



European Business Council in Japan

The European (EU) Chamber of Commerce in Japan

**A Key Member of the Premier
European Business Networking and
Policy Platform in Japan**



WHAT IS THE EBC?

The **EUROPEAN BUSINESS COUNCIL (EBC)** is the trade policy arm of the European National Chambers of Commerce and Business Organisations represented in Japan. These EBC stakeholders include the following organisations in Japan:

Austrian Business Council

British Chamber of Commerce

Belgium-Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce

Danish Chamber of Commerce

Enterprise Estonia

Finnish Chamber of Commerce

French Chamber of Commerce

German Chamber of Commerce

Hellenic Board of Trade

Icelandic Chamber of Commerce

Italian Chamber of Commerce

Ireland Japan Chamber of Commerce

Netherlands Chamber of Commerce

Norwegian Chamber of Commerce

Polish Chamber of Commerce & Industry

Spanish Institute of Foreign Trade

Swedish Chamber of Commerce

Swiss Chamber of Commerce

The **EBC** is registered with the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry as the **European (EU) Chamber of Commerce in Japan**.

HOW DID THE EBC GET STARTED?

The idea of the EBC was conceived by the early presidents of the national European Chambers of Commerce, who established it in 1972. Formation of the EBC as the collective trade policy arm of the chambers was the first concrete expression of multilateral co-operation in Japan between the industries of the European member states.

The EBC emerged against a background of growing trade between Europe and Japan at a time of nascent desire to capture the spirit of a relationship greater than just trade. The establishment coincided with burgeoning investment by a rapidly industrialising Japanese economy into the EU economy that itself, was undergoing a significant new development phase.

Despite the rapidly growing interest of European companies in the Japanese market, the high level of regulatory and non-regulatory barriers posed a serious impediment to market entry, business development and investment. Accordingly, the trade and investment balances were very much skewed in favour of Japan.

WHAT IS THE EBC'S GOAL?

The core mission of the EBC then and now is to promote an impediment-free business and investment environment that will make it less difficult and costly to do business here. The advantages to Japan are obvious – an impediment-free market will serve as a catalyst for global trade liberalisation and prosperity. Unified markets are needed to create a business environment which will stimulate innovation and economic growth, more investment and create new jobs.

Japan's decade-long economic slump, globalization, regulatory reform, and aging population have been slowly forcing welcome changes in the Japanese market. European companies now have greater opportunities for direct investment, strategic alliances, and other tie-ups than at any other time. Accordingly, the EBC's work to encourage beneficial structural and regulatory changes has become all the more important.

WHO IS THE EBC?

The EBC currently represents around 3,000 local European companies and individuals who are members of the EBC through their respective national chamber of commerce or business organisation. Many of these companies participate directly in one or more of the EBC's many industry sector committees, whose work covers a wide variety of economic sectors.

The EBC comprises:

- A Board of Governors consisting of the Presidents of all the European chambers of commerce and business organisations in Japan, an EBC Chairman, a Senior EBC Vice-Chairman, an EBC Vice-Chairman, an EBC Treasurer and three representatives of the Committee Chairmen.
- An Executive Operating Board (EOB) consisting of the EBC Chairman, Senior EBC Vice-Chairman and nominated representatives from the boards of the national Chambers.
- Many Industry Sector Committees whose work aims to improve the local business environment in a wide variety of economic sectors.
- A Secretariat whose staff includes the EBC Executive Director and EBC Policy Director.



HOW IS THE EBC FUNDED?

About one-third of EBC's funding is provided by the National European Chambers of Commerce and other Business Organizations. Another one-third is supplied from membership fees paid by companies that participate in the EBC's sector committees, and about one-third derives from publication sponsorships and activities carried out by the EBC Secretariat under contracts with external organisations.

WHAT DOES THE EBC DO?

Some of the EBC's key activities are:

- Identifying the obstacles that European companies face doing business in Japan and lobbying the Japanese Government for changes in government policy.
- Providing information to the European Commission and EU member nations on the Japanese business environment.
- Visiting Japanese and European politicians and government officials to discuss issues of concern
- Participating in Government commissions and specific hearings
- Participating in the Japan Investment Committee (JIC) and other advisory bodies that report to Japanese Government leaders
- Commenting on proposed legislation through the Japanese Government's Public Comment Procedure.
- Participating in OTO (Office of the Trade Ombudsman) hearings on behalf of EBC Committees
- Publishing policy proposals in annual EBC reports such as: *The EBC Report on the Japanese Business Environment*
- Holding an annual high-level event to launch the EBC report
- Issuing press releases and position papers on issues of concern
- Issuing joint statements with the ACCJ, Japanese organisations, and Europe-based organisations and think-tanks
- Participating in high-level business forums such as the EU-Japan Business Roundtable.
- Participating in bimonthly informal meetings with working-level government representatives
- Working in collaboration with Europe-based organizations, such as Eurochambres, Eurocommerce, European Services Forum, Eucomed, BusinessEurope etc.

WHAT ARE THE EBC COMMITTEES?

The EBC has committees in many sectors such as:

Aeronautics, Space & Defence

Airlines

Animal Health

Asset Management

Automobiles

Automotive Components

Banking

Business Aviation

Construction

Cosmetics

Environmental Technology

Food

Human Resources

Insurance

Legal Services

Liquor

Logistics & Freight

Materials

Media & Communications

Medical Diagnostics

Medical Equipment

Organic Products

Patents, Trademarks & Licences

Retail

Shipping

Tax

Telecommunication Carriers

Telecommunication Equipment

HOW DO EBC COMMITTEES WORK?

EBC Committees:

- **discuss regulatory developments and issues of common concern**
- **visit Japanese government officials, write position papers and engage in media campaigns, when necessary.**
- **provide briefings on the current state of their specific business sector for visiting European Commission officials and various European industry representatives**
- **give presentations to governmental bodies and political parties (LDP, mainly) upon request**
- **hold symposiums, briefings, lectures and other events**
- **contribute one chapter to the annual white paper**
- **function as small “clubs” for exchange of sector specific information**
- **work closely with the EC commission and member state Embassy personnel to put the regulatory concerns also on their agenda**
- **liaise with the EBC office to ensure that committee issues are inserted in to the general lobbying activities**



WHAT IS THE EU-JAPAN BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE (EJBRT)?

The EU-Japan Business Roundtable (EJBRT) is a series of annual meetings between business leaders from Europe and Japan. It was formed in October 1999 from the amalgamation of two separate Europe-Japan business dialogues that had existed up until that time - the EU Japan Industrialists Round Table and the EU Japan Business Forum.

The Mission is to contribute to a better understanding by the Authorities of Japan and the EU of the issues met by the industries. This is achieved by producing annual sets of recommendations on issues that are considered to constitute a significant element in the economic relations between Japan and the EU. The activities of the EJBRT are also perceived as key within the framework of the Action Plan launched by the Japanese and the EU Authorities in 2001. The EJBRT reviews the factors affecting business cooperation between the EU and Japan, and calls on the EU and Japanese Authorities to take immediate action on priority issues.

The EJBRT is organised currently in the following working parties (subject to change depending on the needs of industry):

Trade, Investment & Regulatory Cooperation

Life Sciences & Biotechnology, Healthcare, Well-being

Information & Communication Technologies

Accounting & Taxes

Financial Services, Accounting & Taxation

Innovation, Environment & Sustainable Development

WHAT IS EBC'S ROLE IN THE EJBRT?

The EBC Chairman has a permanent place in the EJBRT as the Co-Chair for the EU side of the Trade, Investment & Regulatory Cooperation Working Party, which focuses on the goal of creating an improved business environment. The EBC produces the official paper for the European side of the Working Party in close collaboration with the Japanese side.

WHAT ARE SOME EBC ACHIEVEMENTS?

Some examples of EBC "Success" stories are:

- EBC lobbying has been instrumental in the abolishment of the re-entry permit requirement for valid residential visa holders
- Article 821 of the new company law – EBC lobbying led to deliberations in parliament, an explanatory resolution attached to the bill, and the issuance of detailed explanatory notifications from the government to avoid an adverse impact on companies represented in Japan as branch offices.
- EBC lobbying contributed to the introduction of a triangular merger scheme allowing foreign shares to be used as consideration in mergers and acquisitions of Japanese companies by foreign companies
- Pricing restrictions on international airfares have been relaxed due to the efforts of the EBC Airlines Committee
- New regulations on large-scale retailing were constrained through EBC's efforts so as not to affect the cities with more than 1 million inhabitants
- The approval process for low-risk medical diagnostics products has been reviewed and shortened
- The revised Foreign Lawyers law now allows foreign lawyers (*Gaiben*) to hire Japanese lawyers (*Bengoshi*)
- "Double-hatting" of certain back-office functions between affiliates of financial groups has been secured
- The list of non-quarantine organisms for cut flower imports has been expanded
- EBC lobbying led to action by the Japan Fair Trade Commission to prevent pricing collusion by fumigation service providers at Narita Airport
- The period of validity for importation of tableware has been expanded

And there have been many more small, but crucial improvements.

SHOULD I JOIN THE EBC?

Joining an EBC committee can give you access to highly relevant information in your sector, valuable contacts with other European professionals, an opportunity to have your voice heard through various channels, professional help in formulating and promoting your regulatory concerns under the EBC umbrella together with other member companies, and a direct channel to the Japanese government and access to a new world!

If you are interested in joining an EBC committee, please contact the EBC Secretariat for more information:

EBC Executive Director

Tel: 03-3263-6222; Fax: 03-3263-6223; E-mail: ebc@gol.com

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欧州ビジネス協会

欧州(欧州連合)商工会議所

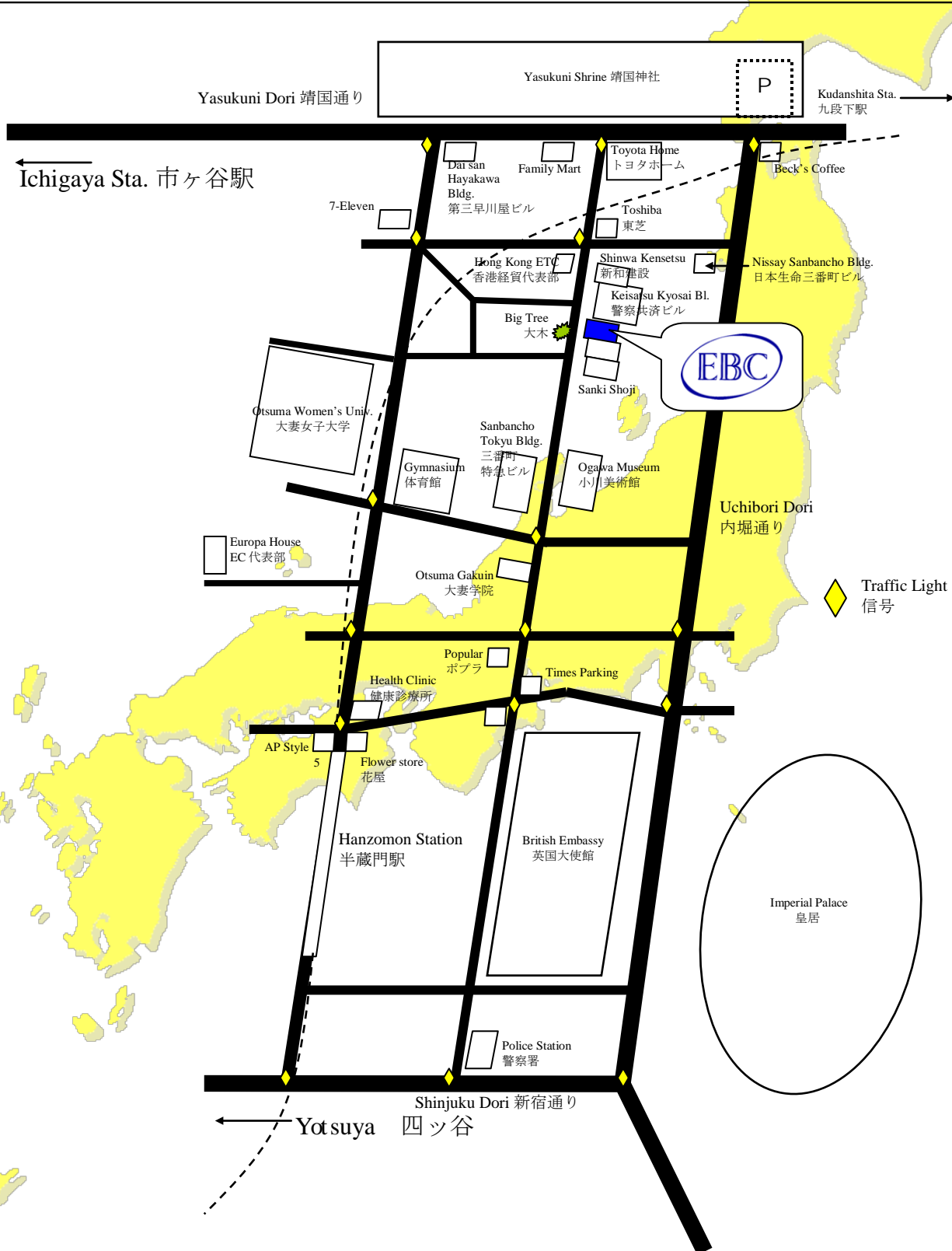
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Tel: 03-3263-6222 Fax: 03-3263-6223 E-mail: ebc@gol.com





Application for EBC Committee Membership

Name of Applicant: _____

Name of Company (or Organisation): _____

Position: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Fax Number: _____

e-mail Address: _____

URL (if applicable): _____

European National Chamber of Commerce (if applicable): _____

Membership Category: *(Please tick appropriate category)*

(1) Special Sponsor: _____

(2) European Chamber Company & Individual _____

(3) European Company (no chamber exists) _____

(4A) Associate: Non-European Company) _____

(4B) Associate: European Company (non-member of existing chamber) _____

(5) Non-Resident _____

EBC Committee(s) for which this application is being submitted: _____



The National European Chambers of Commerce & Business Organisations in Japan together with their collective trade policy arm, the European Business Council, form the premier business networking and policy platform for Europeans in Japan. With close to 3,000 European and Japanese members, this huge network reaches deep into the business communities of both Europe and Japan, and has close ties with the National European Governments and the European Commission. A vast number of the European members of this network have mastered the Japanese language and have a long history of involvement in the Japanese business environment.

欧州各国在日商工会議所は、共同の通商政策部門である欧州ビジネス協会とともに、在日欧州企業にとっての最有力ビジネス・ネットワーキング/政策プラットフォームを形成しています。3000近い日欧のメンバーを擁するこの巨大なネットワークは、日欧双方の財界に深く根を張り、欧州各国政府および欧州委員会と親密な関係を有しています。このネットワークの欧州メンバーの大多数は日本語をマスターし、日本の商環境で長年にわたって活動しています。

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