

The 10th EU-Japan Science Policy Forum

New STI Policies in a Changing World

Saturday, October 5, 2019 11:30-15:30

Kyoto International Conference Hall Conference Room A

The 10th EU-Japan Science Policy Forum was held in Kyoto, Japan on October 5, 2019, having more than 130 participants, representing governments, academia and research-related organizations. This is an annual event held between the Delegation of the European Union in Japan



and the National Institute

for Policy Studies in Japan to be updated on the science policy in EU and Japan and exchange ideas on how best to enhance research collaboration between them. The MCs were Dr. Gediminas Ramanauskas, First

Counsellor, Delegation of the European Union to Japan and Prof. Tateo Arimoto, GRIPS.



The forum started with the welcoming remarks by Dr. Patricia Flor, Ambassador of the EU to Japan that Horizon Europe that is to start in 2021 gives direction to the EU's research and innovation over the coming 7 years. At the same time, Japan is also in the process of developing



the 6th Basic Plan, which outlines research and innovation policy starting in 2021. With both regions embarking on a new journey in policy in the same year, there is no better time than now for the EU and Japan to examine synergies in science and technology.

Her words were followed by the remarks by Dr. Takashi Shiraishi, Director of the SciREX Center in Japan in that this is the 10th year since the EC and Japan signed the S&T Agreement and that the forum has had a timely topic each year as epitomized by Risk Communication in 2011, the year the Great East Japan Earthquake occurred. Mr. Koji Omi, Founder and Chairman of the STS Forum stressed the increasing value of EU-J collaboration as both will launch their new S&T program and plan in 2021.

It was then followed by a toast by Dr. Kyosuke Nagata, President of Tsukuba University and the President of the Association of National Universities in Japan.



The Policy Briefs session was opened by Dr. Jean-Eric Paquet, Director-General, DG RTD, European Commission, who gave an introduction to the Horizon Europe. The program will consist of three pillars of basic science, innovation and societal



challenges. The EU parliament agreed on the basic outline of the Horizon Europe in less than a year – in record time – as the negotiation was driven by need. The challenge for Europe is that the startups grow and scale rather slower than expected. Even when they do, they do not necessarily stay in Europe. Horizon Europe will help startups grow by providing subsidies for disruptive

innovators, particularly those at the crossroads of physical and digital space. Horizon Europe will be allocated with a record-breaking 100 billion euros. A notable characteristic of this extremely ambitious program is its emphasis on visible outcomes in European society; it targets the areas of cancer, climate change, smart cities, healthy oceans, and healthy soil and food. While Horizon Europe builds on the success of Horizon 2020, a key contrast is its interdisciplinary approach to funding. He said “with Horizon, we attempt to bring in an aspect of cross-cutting research, where we create synergies between fields to bring a larger social impact.” This is seen in that while Horizon 2020 had 7-8 sub-programs, Horizon Europe will not have sub-programs, which means no one owns the budget, enabling researchers to collaborate better.

Dr. Takahiro Ueyama, Executive Member of the Council for Science, Technology and Innovation Policy (CSTI) in Japan talked about Japan’s 6th S&T Basic Plan that is still in draft and will begin in 2021 for five years. He said that the discussion of the plan began to think of what kind of society we should aim for in 2050. The highlight of the plan is the moonshot program that targets developing radical solutions for challenging social agendas. The government will finalize the 25 outcome goals of this program in December 2019.



Mr. Yoshio Yamawaki, Deputy Minister of Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) talked about the context surrounding the Basic Plan. The research capability in Japan has been stagnated since 2005. To break the situation, MEXT released a new policy plan that consists of three focus areas: making academia more attractive to the younger generation, reinforcing funding systems for long-term research, and improving the research environment. All of these require further reform of universities.



In the introductory remarks session, 9 people including ministers, S&T policymakers and representatives from academia presented their countries' or organizations' policies, plans and priorities, including EU-J cooperation in students exchange and space development.

The floor was then opened to discussion, being MCed by Dr. Iris Wieczorek, President of IRIS Science Management Inc. and Japan Representative of Leibniz Association, and Dr. Michiko Iizuka, Professor, GRIPS.



A variety of substantial topics were raised in the discussion session, all of which were highly valuable in identifying the areas EU-Japan STI cooperation could focus on. The notable points were the importance of: building more schemes for researcher exchanges, especially for younger researchers; building on and expanding existing collaborations outwards to other countries; introduction of practical actions for researchers both in the EU and Japan to share, including use of data; EU and Japanese funding agencies' role in managing research data based on FAIR data principles; more collaborative work on societal implications and aspects of Artificial Intelligence as seen from different cultural perspectives; sharing more information on STI policy, foresight and open innovation: working together towards enhancing public engagement in science to build greater awareness and inclusivity; data analytics to inform current levels of EU-Japan cooperation, distinctive research strengths and distinct areas of activity in order to identify where additional action or funding may be desirable; and working together to address gender imbalances in STI.

Dr. Wieczorek summarized the discussion session that Europe and Japan possess similar values and face similar challenges. International collaboration will be critical for solving larger agendas such as the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Since European and Japanese partnerships are already in place, we have good ground for taking collaborations to the next level. As a first step, we need to identify ‘hotspot’ areas of research, where the research outcome will impact both EU and Japan most significantly.

Dr. Iizuka added that it is important to think about how the society can participate in policymaking. For example, it would be of help for the citizen to visit science museums to have an image of unforeseeable future. The discussion at the forum also confirmed the importance of women participation in S&T policymaking.

In closing the event, Dr. Jean-Eric Paquet wrapped up the Forum with “Institutions and researchers have the first responsibility to make collaborations happen. From there, it is up to us – policymakers are responsible for making that easy to do.”

