

# Osaka@EURO

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**In this article, we will report on "Business Forum Japan" which was held in Aix en Provence in June. This was the 6th time this forum was held in France, and many Japanese enterprises located in France participated along with local enterprises to exchange views.**

First of all  
Hello, everyone.

I am Koji Uehara, the new director general of the Osaka City Paris Office from April, as Mr. Takahashi has accomplished his three years term in Paris and returned to Osaka. It has only been 2 months since I started working here and despite not being used to living abroad, I take pride in having a very high motivation among all the past director generals and would like to try my best, so I look forward to working with you all.

The Osaka City Paris Office participated in "Business Forum Japan" which was held by JETRO Lyon in Aix en Provence on June 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>.

The seminar started with a greeting speech from a representative of the Community of Aix en Provence. Then, Mr. Seto, the Director General of JETRO Lyon gave an explanation on the Japanese market and its potentials to the companies based in this region. Mr. Kataoka, Counselor in Charge of Commercial Affairs, from the Japanese Embassy gave a lecture on the present Japanese economy and its market's potentials. Representatives of local companies specializing in food, IT and tourism industry were introduced, and they took part in business matchmaking. Our city, Osaka, gave a presentation on the robotic industry, explaining that as the first Asian city to invent a robot, Osaka gives priority to this field. There was also explanation about the development of the Osaka Station North District as well as a demonstration of a robot invented by a SME from Osaka.

The next day, Mr. Isomura, the first president of the Foundation of Japan and critic on diplomacy, gave a speech titled "Will Japan Overcome This Economic Crisis?"

In this speech, he explained that as Japan is a country without natural resources and one with an aging society, some people think that Japan is coming towards its end. However, it is because Japan didn't have any oil that technology in saving energy advanced. Talking about efficiency in using energy, Russia, China and the US each use 18 times, 9 times and twice as much energy in comparison to Japan, making clear the high energy-saving technology that Japan possesses.

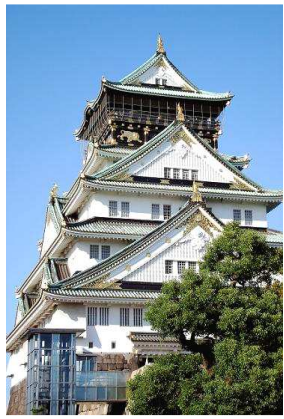
battery development technology and nuclear energy – areas of high interest for other countries as well. In addition, being an aging society, Japan is making development in robotics so that robots may assist in the lack of manpower.

After Mr. Isomura's speech, I participated in a panel discussion on the theme "Will Japan be saved by innovation?" with the representatives of Japanese and French companies. Participants from universities and local companies also shared their interesting opinions with us.

Aix en Provence is a city with a population of 130 thousand, and is a very famous tourist city with its beautiful scenery. The Japanese also know it as the city of Cezanne. But the city also has research institutions and universities, and Japan can collaborate in the fields of medicine, robotics, batteries and nuclear energy to create new technologies. In addition, ITER, an international tokmac (magnetic confinement fusion) research/engineering project, which the French government succeeded in bringing to France, is being constructed in Cadarache, located nearby. Researchers from all around the world will be conducting research on nuclear fusion reactor and when it succeeds, it will be an important clean energy.

Aix en Provence is also a city with a mixture of beautiful architectural, cultural heritage and modern buildings. For example, a new shopping mall equipped with parking space for 1500 cars has been constructed next to the old part of town. It is trying to promote its city by conserving its beautiful history and renovating it with convenient modern-type buildings and dealing with the problem of traffic at the same time.

Koji UEHARA



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