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RECENT ACTIVITIES OF THE EU-JAPAN CENTRE FOR INDUSTRIAL COOPERATION RELATED TO THE AGRI-FOOD SECTOR

Given the importance of the agri-food sector for EU SMEs interested in the Japanese market and benefiting from the EU-Japan EPA, here is background information on the activities of the [EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation](#) over the last years in this important sector.

Overall, the EU-Japan Centre's activities combine three main dimensions in order to:

- *Inform, mobilise* EU and Japan stakeholders, notably from industry, and identify opportunities for EU-Japan cooperation (via events, webinars and analytical reports) and *operationalise* these opportunities into concrete actions (via business matchmaking)
- *Inspire, draw lessons and learn* from existing EU-Japan existing business cooperation cases (via concrete case studies) to *build new* industry cooperation, and engage new stakeholders – snow ball effect
- *Leverage* (i) EU and Japanese businesses both directly (via B2B matchmaking) and indirectly (via the industrial clusters hosting many businesses, notably SMEs) and (ii) EU Member States *Trade Promotion Organisation* (via joint action with them – Team Europe approach) as well as Japanese actions and organisations.

It is the *synergetic combination* of all these actions and dimensions that brings high added value to the activities of the EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation. No single 'solve-it-all solution', but a coherent package of actions that – together – are meaningful and effective.

1. Events / webinars – have mobilized many EU and Japan stakeholders, mostly from industry

The EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation organized a series of events online to support further trade, industry, innovation and economic cooperation between Europe and Japan in the agri-food sector (the corresponding video recordings, slides and reports are available), such as:

- [Japanese Food and Beverage Days 2022](#), 15-18 February 2022
- [Premium food market in Japan](#), 26 October 2021
- [Japanese vegan & vegetarian markets](#), 12 October 2021
- [Opportunities for EU Companies in Japan's Organic Food & Beverage Market](#), September 2020
- [Japanese frozen food and ice cream market](#), 28 September 2021
- [Japan's Premium Food market](#), June 2021
- [Japanese Food and Beverage Days 2021](#), 10-26 March 2021
- [Sicily2Japan](#), 28 September -2 October 2020
- [Step in Japan](#)

Online Training series on "[Export to Japan](#)" include 35 webinars, many of them on the agri-food sector, for example:

- [EU Advantages on Agriculture and Food Products: Dairy products](#), 16 February 2022
- Online training programme; Get Ready For Japan, 16 May-27 May 2022
- [Online follow up training programme; Are You Really Ready For Japan](#); 30 November -1 December 2021
- [Online training programme; Get Ready For Japan](#), 31 May-11 June 2021
- [Online training programme: World Class Manufacturing](#), 16 November-20 November 2020
- [Online training programme; Get Ready For Japan](#), 1 September -18 September 2020
- Online training programme: World Class Manufacturing, 7 March -11 March 2022
- [Online training programme: World Class Manufacturing](#), 15 November- 19 November 2021
- [Online training programme: World Class Manufacturing](#), 8 March -12 March 2021

In its ongoing efforts to help European SMEs to access the Japanese market, the EU-Japan Centre is also co-organizing "Export Support" webinars and workshops in cooperation with the EU Member organizations of Enterprise Europe Network (EEN). Here are some examples:

- Belgium: <https://www.eu-japan.eu/export-support-online-workshop-food-sector-belgium>
- Poland: <https://www.eu-japan.eu/export-support-online-workshop-food-sector-poland>
- Hungary: <https://www.eu-japan.eu/events/export-support-online-workshop-food-sector-hungary>
- Italy: <https://www.eu-japan.eu/events/export-support-online-workshop-food-sector-italy-0>
- Lithuania: <https://www.eu-japan.eu/events/export-support-online-workshop-food-sector-lithuania>
- Estonia: <https://www.eu-japan.eu/events/export-support-online-workshop-food-sector-estonia>
- Croatia: <https://www.eu-japan.eu/events/export-support-webinar-food-sector-croatia>
- Bulgaria: <https://www.eu-japan.eu/events/export-support-webinar-food-sector-bulgaria>
- Spain: <https://www.eu-japan.eu/events/export-support-webinar-food-sector-barcelona-spain>

[EPA Helpdesk](#)

The EPA Helpdesk has published / is publishing dozens of factsheets covering factual information about the changes brought by the EPA and organizes related webinars. All webinars are recorded and are available with the relevant factsheet. Many of these factsheets and webinars concern the agri-food sectors, e.g. dairy products, meat, fruits and vegetables, spirit and beers.

Our EPA Helpdesk also released in May 2021 a "[EPA Handbook – a guide to help EU SMEs import Japanese products](#)". Another [guidebook for EU exporters to Japan](#) has also been prepared.

See also interview in Euronews: <https://www.euronews.com/embed/909988>

2. Concrete case studies of EU businesses in the agri-food sector

The EU-Japan Centre has highlighted the following existing business cases:

- [Success Story: Formosa Gourmet](#)
- [Business Partnership Agreement between Natural Machines and Innova Global](#) (2020)
- [Greek fruit-based products on the Japanese market](#) (2020)
- [Traditional honey from Estonia reaches Japan](#) (2019)
- [3-D printed food comes to Japan](#)

- [Sharing the Common Beer Philosophy](#) (2020)
- Italian cosmetic company [Kurabeauty](#) concluded a partnership with a company based in Japan (2021)

3. [Industrial clusters: Best practice of EU-Japan cooperation](#) :

The EU-Japan Regional Cooperation [Annual Conference & Matchmaking](#) was held on 17-18 May 2021 on the theme of “Future of the EU-Japan Regional Cooperation”, with 136 participants from Europe and Japan, including 7 prefectures and 2 cities from Japan, 6 regions and one city from Europe, and 11 clusters from Japan and Europe. Day 1 was dedicated to a conference. Day 2 was focusing on matchmaking of clusters/ regions / prefectures in a number of sectors, including the agri-food sector. This event was organized by the EU-Japan Regional Cooperation Helpdesk (CEEJA and CLAIR) and the EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation, in cooperation with the European Cluster Collaboration Platform.

The Helpdesk also organised a series of best practice webinars related to different sectors, including the following in the agri-food sector:

- [10 years of WIN-WIN relations on Agri-Food innovation](#), 8 January 2021, cooperation between the Kyushu Bio Cluster and the Vitagora Cluster, Dijon, France
- [A successful regional partnership in terms of industrial policy, food industry and cultural tourism](#), 15 March 2022, cooperation between Mie Prefecture and the Basque Country

4. **Analytical reports**

The EU-Japan Centre has prepared (via our “[MINERVA](#)” activity that is a 6 month in-house research scheme in Japan designed to support its research and policy analysis of EU-Japan economic and industrial issues) the following reports highlighting the situation in Japan and the opportunities for EU businesses. Reports and video podcast are available.

- [The Country-of-Origin Effect in Japan](#) Paul Van Der Plas 2018
- [The dairy sector in Japan: Market access and business opportunities for European companies](#) Paul Van Der Plas 2018

5. **Public Procurement in Japan**

The EU-Japan Centre’s [Helpdesk for public procurement](#) has prepared a [number of thematic reports](#) including one (October 2021) on [Government procurement and the agri-food sector](#)

6. **EU-Japan Business cooperation in and with ASEAN, Africa, Latin America**

The EU-Japan Centre has organized workshops, webinars, virtual booths and trilateral business matchmaking events to promote and support EU-Japan business cooperation in and with (i) Africa and (ii) Vietnam. This was done in cooperation with several Trade Promotion Organizations and Chambers of Commerce & Industry of the EU member States in Japan, in Africa and in Vietnam.

Through these activities, the EU-Japan Centre has promoted EU-Japan business cooperation in and with foreign markets in various sectors, including in the agricultural sector, and in particular in developing sustainable, durable and smart agriculture. While, other sectors like infrastructure are at the core of these activities, the EU-Japan Centre does not exclude business support activities in the agri-food sector. The below activities organised by the EU-Japan Centre saw the attendance of several companies, business support organisations and institutions related to the agri-food sector.

- [EU-Japan-Africa](#) trilateral business matchmaking at the occasion of the [3rd Japan-Africa Business Forum](#), July 2021. Report available [here](#).
- [Workshop and business matchmaking event about EU-Japan-Africa trilateral business cooperation](#) at the occasion of the 7th EU-Africa Business Forum, February 2022 (report in preparation). [Workshop](#) recording available [here](#).
- Launch of a one-year [EU-Japan-Vietnam matchmaking platform to facilitate trilateral business cooperation in and with Vietnam](#). Kick-off webinar and business matchmaking in March 2022 (report in preparation). Kick-off webinar recording available [here](#).

EU-Japan business cooperation in and with foreign countries, notably Africa, ASEAN and Latin America is part of an important business trend. In addition to reaching Japan's domestic market, European businesses increasingly see Japan as a strategic hub to access foreign markets, by partnering with Japanese businesses.

More information on this massive trend that has impact on industrial competitiveness as well as on business and regulatory environment, norms, standards and geopolitical dimension in the Centre's analytical reports [here](#) and [there](#), and [conference](#).

7. [Food & Drinks Virtual business mission in May 2022](#)

With the aim of supporting the EU food producers in Japan, the EU-Japan Centre is offering the opportunity to selected EU SMEs to virtually exhibit during [IFIA](#) the International Food Ingredients & Additives Exhibition and Conference in Japan, 18-20 May 2022. ifia is Japan's largest food ingredients & additives related event.

Selected EU participants are promoted as co-exhibitors of the EU-Japan Centre's booth, where posters, flyers and eventually samples will be displayed by the EU-Japan Centre's staff. Before the event, the EU-Japan Centre will also promote the participants profiles on ifia's website and through the Centre's EEN Japan's newsletter. The scope is to optimize the virtual participants' visibility during the 3-day event. If Japanese companies show interest in meeting an EU participant, the EU-Japan Centre will help arrange an online meeting.

Additionally, the Centre can provide reports and references related on functional food or raw material sectors in Japan.

This mission aims at facilitating EU participants' first step in Japan, and to open new business opportunities in the country.

The goals are:

1. connect EU participants with potential Japanese partners
2. boost EU participants' visibility in Japan
3. learn about latest trends of the sector in Japan from the potential partners

Target companies:

EU SMEs in the following sectors:

1. functional ingredients for processed food (e.g. nutrient-dense oils, grains)
2. health foods/supplements
3. seasonings/extracts
4. flavours & spices

5. emulsifiers & stabilizers
6. food tech sector could be considered as well

Business Matching

[Sicily2Japan](#), 28 September -2 October 2020

A testbed virtual Matchmaking event for Sicilian producers from the Food&Beverage Sector and Japanese buyers

8. [EUFood2Japan](#)

Given the importance of the food sector for EU SMES interested to access the Japanese market using the EPA, the EU-Japan Centre has launched this “virtual mall” aiming at promoting **EU Organic Food products** among Japanese importers and buyers. The [Japanese version of the virtual mall](#) is available

This project is managed by the [EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation](#), under the umbrella of [Enterprise Europe Network](#) with the support of the [European Trade Promotion Organisations Association](#) .

Access to the virtual mall is possible via (i) sectors, (ii) products or (iii) producers.

Japanese Food and Beverage Days

This virtual Matchmaking event series builds on experience gained through earlier Matchmaking events in the sector and the EUFood2Japan virtual mall. It matches Japanese producers of Food and Beverages with importers and buyers from Europe that are mostly SME.

[Japanese Food and Beverage Days 2021](#), 10-26 March 2021

[Japanese Food and Beverage Days 2022](#), 15-18 February 2022 (cancelled due to covid pandemic)

Training programs

9. Food & Drinks mission in Japan

A training Mission in the organic food and beverages sector organised by the EU-Japan Centre from 6-9 March 2018, which included lectures and a 4-day participation in [FOODEX Japan](#), the largest food and beverage fair in Asia. 8 European SMEs benefited of this program.

(Article in the Centre’s quarterly newsletter [EU-JAPAN NEWS JUNE 2018 I 2 VOL 16](#), p. 4

10. “Get ready for Japan” This programme helps participants to get an in-depth understanding of how to do business in Japan and consists of a combination of lectures, virtual case studies and meetings..

During this program 12 SMEs and 3 large companies participated in 2019 and 2020 and other 3 SMEs will participate during 2022 according to the following chart:

COMPANY NAME	COUNTRY	YEAR OF PARTICIPATION
ACEITUNAS LOSADA S.L.	Spain	2019

OLEOESTEPA	Spain	2019
Geld Baltic	Lithuania	2019
FFT International BV	Netherlands	2019
Artisan Honey OÜ	Estonia	2019
CHB GROUP (Christodoulou Bros S.A. & Vitom S.A.)	Greece	2019
DMK Deutsches Milchkontor GmbH	Germany	2019
RIM GROUP CO Ltd. "Rosey's mark"	Bulgaria	2020
PlantaCorp GmbH	Germany	2020
Venison Gusto LTD	Hungary	2020
Oleifici Masturzo SNC	Italy	2020
SC Zemaitijos pienas	Lithuania	2020
MaxSport Advanced Nutrition Ltd.	Slovakia	2020
Caves Campelo	Portugal	2021
MB WeZoop	Lithuania	2021
Mellifera Ltd. - MelliGEL	Bulgaria	2022 not yet attended
Cake Lucky - Maison Fontaine	France	2022 not yet attended
Elit - Méhészeti Szövetkezet	Hungary	2022 not yet attended
Super Garden	Lituania	2022 not yet attended

11. World Class Manufacturing (WCM) This 5-day training mission provides an in-depth analysis of Japanese manufacturing methodology and is aimed exclusively at EU managers with knowledge of WCM and an engineering background. WCM takes place in Japan, including lectures, seminars, discussions presented by Japanese industry experts, Workshop Dojo and Visits to Japanese factory floor /Gemba.

For example WCM-II (8 -12 March 2022) received 35 applications; 25 companies from 12 Member states were selected to participate in the training programme, among which 12 SMEs. The programme provided 4 lectures on Japanese manufacturing methods, 4 plant visits and expert lectures of the selected Japanese firms, 1 workshop and 4 discussion sessions were successfully organized virtually.

Followings are the food companies which participated in WCM missions from 2021 to 2022.

COMPANY NAME	COUNTRY	YEAR OF PARTICIPATION
Kraftheinz	France	2021 November
INNOLACT	Spain	2022 March
Oatly Netherlands Operations & Supply B.V.	Netherlands	2022 March

One large company, Rational AG, from Germany participated to WCM missions from 2019, 2020 and 2021.

Other Services

[Step in Japan](#), a “Logistical support service for European SMEs, offering them a “hotdesk” in Tokyo has welcomed several companies from the Food and Beverage sector who very often used it as a follow-up service after their participation in Training programs or Matchmaking events. (participant case study in [EUROBIZ Japan, May 2019](#), p.31)

12. In 2018 there was a mission which targeted organic food & drinks and the following companies participated:

Company Name	Country	Sector
ALEXANDROS HANDMADE CHOCOLATE	Greece	organic chocolate/Pralines/Dragees
DIDIER GOUBET PRODUCTIONS	France	organic wine
BIOAGROS	Greece	organic juice, olives, fruits & vegetables
LAT EKO FOOD	Latvia	Family, baby processed food
CARAVELA FORMOSA LDA	Sweden	organic olive oil and canned fish
MAISON DU BON	France	Fine Grocery Products (chococalte)
SMARTIMPORT SRL	Italy	organic wine
NUHEALTH JSC	Bulgaria	organic whoelgrain brown rice

13. Examples of success stories

Formosa Gourmet, a gourmet food brand promoting Portuguese delicacies (olive oil, canned fish, salt) which found an importer in Japan and is selling their products successfully in Japan
<https://www.eu-japan.eu/publications/success-story-formosa-gourmet-sme>

ACEITUNAS LOSADA a Spanish which started their export business with a Japanese company
<https://www.eu-japan.eu/news/success-story-spanish-sme-japan-aceitunas-losada>

Sardegna Mia

(Article in the Centre's quarterly newsletter [EU-JAPAN NEWS JUNE 2018 I 2 VOL 16](#), p. 4)

Beer Mania a bottled beer shop from Brussels, Belgium which reached a partnership agreement for exporting Belgian beers to Japan.

(page 8 of the [EEN Japan 10-year anniversary booklet](#))

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