



Newsletter March 2008

European Business Council
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EBC Secretariat News

Media reports and subsequent working groups and debates within the government have focused on the economic plights and woes of Japan and the need for more investment. The EBC encourages the government to take a proactive stance vis-a-vis promoting foreign direct investment in their efforts to devise a long-term strategy for sustainable economic growth.

Update on lobbying activities

On January 28, the EBC Chairman, the Executive Director, and the Policy Director, met with Director General Zourek, DG Enterprise to take part in an informational session on the Japanese business and investment environment. On February 6, EBC Chairman Collasse gave a speech to the Belgian-Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce in Japan (BLCCJ) on the "Vision for an Economic Integration Agreement".

The EBC secretariat hosted a delegation from the Ukraine European Business Association as part of the activities of the European Business Organization (EBO), a worldwide network of European businesses in non-European countries. The visit was an opportunity to discuss and compare success factors in committee management, lobbying and advocacy, membership structure and funding sources.

On January 30, Chairman Collasse was invited to take part in the Expert Committee on FDI under the renewed Japan Investment Council, an advisory body to the Prime Minister on foreign investment that is chaired by Minister Ota. On February 15, Chairman Collasse participated in the Working Group of the Council for Economic and Fiscal Policy providing recommendations on policy towards formulating EPAs. As part of this renewed focus on foreign investment both at the national and local government level, EBC Policy Director gave a speech at MIPRO on current investment challenges.

Economic Integration as a new approach to eliminating trade barriers

As part of the European Task Force on the Economic Integration Agreement (EIA), the EBC submitted the first EIA Draft Paper on for comments to all internal and external stakeholders. The Draft paper is available for viewing on the EBC website and has launched the discussions on the industry's position at the EU Task Force meetings held in December and March.

The European Training Programme ETP 2008-2009

As the official ETP Helpdesk and Recruitment centre for Japan, the EBC has launched the next round of recruitment. Applications are now being accepted for the 2008-2009 program. An announcement, brochure, and press release are to be issued. For more information contact Alison Murray (ebcam@gol.com)

EBC Committee News

This CCIFJ Newsletter features an interview with Phillipe Avril, Chairman of the Banking Committee, and Richard Krauckler, Chairman of the Automotive Components Committee. (http://ccifj.or.jp/lm/rubrique.php?id_rubrique=28&lang=fr)

Food Committee

The Committee is closely monitoring discussions within the government on food safety measures following the recent food scandals and tainted imports of food products. The committee is concerned with changes to food labels and guidelines for sanitation inspections of food products underway.

Restriction on Foreign Investment in Airports

Following the discussions on investments in airports, the LDP agreed not to approve, at least for the time being, a proposal by MLIT to introduce legislation setting a strict limit on foreign ownership of national airports to 30%.

The new legislation was passed without rules stipulating ownership.

New Immigration Procedures

The Regulatory Reform Council is continuing discussions on reform of foreign registration procedures including the possibility of introducing an IC Card. As a part of the major revision of the immigration control law scheduled for next year, the council is considering an overhaul of the re-entry permit system. EBC Policy Director recently met with Deputy Director-General of the Economic Affairs Bureau of MOFA to discuss proposed language requirements for visa applicants.

Banking Committee

The committee continues to monitor developments in firewall regulations. On March 4, proposed revisions to the financial product law were approved by the Cabinet. These revisions aim to promote Tokyo as global financial center, by lowering barriers between banking, brokerage and insurance operations and expanding lineup of exchange-traded funds. On March 5th, Mr. Ohkubo, Member of the House of Representatives gave a presentation on DPJ

Event Calendar

March 25:
GCCIJ International Business Seminar

March 31:
CCIFJ and EBC: "The EU and Japan" Speech by Ambassador Richardson

April 3:
IJCC Business Networking Evening

April 9:
GCCIJ Seminar: Women in Business

April 11:
BCCJ 60th Anniversary Gala Dinner

April 16:
FCCJ luncheon with Minister of Communications of Finland

April 17: BCCJ Presentation on Japonism by Mr. Hisomura

April 23: IJCC First General meeting

For details on these events refer to the Event Calendar on the EBC website :
<http://www.ebc-jp.com/>