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INTERVIEW

## Standardization is a tool that supports achieving sustainability

Interview with Mr Tomoyuki Endo, Director of Standards and Conformity Assessment at JETRO Geneva

JETRO Geneva is pleased to host a new member from the Japan Standardization Association. Mr Tomoyuki Endo is succeeding Ms Yukiko Kotani as Director of Standards and Conformity Assessment at JETRO Geneva.

Standards have significantly contributed to the development of the global trade over the past decades. As a trade promotion office, JETRO Geneva will benefit from the experience of Mr Endo, who kindly answered our questions.



Mr Tomoyuki Endo as joined JETRO Geneva in July 2022

### *Could you please introduce your professional background?*

I have been involved in the world of standardization for many years in the Japanese Standards Association (JSA). JSA is the standard developing organization that supports and promotes the development of international and national standards. I have worked with many stakeholders, including companies, industrial associations, public sectors, and consumers, to create international standards and national standards based on their practices.

In addition, I have several responsibilities, such as organizing international technical committees in ISO (International

Organization for Standardization). ISO covers a wide variety of areas, including products, services, and social systems. I am currently working on making standards, in cooperation with experts from different countries, in the fields of “sharing economy”, “service excellence”, “unmanned aircraft”, etc.

In recent years, I could not see experts in person due to Covid-19. I really look forward to exchanging ideas with them in their countries in person.

### *What is standardization?*

If you look up “standardization” in a dictionary, you probably will be able to find only “the process

of making something standard”. “Standardization” is the creation of some common rules for a certain purpose regarding a product, service, system, etc.

Speaking of the purpose of standardization, you may think of “compatibility”, such as screws or paper sizes (A4 or A5). But the purpose is not limited to compatibility. There are several purposes, such as enhancing safety, increasing quality assurance, providing compatibility, protection of the environment, etc. Standardization is a tool that enables any type of organization to achieve these objectives effectively.

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## Standardization is a tool that supports achieving sustainability

会見

INTERVIEW

Interview with Mr Tomoyuki Endo, Director of Standards and Conformity Assessment at JETRO Geneva

(continued from page 1)

*What does the Japanese Standards Association do, and what are your main tasks here in Geneva?*

Japanese Standards Association (JSA) is the standard developing organization (SDO) in Japan that supports companies and organizations to turn their best practices and their excellent technology into national or international standards. This said, if we create excellent standards but nobody is aware of them, these might never be used. Hence, we are instrumental in promoting standardization and helping incorporate implementation of those standards through publications, seminars, conferences, etc.

I have two main responsibilities here. One is to research all activities related to European standardization and to provide more feedback to Japan to better support industries there. More specifically, I will examine how Europe and other countries make effective use of standards and contribute to solving social problems through standardization and will investigate what role standardization plays in developing organizations. My other responsibility is to enhance international development cooperation even more so than now. I am serving as an organizer for several international technical committees consisting of experts from different countries.

Cooperation with national standardization bodies and industries around the world is essential for making better global standards, and I wish to build a strong network for this purpose.

*What fields of standardization are especially relevant for Japan?*

Current standardization focuses on achieving the SDGs. The discussion in ISO seems to be not only on standardizing products and services themselves, but also on how to realize a sustainable society through their utilization. For example, in the field of mobility, they are discussing sustainable use in their community. Recently a committee called “Sustainable Mobility” was established. Japan is leading it.

Also, it has been discussing how to effectively share unused assets without discarding them, in the committee called “sharing economy”, in which I am one of the leading members.

Another project seeks guidance for implementing “gender equality”. It can be used in any type of organization and is ongoing in ISO.

In recent years, I worked on a project to analyze the gaps between what current international standards address social issues and which ones do not in terms of a human-centered sustainable society. Almost 100 participants from 26 countries participated in this workshop. That is an expression of the intense interest surrounding

how standardization can contribute to sustainability.

*How do you like Geneva so far?*

Geneva makes me happier! I have been to Geneva several times before, but I always spent my time only going back and forth between the hotel and the conference center. My impression then was that Geneva is nice, cosmopolitan, and an expensive city in which to live.

Now that I have lived here for two months already, I have come to realize that this is a city that has much to offer. The weather is nice, the city is well connected, and one can find good cheese and the best wine. However, I think that Geneva's greatest asset is the people living here. I find that many people living in Geneva like to engage in dialogue whether they are colleagues, neighbors, or other expatriates. I have been in Singapore in the past and felt a similar atmosphere here. Of course, there have been some inconveniences related to living here, but I already have forgotten what those are.

In other words, I believe Geneva is a synergistic city that connects people to people. I have been here for only about two months, but I am grateful to all the people I have met in Geneva, those I have worked together with, and also to all of my colleagues who are watching over me from Japan.

## The decreasing value of the yen fuels inflation in Japan

While several major central banks are rapidly increasing their interest rates, the Bank of Japan (BoJ) is reluctant to end its loose policy. The interest rate will remain negative at -0.1%.

The BoJ considers that the Japanese economy is still recovering and that it is too soon to increase the rate.

Therefore, the gap between Japan's monetary policy and those of the other largest economies is growing, resulting in a decreasing value of the yen against foreign currencies. The yen is near its all-time low against the dollar (147 yen / \$1).

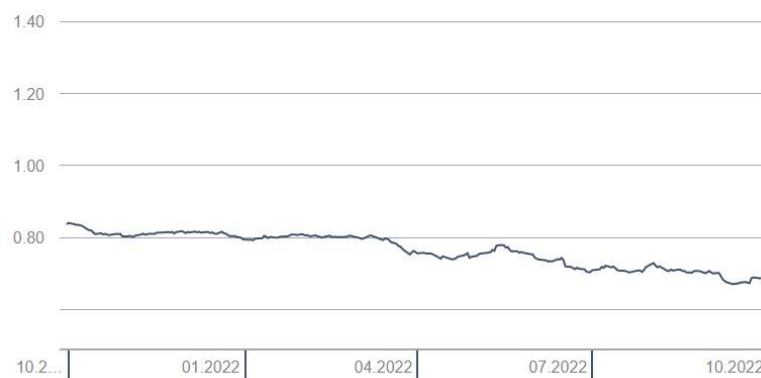
This is also true with the Swiss franc. At the beginning of March, 100 yen was worth CHF 0.80. On September 28, it was worth CHF 0.67.

As the yen is weakening, imports

are become more expensive. This is fueling the inflation that has reached a 30-year high with the consumer price index at 2.8% in August. This is above the 2% upper limit set by the BoJ but is much lower than what the USA and the EU are experiencing now. This gives a bit of room to the BoJ to stay on its current path.

Japanese companies may have to pay more to buy Swiss products, but Swiss companies can benefit from the low yen to buy Japanese products at a lower price.

Sources: [Bank of Japan](#), [Speech of Governor Kuroda](#), [Japan Times article on the Yen](#), [Japan Times article on inflation](#).



The yen has lost 15% against the franc since March. Source: [Swiss National Bank](#)

分析

ANALYSIS

## Japan will lift border entry restrictions for tourists from October 11

From October 11, tourists will be free to visit Japan without inbound restrictions, provided that they have been vaccinated three times (normal vaccination + booster) or by presenting a negative PCR test before departure (less than 72 hours).

All requirements of quarantine or PCR test upon arrival are lifted.

There will be no more entry cap for foreign tourists (50,000 daily). The obligation to be enrolled in a guided tour or to book entry through a travel agency is lifted as well.

Japan introduced the first entry

restriction on January 31, 2020, for people arriving from Hubei Province in China. Gradually, the country extended the ban up to over 100 countries including Switzerland on May 14.

On September 1, the ban was lifted on re-entry for foreign residents, and one month later, the entry ban on foreign nationals planning to relocate to Japan was lifted.

During the winters of 2020-2021 and 2021-2022, Japan suspended the entry for foreign residents and the business track system, allowing entry for business purposes under certain conditions.

On March 1, 2022, Japan allows the entry of foreign nationals for any other purpose than tourism.

Tourism was allowed from June 1, 2022, with a 20,000 daily cap extended later to 50,000 daily including tourists enrolled in guided tours.

In 2019, Japan welcomed 31.88 million foreign visitors. In 2021, the figure dropped to 250,000 with a massive impact on the tourism and accommodation industry.

Sources: [Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#), [Japan Times](#)

動向

TREND

## Japan and the USA to scale up on semiconductors

### 革新

INNOVATION

Semiconductors are a key component of every electronic device. From the most sophisticated and powerful computers to electric toothbrushes.

Historically, Japan has been a major producer of semiconductors and still is a leading country in this area. Over time, however, the production has partially been relocated abroad.

Eventually, the production was regrouped in the hands of a few countries only.

This will be efficient as long as the supply chains work efficiently, and as long as peace prevails. The COVID pandemic and the tensions regarding Taiwan — the largest producer worldwide — have highlighted the weakness of the global

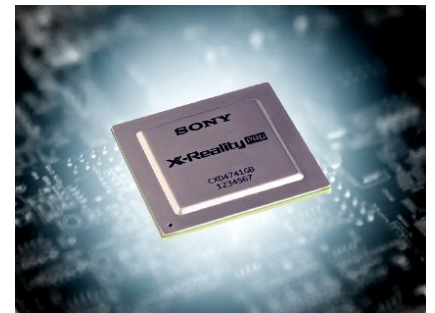
supply. Therefore, the Japanese government is now willing to revitalize this industry by increasing both the quality and the quantity produced in the country.

The government has allocated ¥476 billion (CHF 3.6 billion) to build a factory in Kumamoto Prefecture. The factory will be operated by a joint venture between the world leader TSMC (Taiwan), Sony, and Denso Corp. The three companies will invest about CHF 8.6 billion in the factory, which should be operational in 2024.

The USA, which is facing the same problems, is also investing, and seeking partnerships with key allies. Visiting Japan, the US Vice-President Kamala Harris met Japanese corporate executives to dis-

cuss this topic. In July, the two countries agreed to collaborate on research and development of the next generation of semiconductors.

Sources: [Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry](#), [Sony](#), [The Japan Times](#), [Kyodo News](#)



Sony is one of the larger manufacturer of semiconductors

Copyright: Sony Semiconductor Solu-

## Agenda

### 活動

AGENDA

#### ✓ Japanese Food Festival — Fernweh Festival

Tasting of special Japanese Wagyu beef, Japanese miso, sweets, drinks, etc.

Venue: October 29, 2022 — 10:00-15:00 at the Japanese Embassy, Engenstrasse 53, 3012 Bern

This event is taking place within the framework of the Fernweh Festival. The Festival pass is required to access it. Please take note, that for security reasons, large luggage and bags are prohibited inside the Embassy.

More information on the [Fernweh Festival website](#)

**JAPANESE FOOD FESTIVAL**

10:00-15:00, 29th October (Sat)  
Embassy of Japan, Bern  
Engenstrasse 53, 3012 Bern

Come and enjoy the Japanese festival-style games for kids!

JETRO is a government-related organization that works to promote mutual trade and investment between Japan and the rest of the world. Originally established in 1958 to promote Japanese exports abroad, JETRO's core focus in the 21st century has shifted toward promoting foreign direct investment into Japan and helping small to medium size Japanese firms maximize their global export potential.

The JETRO Switzerland Newsletter can also be viewed and/or downloaded online: <http://www.jetro.go.jp/switzerland/newsletter>

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