
Japanese week in Brussels 2013

-In commemoration of the 2nd anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake-

Kobe University Symposium

in collaboration with European Economic and Social Committee

PROGRAMME

Opening: 10:00 - 10:20

HE Mr Kojiro Shiojiri, Ambassador of Japan to the European Union

Mr Henri Malosse, President of Employers' Group, European Economic and Social Committee

Professor Noriyuki Inoue, President of EU Institute in Japan, Kansai

Part I: 10:20 - 12:30

EU-Japan economies: issues and perspectives

Part II: 14:15 - 17:20

Disaster recovery support from scientific/academic perspectives

Closing: 17:20 - 17:30

Professor Hiromasa Kubo, Executive Director of Kobe University Brussels European Centre

Photo exhibition by Mr Katsumi Hirabayashi

Dawn in Tohoku

HE Mr Kojiro Shiojiri

Ambassador of Japan to the European Union



Good morning ladies and gentlemen. It is a great pleasure, privilege for me to be here with you at the Kobe University Symposium during “Japanese week in Brussels 2013.”

It has been two years since the Great East Japan Earthquake.

For those who lost loved ones, life goes on and they had to adapt to a totally changed and harsher reality. Even if their sorrow will not disappear, many of them have chosen to live with their heads up and shoulders back. Their minds begin to turn to the future as they look to move forward.

Today’s symposium is unique. It offers a forum to look beyond current thinking and discover new platforms and new paradigms from which we can realize a better tomorrow.

Our discussions today focus on disaster prevention and Japan-EU economies, areas where we can actively demonstrate the benefit of sharing experiences and finding new platforms.

Here I would like to share one of our experiences in the Great East Japan Earthquake. In Kamaishi City, which was badly hit by the tsunami, over one thousand people lost their lives or are missing. On the other hand, of around three thousand elementary and high-school students in the city, 5 students lost their lives. It means 99.8% of the students survived. These students on their own initiative and without waiting for instructions, climbed to higher ground, owing this to the disaster prevention education they had received. With this education, students learned first and foremost to safeguard their own lives by themselves.

Now I would like to remind you of the home city of today’s hosts, Kobe. After the Great Hanshin Earthquake in 1995, the Kobe Framework was established, offering a new paradigm in disaster prevention. It shifted the paradigm for disaster risk management from post disaster response to a more comprehensive approach that would also include

prevention and preparedness measures. The following new Kobe Framework will be implemented for the post 2015 period. It serves as an important example of our past experiences shaping our future responses.

Japan and the EU are facing serious economic and financial challenges. Now the EU is struggling to overcome the EU debt crisis and Japan is struggling to get out from the deflation which has lasted almost 20 years. And we face the challenge of competitiveness. How do we make our economies and societies more competitive under the circumstances we both face, such as declining population and the rise of emerging economies? It is through sharing views and experiences that we can find a new paradigm, a new way of thinking to overcome our challenges.

And it is on this point we see the worth of today’s symposium. We have a lot of room to work together in and this symposium will bring forward new opportunities for collaboration. Each day of work, each new discussion and each new collaboration, can unlock a new paradigm. For this perspective, I am very much looking forward to the discussion of this symposium. Thank you.

Henri Malosse

President of Employers' Group
European Economic and Social Committee



Excellency, president, professors, ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues, it is very important for us, for the European Economic and Social Committee, which is a unique assembly here in Brussels representing civil society. We are not politi-

cians, we are not technocrats, nothing against politicians, nothing against technocrats, we are useful but we are different.

We represent employers. I am now chairing the Employers' Group. Some of our colleagues here represent the workers. But in Europe it is values that are the most important.

Last Sunday when I was still in Brussels, I participated in a rally for the 54th anniversary of the Tibetan uprising. That took place on the 10 of March 1959. I was there to express our support for the Tibetan nation in their quest for more freedom, solidarity and freedom of expression.

Although today is a totally different occasion, when I was asked by my dear colleague, Vice-President of Employers' Group - Eve Päärendson to participate in and host this symposium on the second anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake I thought it was something the European Economic and Social Committee should do. The values we want to promote, in the European Union were founded on values after the Second World War, values of peace, values of solidarity, values of democracy. This is why we have to support our friend Japan in her time of need. Moreover, what happened to Japan could have happened to us.

First, the value of preservation of nature. I'm not so-called green; I have not made my career as an environmentalist, but it is a very important value for all of us including both entrepreneurs and employers. What happened 2 years ago in Japan with the Earthquake and Tsunami showed us how important the concept of prevention is. We all know the extent

to which Japan is prepared for earthquakes, but even as probably the most prepared society, the most prepared country, you experienced so much devastation, mainly due to the tsunami. So prevention is the key, thus we should devote more funds and more effort, to prevention. This is for me the main lesson we can gain from what happened. Concerning the protection of nature is the importance of prevention, what we call in French "Principe de Précaution", we should always take care whatever we do and make impact assessment in advance!

Second, we just mentioned one other very important value, which is social responsibility. What happened in Fukushima after the earthquake and after the tsunami showed us how important it is for both government and the private sector to share responsibility in times of trouble. The reaction of some private companies, namely the one who rules the Fukushima nuclear plant, seemed from Europe, not to have been transparent enough.

To be socially responsible is to recognize the obligation of transparency. The dissemination of information is an obligation for everybody, but mainly companies and public sector in very sensitive sectors such as energy. Social responsibility is a value we share together.

The third value we share together is solidarity. Of course solidarity can be seen in our being here with you and hosting this event. Solidarity was also seen in the marvellous reaction of the Japanese people after the earthquake and the tsunami.

The news we see on French TV is of people living in and around the region of earthquake and how feelings of solidarity have grown between them. How young people help old people, old people help young children, it is also true that some European and Japanese companies have displayed an awareness of their social responsibility having been active in showing solidarity with the affected areas.

So, the values of taking care of nature, social responsibility and solidarity are ones we share together. This is why we feel that this commemoration is very important issue for both, for the Japanese nation, and also very important for us. Thank you.

Noriyuki Inoue

President of EU Institute in Japan, Kansai



Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, first it is a great pleasure for me to hold this symposium as one event of Japan week in Brussels and welcome you today. On behalf of Kobe University, I would like to express my sincere gratitude

to his Excellency Ambassador Mr Shiojiri, Mission of Japan to the European, Union for his support of today's symposium, and Mr Henri Malosse and his colleagues of the European Economic and Social Committee for co-organizing this event. Moreover, we have in attendance a prominent researcher from Tohoku University, who was affected a great deal by the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami.

I would like to say thank you for coming to Brussels today. But regrettably I have to inform you that Professor Hormoz Modaresi, the French researcher, could not participate in this symposium because of yesterday's bad weather.

As a university which experienced a mega disaster 18 years ago, Kobe University has constantly been thinking of the people in the affected and devastated region and collaborating with Tohoku University in the recovery process.

The day before yesterday was the second anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami. On this occasion Kobe University reaffirmed its commitment to contribute to the reconstruction of the area and also the establishment of the resilient, sustainable and safe society against mega disasters. So, together let's consider this theme through this symposium today.

Enjoy yourself and thank you very much.