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INTERVIEW

## IAF Roadshow: “New Technologies—New Ways of Age(ing)?”

Interview with Samira Hüsler, co-organizer of the roadshow and researcher at the IAF

The [Institute for Ageing Research \(IAF\)](#) at the Eastern Switzerland University of Applied Sciences conducts state-of-the-art age research. Currently, it also leads one of Switzerland’s largest national research networks dealing with the topic of the ageing society (AGE-INT). At the IAF roadshow event in Fribourg, we had a chance to talk to Ms. Samira Hüsler, co-organizer of the roadshow and researcher at the IAF.



Samira Hüsler, IAF researcher

*Can you tell us more about the research you do at the IAF and specifically within the framework of the AGE-INT project?*

The Institute of Ageing Research (IAF) researches both technological and social innovations related to aging in an interdisciplinary team. To explore different research topics, the institute is organized into two competence centers: One for technologies and aging, led by Simone Eicher and one for social innovations (e.g., new forms of living in old age or societal aging strategies) led by Dr. Damian Hedinger. In doing so, we pursue a participatory research approach and maintain an active dialogue with seniors. Our goal is to work not only for, but with older people. AGE-INT is one of our main projects. It is one of

the largest national research projects dealing with the challenges of demographic change. The research project covers various topics such as technologies for older people, dementia: prevention and care, employment in retirement age and social inclusion. The project is carried out in collaboration with the University of Geneva, University of Zurich, Bern University of Applied Sciences, the University of Applied Sciences and Arts of Southern Switzerland and the Eastern Switzerland University of Applied Sciences (Institute of Ageing Research and Dementia Competence Center).

*What is the main aim of the roadshow that you organized? What do you hope visitors will learn there?*

The roadshow “New Technologies - New Ways of Age

(ing)?” presents technologies for older people and makes them more accessible. On site, groups and individuals are invited to try out wearable motion sensors, devices for measuring vital data, fall sensors and robots. We aim to get into exchange with the visitors, discuss their expectations and fears regarding technologies for older adults and inform them about the current state of knowledge. The roadshow takes place annually within the framework of AGE-INT and visits all three language regions of Switzerland.

*In your opinion, what are the biggest opportunities and challenges that your field of research faces?*

Population aging is one of the key developments of the 21st century and will change societies in general. This phenomenon is being studied and addressed in various scientific fields. A particular challenge is to conduct well-coordinated interdisciplinary research to tackle the development holistically. Specifically in the field of gerontechnology, the involvement of end users, in this case older adults and their environment, and to adapt technologies to their wishes/needs, remains challenging. The IAF is seeking to address this challenge

## IAF Roadshow: “New Technologies—New Ways of Age(ing)?”

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INTERVIEW

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by working closely with manufacturers and older people and other involved stakeholders in a so-called co-creation process.

*Are there any similarities or differences between Switzerland and Japan in terms of the development and adoption of new technologies for ageing? If so, what are they, and what factors contribute to these similarities or differences?*

Given that even the definition of technologies for older people varies and is not uniform, comparisons between countries remain difficult to elaborate. All I can say is that in the course of our AGE-INT research, we noticed several innovations in Japan, such as [Orange Links](#), [RT.2](#), or care platforms like [Lifelens](#), which I think are very interesting for Switzerland and should be investigated in more



Buddy (left) and Paro (right) are some of the robots shown at the IAF roadshow

detail. Since certain societal trends, such as the tendency to high life expectancy, are similar in Japan and Switzerland, collaborations and scientific exchanges in general are important and to be promoted.

*What are some future projects that you are looking forward to?*

Personally, I am very much looking forward to the testing of a new ro-

bot called [Moflin](#) from the manufacturer [Vanguard Industries Inc.](#) from Japan. A first exchange is planned in Tokyo in November, before testing will be carried out in selected Swiss nursing homes in 2024.

*Thank you for the interview, Ms. Hüsler!*

## Meet-up with Keigo Tsunemoto, Japanese Football Player at Servette FC

活動

ACTIVITY

Mr. Shiro Takegami (right), Director General of JETRO Geneva and representative of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce in Geneva, recently exchanged views on football, business, and innovation with Mr. Keigo Tsunemoto (left), who joined Servette FC this July. [Servette FC](#) is a historic Geneva-based football club and Mr. Tsunemoto is its first Japanese player. Other than Tsunemoto, there are two other Japanese football players currently playing for Swiss clubs, one for Grasshoppers Club in Zurich and one for Lausanne Sport.

During their discussion, Mr. Tsunemoto shared insights into the advanced technologies being used to play, coaching, and training. He noted that European football clubs are ahead of Japanese clubs in that aspect. He also commented on the growing trend of using new technologies like AI in sports and the impact this could have on players in the near future.



## Switzerland's revised Federal Data Protection Act comes into force

On 1 September 2023, the completely revised Federal Data Protection Act (FADP) and the corresponding provisions in the regulations have come into force.

A partial revision had already taken place in 2008 in order to keep pace with technological advances and increasing digitalization. Starting from 2017, the act was subjected to

a total overhaul. The revised act aims particularly at strengthening the protection of privacy and improving the self-determination of people over their own data.

The law applies to natural persons, companies and institutions. However, the law only extends to data of individuals (natural persons) and not to legal entities (companies).

The Federal Data Protection and Information Commissioner will receive more powers to ensure supervision. In addition, the penal provisions for data protection violations are being tightened.

Source: [Swiss Federal Administration](#)

動向

SITUATION

## Key findings from the annual JETRO Global Trade & Investment Report

Every year, JETRO publishes its **Global Trade and Investment Report**, which includes JETRO's estimates for world trade and FDI figures, as well as in-depth analysis of the world economy and Japan's place in it. The motto of this year's edition is *International Business Facing Fragmentation Risks*.

### *The World's and Japan's Economy and Trade*

According to the findings of the report, global trade increased year-on-year in both value and volume in 2022 but the momentum began to slow down toward 2023. Apart from the general uncertainty in the global economic outlook, downside risks include high resource prices, food insecurity, and financial market instability. The free trade regime is being distorted by several factors, including the prolonged conflict in Ukraine, increasing trade-restrictive measures by major countries, and geopolitical risks. As for Japan, its account surplus in 2022 was \$90.7 billion, which is

the first time in eight years that it has fallen below \$100 billion. Although the primary income remained in a large surplus, the current account was pushed down by trade turning from a surplus of \$16.5 billion in the previous year to a deficit of \$117.6 billion. However, in June 2023, Japan's current account surplus was ¥1.51 trillion, which was largely due to a ¥328.7 billion trade surplus, its first since October 2021.

### *Global FDI and Japan's FDI*

Compared to last year, global foreign direct investment (FDI) declined by 12.4%. This trend is especially visible in investment to developed countries. On the other hand, investment in emerging economies increased 4%. Japan's outward FDI in 2022 declined by 16.4% year-on-year to \$175.6 billion. FDI in the first five months of 2023 also remained weak.

### *Trade Rulemaking*

Economic security and supply chain resilience have led countries

to adopt independent policies and regulations that have created more uncertainty in the trade environment and curbed the expansion and diversification of transactions. The U.S. and Europe suggest a shift in the conventional view of free trade and globalization.

### *Policies and Business for a Sustainable Society*

The calculation of greenhouse gas emissions is becoming an unavoidable issue for companies and with the implementation of the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), carbon pricing has entered a new stage. In addition, an increasing number of companies are encouraging their suppliers to calculate and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

The original report is only available in Japanese but the overview of the report is translated into English. You can access this year's and previous editions [here](#).

Sources: [JETRO](#)

分析

ANALYSIS

## 革新

INNOVATION

## Sevensense and Rapyuta Robotics develop autonomous forklifts

Zurich-based [Sevensense](#) and [Rapyuta Robotics](#), which has its headquarters in Tokyo, have announced their technical development collaboration with the aim of creating next-generation automated forklifts based on Visual Simultaneous Localization and Mapping (SLAM) and cloud robotics.

This technology provides autonomous robots with reliable navigation capabilities, even in changing environments, and facilitates operations along dynamic objects such as other vehicles, robots, and even human employees. The aim is to enable autonomous forklifts to navigate complex environments with ease and efficiency.

Gajan Mohanarajah, Co-founder and CEO of Rapyuta, said that Sevensense's Visual SLAM technology provides highly accurate localization and mapping capabilities, which are critical for the reliable and flexible operation of autonomous vehicles. On the other hand, Gregory Hitz, CEO and Co-founder of Sevensense, mentioned is excitement to work with Rapyu-



Sevensense and Rapyuta Robotics are working towards developing next-generation automated forklifts @Sevensense/Rapyuta Robotics

ta on this project. He is confident that their technology will enable Rapyuta Robotics to deliver high-performing autonomous forklift vehicles to their customers.

Sevensense is a spin-off of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, ETH Zurich while Rapyuta Robotics, also an ETH spin-off, is the leading provider of flexible and collaborative autonomous mobile robot (Rapyuta PA-AMR) solutions and the pioneer in cloud robotics.

Source: [Switzerland Global Enterprise](#)

## Message from the new editor

Dear readers,

I wanted to take this opportunity to introduce myself: My name is **Pablo Das** and I started working as Research Associate for JETRO's Geneva office in July. I am also the new editor of this newsletter and it is my great pleasure to continue my predecessor's amazing work. I am motivated to provide you each month with high-quality content that is informative, engaging, and thought-provoking. Thank you for your continued support and interest in our publication. I look forward to this journey and hope to bring you more great content in the future.

Best regards from Geneva,

Pablo Das

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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