

## ***MINUTES OF THE EU-JAPAN ICT COOPERATION WORKSHOP OF MAY 20, 2008***

*Organised by the COJAK project*

*Hosted by the Delegation of the European Commission to Japan*

*Roger Torrenti*

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In his welcome address, Philippe de Taxis du Poët reminded what Commissioner Reding and DG Colasanti had underlined during their recent visits to Japan that the present level of cooperation on ICT research was too low when compared to what was at stake. “We can do more, we can do better”. He expressed the wish that the present workshop could usefully contribute identifying ways to strengthen this cooperation. He also informed participants that the EU-Japan S&T agreement was still in discussion and that, when signed, it might allow developing some mechanisms (such as coordinated calls) that would support a stronger development of EU-Japan cooperation. He concluded reminding that cooperation on ICT research was not limited to joint projects and that Marie Curie Actions for instance could provide relevant means to European and Japanese organisations to tighten their relations.

In his introductory address, Roger Torrenti reminded that the present workshop, organised by the COJAK project and kindly hosted by the Delegation of the European Commission to Japan aimed at discussing with Japanese organisations already (or interested in being) involved in EU-Japan cooperation on ICT research problems and potential solutions related to the present development of EU-Japan cooperation on ICT research. He also mentioned that the conclusions of the workshop would be reported to DG Infso and that they should be logically helpful in the preparation phase of the Cooperation Forum that DG Infso and MIC will co-organise in the near future in Brussels as a follow-up event of the Forum organised on March 4 and 5, 2008 in Tokyo.

Then, the largest part of the workshop was devoted to an open discussion, moderated by Roger Torrenti, addressing the three main identified discussion topics (the discussion being however also opened to any topics that participants might wish to address):

- *Connection*: which connection opportunities do European and Japanese organisations need: Forums or focused workshops, online facilities, etc.?
- *Information*: how to improve the information of organisations from both regions on cooperation opportunities (in particular Japanese SMEs and Universities: a specific target of the foreseen EU-Japan cooperation under FP7)?
- *Funding*: what solutions can ensure a stronger participation: match funding, coordinated calls, etc.?

In order to launch the discussion the floor was given first to those participants who had kindly prepared a formal contribution: Shintaro Uno (Motorola), Tatsumi Mitsuta (Aisin Seiki), Kunikazu Imai (freelancer), Toshiaki Kurokawa (CSK), and Gerhard Fasol (Eurotechnology Japan).

Then Roger Torrenti shared with the assistance the formal contributions he had received from organisations based in Europe and having attended the Forum of March 4 and 5, 2008 in Tokyo: Enrico Pagello (University of Padua), Georg Kelm (European Commission), Peter Choi (NanoUV SAS), and Richard de la Rue (University of Glasgow).

Another contribution received by a Japanese organisation, but willing to remain anonymous, was also introduced by Roger Torrenti.

It would be inappropriate to present here a synthesis of these contributions since it would lead to making some interesting inputs not visible any longer: the reader is indeed invited to read the different contributions (all are posted online on the EuroJapan-ICT web site).

However, below are some points of specific interest that have been noted during the presentations of the contributions and the discussions following them:

- The opening of Japan to international cooperation, namely in the ICT area, is seen as more and more strategic by Japanese authorities and organisations (related to a “Galapagos syndrome” evoked by Dr Mechler, Director of Deutsche Telekom Japan during the meeting). It’s quite recent however and the influential role of authorities to advocate this opening has to be kept in mind (even if the early involvement in the process of leading Japanese companies is crucial too).
- Funding is probably not the main attractiveness of the EU FP7 programme for Japanese organisations. It is important to promote here some striking success stories of the EU-funded research (to make it more “credible”, more appealing), to make IP issues clearer (a very sensitive problem for Japanese organisations), not to underestimate the efforts required in terms of information concerning a programme seen as very complex, to fully explain why the EU is pushing international cooperation (“ensuring EU competitiveness” and “developing projects of mutual interest” are not always seen as compatible objectives).
- The involvement of METI and MEXT (beyond MIC) is seen as fully appropriate if the cooperation projects have to address a wide range of research areas and organisations.
- It remains more efficient to develop promotion and awareness actions in Japan using the Japanese language, in particular when targeting SMEs or universities. It is true also when online information is produced (we have to keep in mind that Japanese will search Google in Japanese!).
- Beyond general Forums, the organisation of specific workshops (focusing for instance on a given research topic or on cooperation projects that would have emerged in a recent cooperation event) is seen as relevant.
- A web portal, including online facilities and services (namely a “community area”) is seen as useful, since it allows organisations from two geographically distant regions to easily establish, maintain and/or develop connections.
- Some “flexible funding” might usefully be made available (in the framework of a support action?) to support small scale initiatives in a more efficient way (support to travels and to the organisation of focused meetings for instance).

The workshop concluded with a “networking cocktail” that gave the opportunity to continue the discussions in a more informal way.

Many participants agreed on this occasion that the group of stakeholders who attended the today’s fruitful workshop was quite “unique” (a good mix of industries and academies, and of Japanese organisations and European organisations based in Japan, with some good experience of EU-Japan cooperation on ICT research, in particular of FP6-FP7 projects) and could be usefully involved in future actions and for instance on a short term action aiming at identifying a “leading potential project” that would have a large media visibility.