

High School Students Given EU Class

- Lectures by the Head of Press, Public and Cultural Affairs at the Delegation of the European Union to Japan and Other professors
At Kinran Senri Senior High School

On 23 February, experts from Europe gave a lecture on the history and current status of the European Union (EU) to students at Kinran Senri Senior High School, Suita City. EU researchers invited students to learn about the particulars leading up to the construction of a single framework by the countries of Europe, with their different cultures and languages, and to ponder the implications for Japan's future course. About 150 second-year students answered their call and listened closely to experts' remarks.

The lecture was held by the EU Institute in Japan, Kansai (EUIJ-Kansai, Nada-ku, Kobe City) and co-sponsored by Asahi Shimbun Company and others. The EUIJ-Kansai serves as a centre of EU-related learning and research in the Kansai region and was established in 2005 by Kobe University, Kwansai Gakuin University, and Osaka University, with financial support from the European Commission. The lecture was its first programme for senior high school students.

At the beginning, Professor Masahiko Yoshii (Vice-President of the EUIJ-Kansai) gave an outline of the EU and introduced the EUIJ-Kansai.

During the programme, Mr. Rudie Filon, Head of Press, Public and Cultural Affairs at the Delegation of the European Union to Japan, described the integrated market, common currency, and other features of the 27 EU Member States. Dr. Timothy Harding, Honorary Professor of the University of Geneva, spoke on the European Court of Human Rights, which monitors human rights, and told students about the EU's achievements in this area, including protection of the right to vote for prison inmates and prohibition of torture.

The programme was a resounding success. The students had numerous questions for the speakers, on subjects such as whether or not a country's predominant religion influences decisions on its admittance into the EU. Even after the lecture was over, they approached the speakers, eager to hear any last comments. "I really admire nurses who are internationally active. I want to have more of a global perspective," said student Ms. You Asami.

Dr. Hisakazu Matsushige, professor of Osaka School of International Public Policy, Osaka University, who organised the programme, wrapped up with the following remarks: "The idea behind the EU is the desire to get along with people who have a different culture and language. The world does not operate on principles of bullying and ostracism. You must open your hearts to the rest of the world."

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(Underlined part added by the EUIJ-Kansai)