

## Special points of interest:

- A message from our Director General on this special year for Swiss-Japanese relations
- Japanese exports nearly halve, yen down again after record highs
- Cosplay to be represented at the Polymanga festival
- Presentation of the RIT project that links Switzerland with Toyama in the field of pharmaceutical products

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## Message from Mr. Michiaki Watanabe, Director General of JETRO Geneva

Dear reader,

On February 19, 2009, Ms. Leuthard, Vice-President of the Swiss Federal Council and Head of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs and Mr. Nakasone, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan, signed the Free Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (FTEPA) between Japan and Switzerland.

This represents a landmark in the relation between our two countries. It is a fabulous challenge and a wonderful opportunity to enhance exchanges of all kinds. In particular, we expect an expansion in mutual trade and investment and the further development of business collaborations between the two countries.

I am also very much looking forward to the conclusion of the revision of the double taxation convention, as well as the social security agreement between Switzerland and Japan, as they will greatly improve investment conditions.

Currently, procedures to bring the FTEPA into effect are being followed by both sides, and we expect it to be fully implemented by

the end of this year.

I would also like to point out the role played by former Federal Councillor Joseph Deiss, who initiated the negotiations for this FTEPA, as a result of which he deservedly became the first Swiss to be awarded 'The Grand Cordons of the Order of the Rising Sun' from the hands of Emperor Akihito. Meanwhile, we at JETRO Geneva are taking on the opportunity in this special year for our two countries to organize various FTEPA-related seminars and product fairs, as well as tourism and cultural presentations on both sides.

We will also endeavor to build more bridges between Switzerland and Japan, among others through our so-called RIT (Regional Industry Tie-up) program, which links Japanese regional industries with other parts of the world. I am proud to say that of the 19 RIT projects worldwide, 3 involve Swiss industries, a sign of the strong health of business relations between Switzerland and Japan.

One of those RIT projects links Switzerland with the Suwa region in the field of Micromachines.

It is within this RIT frame-



Federal Councillor Doris Leuthard and Foreign Affairs Minister Hirofumi Nakasone upon signing the FTEPA

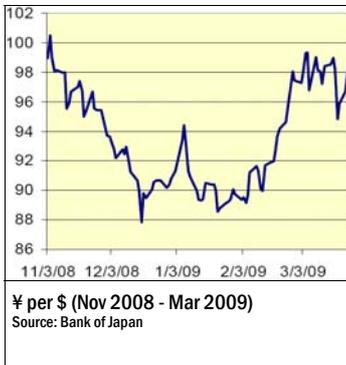
work that we will be welcoming a delegation from the Suwa Desk Top Factory Research Consortium ([www.dtf.ne.jp](http://www.dtf.ne.jp)) in Switzerland between May 10 and 19. During this trip, the delegation will take part in the Professional Microtechnology Environment Show (EPMT) in Lausanne and visit the EPFL. It will also visit Solothurn to have a roundtable with local companies.

Overall, our activities are wide-ranging and I am confident that opportunities to build on the already sound Swiss-Japanese economic relations will abound in the future.

A new era is about to begin in the relations between our two countries, and I sincerely hope that, with our help, you will make the most of this wonderful opportunity that is the FTEPA.

Michiaki Watanabe

## Japan's current economic situation



The Japanese economy suffered another fresh blow when it was announced that exports fell 49.4% year-on-year in February, following a 45.7% fall in January, further highlighting the profound impact on Japanese manufacturers of falling demand abroad. Exports to the US and Europe were again particularly affected, with respective falls of 58.4% and 54.7%.

More surprisingly, imports also fell much more than expected, dropping 43% year-on-year in February, leading to the first trade surplus in five months. However, exporters might find solace in the weakening yen, which has gone down to ¥98.2 against the dollar on March 26 after having hit record highs in December and January. The Nikkei 225 Index has also recovered well after

having hit a 26-year low on March 10 at 7,021.28, having since shot up 20% to reach 8,383.99 on March 26, as optimism that the worst of the financial turmoil may be behind hit the markets. Meanwhile, industrial production fell a record 10% month-on-month in January, while corporate bankruptcies rose 10.4 % year-on-year in February, the ninth straight increase.

## Cosplay, the new phenomenon from Japan

Japan the country of cars and electronics, but also the country of cartoons, videogames and mangas. Japanese mangas and videogames are very popular around the world, particularly among teenagers and unsurprisingly, this passion has its own festival in Switzerland.

Indeed, for the fifth year, the "Polymanga" festival will be held in the French part of Switzerland. During this event people can approach the Japanese culture through calligraphy, tea ceremony, karaoke.... Nevertheless, the main point of this event is not to show the conventional Japanese culture but to show the Japanese subculture through the discovery of manga as well as cosplay.

Everybody knows about mangas but people hardly

know about cosplay. So what is it? And why is it so popular among teenagers and young adults? The word Cosplay is a contraction where 'cos' stands for costume. In Japan cosplay is part of the Japanese subculture. Each year, cosplayers and manga fans attend the Comiket event, a huge festival that attracted 550,000 participants in 2008.

Cosplayers form a subculture centered on wearing costumes and reenacting scenes or inventing behavior inspired by their characters. Characters are usually sourced in various Japanese manga, anime, and videogames. In Switzerland, unlike in Japan, the cosplayers use almost exclusively hand-made costumes. Cosplay, which is usually performed by young people aged 12 to

25, is a widespread activity in anime and manga conventions. It is a mix of imagination, creation and imitation. If you ask cosplayers "Why do you cosplay?", the answer would probably be "To have fun!"

But let's insist on the fact that cosplay is not just about dressing like a manga character, it is also about playing its role and creating the costumes. It is, in fact, a real art, and one which is very impressive as well!

So if you want to see cosplay, you can go to the Polymanga festival ([www.polymanga.ch](http://www.polymanga.ch)) that will be held from April 11 to 13 in Lausanne.

More than 12,000 people visited Polymanga last year and the number of visitors keeps increasing since its creation in 2005.



Cosplay, an art that is attracting more and more Europeans

## Regional Industry Tie-up (RIT) project: Toyama

In order to boost foreign investment into Japan's lesser-known regions, JETRO has set up the Regional Industry Tie-up program, or RIT, which promotes two-way industrial exchange and collaboration between regions in Japan and other countries. The aim is to facilitate region-to-region partnerships that lead to the creation of new industries and stimulate business in participating regions. The program offers a perfect opportunity for foreign regions interested in part-

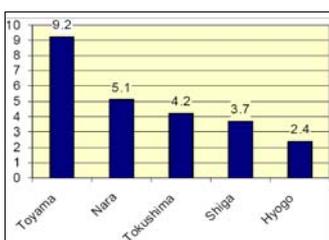
nering with Japan but lack the resources or network to make such connections. JETRO utilizes its wide network in Japan and overseas to help create and maximize the success of such partnerships. One of those RIT projects is the one between Switzerland and Japan's Toyama Prefecture in the field of pharmaceutical products. Located near the center of Japan on the coast of the Sea of Japan, Toyama has a pharmaceutical history that extends more than 300 years and offers one of the most developed pharmaceutical industry clusters in Japan. Centered on universities

and their relations with local testing and research institutions, companies and government bodies, the prefecture's industrial potential, developed over the years with Japanese, Chinese and Western medicine, is being put to use in building Toyama's research functions and industrial concentration in biotech-related industries. With this RIT project, Toyama aims to collaborate and commercialize new products by combining the power of Western medicine with herbal medicine

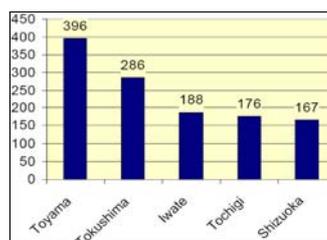
and participate in this local pharmaceutical seminar entitled 'The Technology of Drug Products' to listen to the Swiss firms' presentations and attend a networking session. In addition, since both business meetings with Japanese companies went well over there, we hope that business agreements will be reached in the near future. Besides company visits, the small delegation also visited a 350 year-old drug wholesale museum in Toyama. This experience enabled everyone to



The Swiss delegation visiting the drug wholesale museum along people from JETRO Toyama and JETRO Geneva



Pharmaceutical manufacturing sites, by prefecture, 2006 (per 100,000 people)  
Source: Toyama Prefectural Government



Pharmaceutical output per capita, by prefecture, 2006 (¥ Thousand)  
Source: Toyama Prefectural Government

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and drug formulations of Japanese and Chinese medicine through industry-government-academia exchange with Switzerland, especially Basel's unique pharmaceutical cluster.

Within the framework of this RIT project, JETRO Geneva invited two Swiss pharmaceutical companies to Toyama last February.

They visited five local companies and one institute and took part in a business seminar organized by JETRO Toyama and the Toyama Pharmaceutical Association. It was so successful that more than 50 people came to partici-

understand how Toyama's traditional pharmaceutical industry grew to become a major player in Japan.

If you are interested in doing business with Toyama's pharmaceutical companies, please inform us. There are about 200 pharmaceutical firms in the Toyama region, with an annual production reaching ¥441.7 billion (CHF 5.34 billion).

They have been seeking Swiss partners with whom they can produce drugs in Japan.

Please contact us if you need more information.

Contact person: Ms. Miho Kondo:

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A seminar on 'The Technology of Drug Products' was organized for the visit of the Swiss delegation



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*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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 Geneva Newsletter can also be viewed and/or downloaded online:  
<http://www.jetro.go.jp/switzerland/newsletter>

## Agenda

### **Polymanga**

April 11 to 13, Beaulieu, Lausanne

This year is the 5th anniversary of Polymanga, the largest event in Switzerland on video games, manga and Japanese culture. Mainly focusing on Japanese subculture, it will nevertheless also present more traditional aspects of the Japanese culture, such as origami and tea ceremony. It is therefore an event that the whole family can enjoy!

### **Professional Microtechnology Environment Show**

May 12 to 15, Beaulieu, Lausanne

Within the framework of the JETRO RIT program, the Desk Top Factory Research Consortium from the Suwa region in Japan will attend this trade fair. Three companies from that consortium will present their products at a booth. For more information, please contact us at: [jetroge@jetroge.ch](mailto:jetroge@jetroge.ch)