe it violates the constitution — two judges included written opinions on the ruling that noted they had doubts about the requirements' constitutionality and that it was an issue that needed to be revisited. If everything goes well, I believe we will see this change in as few as five but no more than 10 years.

During my 16 years as a politician, I've often been saddened by our social systems, sometimes almost to the point of despair. But whenever I feel that way, I remember that the best alternative to despair is to fight. ●

comes to giving minorities the rights that they deserve. And Setagaya has a significant liberal base of residents who support new policies.

Currently, the biggest issue facing the transgender community in Japan is that the hurdle for officially changing your gender is far too high. Under Japan's Act on Special Cases in Handling Gender Status for Persons with Gender Identity Disorder — going along with the condition that you have been diagnosed as having “gender



Aya Kamikawa, an independent politician, has served as a councillor for Setagaya Ward since 2003. She is the first openly transgender person to hold elected office in Japan.





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Driving the team

The head coach of the Japan Golf Association National Team

While a lot of attention is paid to golf's professional team events — such as the Ryder Cup, Solheim Cup and Presidents Cup — there are also a number of major amateur tournaments around the world, the most famous of which is probably the Walker Cup. Japanese golfers compete in amateur tournaments such as the World Amateur Team Championships and Asia Pacific Team Championships, while individual amateur players have their own majors.

Japan's football and rugby teams are often coached by foreigners who immerse themselves in Japanese sport and culture, but the head coach of the Japan Golf Association National Team is an Australian who doesn't speak Japanese and spends much of his time in his hometown of Adelaide.

"One major reason for employing me was my lack of Japanese language skills," Gareth Jones told *Eurobiz Japan*. "We felt it was more important for the players to start to learn English and improve their own educational skillset."

The 48-year-old Jones, who was named Australian Golf Digest Coach of the Year in 2018, does a lot of his communicating to team members via an app called CoachNow.

"This helps the players become more responsible and take ownership of their learning plan," he says.

So, what does the head coach of Japan's national golf teams do?

"The role is to set and implement the National Coaching Plan and Curriculum for the national team and then a regional curriculum to set a player and coach pathway for Japan golf," Jones explains. "I'm also fully involved in practical coaching and education of Team Japan athletes."

Part of this is the use of a data-driven, high-performance programme, as well as creating improvement plans for the golfers in coordination with their coaches. Jones's brief also includes sports science medi-

to improve and also the major strengths that the players will base their game plan around."

Amateur golfers can have pretty packed calendars.

"We have a vast schedule of international events from tournaments in Australia to the British, European, US and Asian Amateur Championships, plus major international team events," Jones points out. "We have to be wary of burnout."

Jones praises the work ethic and motivation of Japanese players but recognises that they need more international exposure and extra strength training to make up for their smaller stature. But he would also like to see changes in the domestic scene.

"The driving range culture possibly makes many players very technical and gets them constantly working on technique," he notes. "People just need to play more golf. We need more public golf courses and more pitch-and-putt courses like in the UK to get children playing."

"My job prior to tournaments is to help players prepare technically, physically and mentally for tournament golf"

cine and providing education and professional development opportunities for Japanese PGA and LPGA coaches.

Jones — who has been coaching Team Japan for over four years — is hands-on at competition time.

"My job prior to tournaments is to help players prepare technically, physically and mentally for tournament golf," he says. "We spend a lot of time analysing data from our statistics programme, Shots to Hole, to find the most important areas

Japan's women were runners-up in the 2018 World Amateur Team Championship while the men's team could only manage 15th, even though rising star Takumi Kanaya placed second individually. With the Tokyo 2020 Games coming up later this year, Jones believes the future is bright — as long as team members get the right input.

"They have high goals and expectations," says Jones. "If the information we give them is good, then the likelihood is they will be successful." ●



Gareth Jones at the 2018 Asian Games with gold medallist Keita Nakajima



Not your typical tippie

Novelties of the wine world



As if the world of wine wasn't already varied enough, there's a growing interest in wines that are made in a completely different way than your standard bottle of Cabernet Sauvignon or Pinot Noir. Here's a taste of some of the most intriguing wines on the market today.

Orange Wine

Don't let the name fool you — orange wine has nothing to do with the fruit and everything to do with the colour. It's a type of white wine that owes its unusual hue to prolonged skin and seed contact, often with vibrantly coloured white grapes such as Pinot Grigio. Most white wines are made by pressing the juice and removing the skins immediately, resulting in a clear, light white. But orange wines, like red wines, are left to ferment together with the skin and seeds, extracting both colour and tannin.

It's typically a highly natural process, using few additives and preservatives. The result is an orange-coloured wine that has a rich and deep flavour, which can have notes of melon, herbs and nuts. If you haven't already tried one of these trendy wines — with their origins in ancient winemaking practices — be forewarned. They're very different from contemporary whites.

Retsina

From Greece comes a reminder of how wine may have tasted in antiquity. Retsina, a white wine infused with pine sap, is still made today in the Mediterranean nation. In Ancient Greece, wines often had herbs and fruit added for flavour, and honey, tree sap and salt for preservation. Since the bottles of the time were primitive clay pots (and, of course, sulphur dioxide wasn't yet being used), keeping a wine from oxidising into vinegar was a top priority. Salt from seawater, mixed with pine sap, became the most effective means of preservation. Such a concoction would likely be considered undrinkable today, but modern winemakers are rejuvenating this traditional technique, using the local pine sap to make an updated Retsina. It's a wine that's still characterised by a distinct salinity and resin, but the fruit flavours themselves are now allowed to shine through.

a taste of some of the most **intriguing** wines on the market today

Vinho de Talha

In Portugal's Alentejo region, ancient Roman winemaking techniques have been preserved — and are making a comeback — in the production of *vinho de talha* or, literally, wine of clay vessels. With recipes and methods from more than 2,000 years ago, *talha* is made by crushing grapes and then allowing natural fermentation to occur in the clay pots. Grape skins and seeds rise to the top of the pot to form a kind of cap, which is repeatedly pushed down during fermentation for thorough maceration. This cap settles at the bottom once fermentation is complete and serves as a filter for the wine, which is tapped at the base of the talha. According to locals, it's one of the simplest, most natural wines you can find and is loaded with vitamins and antioxidants.

There's no time like the new year for new experiences. Why not make a resolution to try one of these unique wines? ●



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Hungry? Where do you like to go for a bite?

Brozers' in Nihonbashi. Their Lot Burger makes for a perfect lunch.

What do you do to stay in shape?

I go for a short morning jog.

Name a favourite movie: *Scent of a Woman*, starring Al Pacino.

Favourite musician: José Carreras, whom I had the honour of meeting on two occasions in Tokyo thanks to a dear friend.

Favourite album: *Tosca* by Puccini.

Favourite TV show: I still can't get excited about Japanese TV ...

Favourite book: *A Lawyer's Life* by Johnnie Cochran.

What's something a lot of people don't know about you?

know about you?

Most people think of me as Swiss, but I actually hold dual-citizenship, having been born in Poland.

Cats or dogs?

Dogs.

Summer or winter?

Summer — until I moved from Switzerland to Japan.

What's your ideal weekend?

Relaxing in a traditional wooden *onsen* in the mountains of Nagano after a day of snowboarding.

Where do you go for a drink after a busy week?

It's not about where, but rather with whom. Good friends are rare.

"I had the honour of meeting [José Carreras] on two occasions in Tokyo"



Carl Eklund

Company: Höganäs Japan KK

Title: President

Originally from: Gothenburg, Sweden

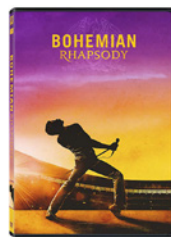
Time in Japan: I've been here since the early '80s

Hungry? Where do you like to go for a bite?

One of my favourites is Bimi Yamucha in Daikanyama. It serves excellent Taiwanese and Hong Kong cuisine. But the very best is my kitchen at home — my wife can outcook most chefs.

What do you do to stay in shape?

I watch what I eat, and have lots of vegetables. I also do some walking and jogging daily.



Name a favourite movie:

Michael Jackson's This Is It, and I really enjoyed *Bohemian Rhapsody*.

Favourite musicians: David Bowie and Stevie Wonder. I was lucky to have met and talked with both of them

when they came to Tokyo.

Favourite TV show: The BBC's *Panorama* is good. Some episodes have been major exposés.

Favourite book: *Hit Refresh* by Satya Nadella. It's good to be reminded about the need for constant change.

What's something a lot of people don't know about you?

I speak five languages well and understand a few more, and I'm also a bit of a maniac for numbers and history.

Cats or dogs?

Dogs. I grew up with a fantastic St. Bernard.

Summer or winter?

Both. Growing up in Sweden, I preferred the summer, but winter is great in Japan.

What's your ideal weekend?

Going skiing or golfing with my wife and friends, before having a nice dinner at home.

Where do you go for a drink after a busy week?

Since I have quite a lot of business dinners, it's great to relax at home.

TONY WHEELER,
GENERAL MANAGER

Heineken Kirin K.K.

Last year was a groundbreaking one for Heineken, with the spectacular success of Rugby World Cup Japan 2019, for which it was a worldwide partner. Now, the company is looking forward to 2020 as Japan welcomes what is expected to be the largest-ever number of visitors from around the world.

“Heineken, enjoyed in 192 countries worldwide, is once again well positioned as Japan’s number one international beer brand,” says Tony Wheeler, general manager of Heineken Kirin K.K. “This year we are excited to be launching engaging international experiences for our consumers that complement our unique global platforms.” ●



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