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INTERVIEW

Japanese watch component subsidiary moved to Neuchâtel

KEF Corporation manufactures and sells watch rubber seals

Founded in 1967 and headquartered in the Chiba prefecture of Japan, KEF Corporation is a company developing precision rubber parts.

It sells its products for many applications: watches, but also digital cameras, printers, batteries, medical and food products.

After a long presence in Switzerland through distributor, KEF opened in July 2003 its own Swiss office. Initially located in Geneva, it moved earlier this year in Neuchâtel. Two persons are in charge of this office.

Jean-Noël Hennau who recently joined and worked previously for Seiko Instruments for eighteen years and spent seven years in Japan. Among other responsibilities, he was in charge of European markets and a member of the Executive Committee of Seiko Instruments. Hiroko Itohisu has worked in the sales department of KEF Corporation for many years and dispatched to Europe to lead the European and International sales since 2008.

KEF develops high-quality rubber parts

KEF employs a total of 350 people for an annual sales volume of about ¥ 1,200 million (approx.



Jean-Noël Hennau, Managing Director, Hiroko Itohisu, Sales Department Manager, KEF Corporation's Swiss subsidiary

CHF 13.5 million). It produces and sells rubber rings that are used mainly in the watch industry. They can be round or square, but also have special shapes.

A watch has generally three types of sealing rings: one on the back to seal the watch case, one on the crown and pushers and one between the case and the glass.

Jean-Noël Hennau claims KEF's rubber rings have three advantages over its competitors. "First, we have very competitive prices. Second, we have very tough requirements on quality. We inspect 100% of our products. Third, we are very fast in the delivery. Even if a new mold needs to be done, we only need 6

weeks or less to deliver a product".

Neuchâtel-based office

KEF Corporation just moved its Swiss office in Neuchâtel. "We moved because many case manufacturers are located in cantons of Neuchâtel, Jura and Bern. They now are the companies which buy the rings", explained Mr. Hennau. KEF's also sells rubber rings to brand's after-sales services.

"We have many customers in Switzerland in the three major Watch Groups, but also in the high quality low volume markets", Mr. Hennau claimed.

The COMCO (Swiss Competition Commission) decided to allow ETA (Swatch Group) to reduce its supply of movements by 15% to watchmakers compared to 2010. Will Swiss companies turn more to foreign companies so as to ensure a stable and diversified supply?

"The COMCO's decision will serve us. Our product is so small that it is not significant for the calculation of the value of the Swiss made label. People should not be afraid to contact Japanese companies", claimed Jean-Noël Hennau.

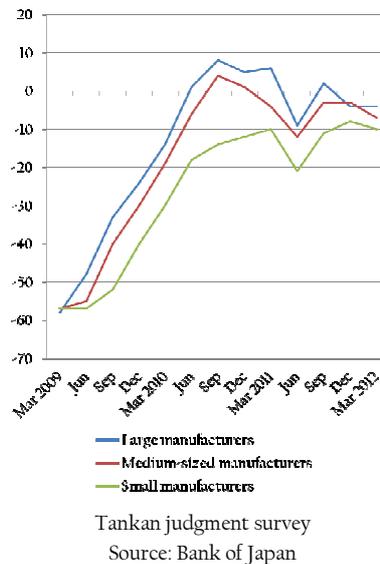
動向

SITUATION

Japan's current economic situation

According to the Bank of Japan, "Japan's economic activity has shown some signs of picking up, although it has remained more or less flat" (April 2012 Monthly Report). Furthermore, the Cabinet Office claimed that "concerning short-term prospects, reflecting the effects of policy measures, a picking up trend in the Japanese economy is expected to take hold. However, there are downside risks that could stem from the influence of the Eurozone debt crisis, oil price hikes, and further slowing down of overseas economies" (April Monthly Economic Report).

The main indices of Japan's economy show a recovery trend since earthquake disasters. The index of



the TANKAN judgment survey for large manufacturers increased from -9 in June 2011 to -4 in March 2012. The leading index of business conditions also grew from 90.3 in

April 2011 to 96.3 in February 2012. Exports of Japan rose 5.9% to ¥6,204 billion in March 2012 from a year earlier, up 23.9% for the United States, but down 9.7% for the European Union and 5.9% for China. On the same period, imports increased 10.6% to ¥6,288 billion.

The domestic demand increased as well. The average of monthly consumption expenditures per household for March 2012 was ¥303,841, up 4.1% in nominal terms and up 3.4% in real terms from the previous year. Furthermore, the consumer confidence index rose in March 2012 1.0% from the previous month and 20.7% from April 2011.

Vaud companies will visit Japan from September 10 to 14

活動

ACTIVITY

The Vaud Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CVCI) held a meeting in Lausanne on April 4. Its purpose was to introduce the business visit of Vaud companies in Japan scheduled to be held from September 10 to 14, 2012.

Raphaël Conz, Manager of the Economic Promotion (SPECo), outlined the objectives of this visit: to bring a total of 30 / 40 entrepreneurs to Japanese dynamic markets and to attract Japanese companies in Canton of Vaud.

During their four-day stay in Japan, participants will be welcomed by the Swiss Ambassador. They will have the opportunity to participate in seminars and to visit some companies, depending on



their interests.

Following the welcome speech of Guy-Philippe Bolay, CVCI's Deputy Director, H.E. Ambassador Kenichi Suganuma, Head of Japan's Consulate in Geneva, presented the current relations between Japan and Switzerland. Manabu Eto, JETRO Geneva Director General also introduced Japan's current economic situation.

Marcel Germann, OSEC's Senior

Consultant Asia Pacific, identified some business opportunities in Japan, such as clean technologies (industry that has gained importance in the post-Fukushima context), medical, bio and nano technologies.

Swiss Ambassador in Japan H.E. Paul Fivat outlined some aspects of the Japanese economy. He underlined that penetrating Japanese market requests not only a good product, but also time and personal investment. He also claimed that it is now time to invest, because Japan is in a recovery and reconstruction situation after earthquake disasters.

Traditional Japanese cuisine in Geneva

"I arrived in 1973 in Switzerland to study French. I was planning to stay only two years. But, 39 years on, I am still here!", said in a very good French Saburo Tanaka, owner of Sansui restaurant in Geneva.

He married his wife Francesca in Geneva in 1979 and worked as a tour organizer. "But, since 1991, the number of Japanese tourists declined. As cooking was my hobby, I opened Sansui restaurant in 1993", he said.



Saburo and Francesca Tanaka, owners of Sansui restaurant in Geneva

Two minutes from station

Located in "Grottes" district of Geneva, Sansui restaurant is only two minutes from Geneva Cornavin station.

The restaurant welcomes approx. 60 clients per day. Most of them are local residents: businesses, bankers, employees of international organizations, diplomats. Some are Japanese and Korean.

Sansui's specialties

"Our objective is to prepare a food of good quality at cheap prices", claimed Mr. Tanaka.

In addition to the traditional sushi and sashimi, Sansui restaurant has some other specialties. "We have been the first restaurant in Geneva to prepare Japanese-style gyoza" (kind of ravioli). Whereas

Chinese gyoza are cooked in a soup, Japanese gyoza are grilled.

Sansui's menu also shows home-made yakitori (Japanese recipe of skewered chicken), tempura (fried seafood or vegetables) and grilled eel with sweet sauce.

Following Fukushima's accident, Sansui imports less foodstuffs from Japan. "Our best sake was the "Okunomatsu" from Fukushima. But, we do not serve it anymore". Most of fishes are imported from other countries. And foodstuffs imported from Japan remain safe, since they are inspected in Japan and in Europe.

Does Mr. Tanaka have some projects for his restaurant? "I always have new ideas. I would like to propose something that exists in Japan, but does not exist yet in Switzerland", he claimed.

Sansui Restaurant
Rue de la Faucille 12, Les Grottes, Geneva

会見

INTERVIEW

Visit of WTO Director General to JETRO's Headquarters

Mr. Pascal Lamy, Director General of the World Trade Organization (WTO) met Mr. Hiroyuki Ishige, JETRO's Chairman and CEO on March 16, 2012, at JETRO Headquarters, Tokyo.

Mr. Ishige made reference to the WTO / Institute of Developing Economies - JETRO joint study "Trade patterns and global supply chains in East Asia: From trade in goods to trade in tasks". This study was presented on June 6, 2011, at WTO's building in Geneva



Mr. Pascal Lamy, WTO Director General, and Mr. Hiroyuki Ishige, JETRO's Chairman and CEO

(see Newsletter No. 27). He expressed his wish for the continuation of joint studies between the

two organizations.

He also claimed that bilateral and plurilateral liberalization of trade has been globally promoted amid the stagnation in negotiations for trade liberalization.

Mr. Lamy outlined that, if two countries were capable of blending their systems, the coalescing of institutions across multiple countries would eventually be achieved.

活動

ACTIVITY

革新

INNOVATION

Canon received six “Best Product 2012” awards

Canon obtained six “Best Product 2012” awards from the Technical Image Press Association, organization that gathers 29 photography and imaging magazines in Europe. It marks Canon’s record high number of awards from this Association in a single year.

The EF8-15mm f/4L Fisheye USM was awarded “Best Professional DSLR (Digital Single-Lens Reflex) Lens in 2012” for its capacity to capture 180-degree field of view.

The EOS-1D X was recognized “Best DSLR Professional in 2012” for its “creative advantages of a full frame sensor with high-speed, high-sensitivity technology”, which meets the needs of journalists, sports and wildlife photographers.



EOS 5D Mark III digital SLR camera
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The EOS 5D Mark III was awarded “Best Video DSLR in 2012” for its camera that “changed the landscape of digital photography”.

The “Best Expert Compact Camera in 2012” award was delivered to the PowerShot G1X for its “DSLR-like image quality, but in a compact camera-style body with an excellent fixed zoom lens”.

Canon received the “Best Profes-

sional Video Camera in 2012” for EOS C300, which features a “landmark video camera technology”.

The “Best Multifunction Photo Printer in 2012” was awarded to the PIXMA MG8250. It features access to the PIXMA Cloud Link and wireless printing from mobile devices.

Furthermore, Canon was recognized by the US Fortune Magazine as the world’s fifth most admired company in March, moving up two positions from the previous year.

Japan remains the world’s largest manufacturers of cameras. It shipped in January 2012 three times as many cameras as it did in January 2003.

Agenda

- ✓ 23rd - 25th May: “Demographic Ageing in Japan and Switzerland: Action through Exchange and Dialogue” Symposium organized by the World Demographic & Ageing Forum, Swiss Re Centre for Global Dialogue, Rüslikon/Zurich
- ✓ 30th May: Swiss-Japanese Chamber of Commerce General Assembly, Zurich
- ✓ 4th June: Visit of the Delegation of Suwa Desktop Factory (DTF, from Nagano Pref.) in Lausanne Workshop and visit of companies
- ✓ 14th June: “Japan: Challenges and Opportunities in Cleantech sector” (“Japan: Herausforderungen und Chancen im Cleantech-Sektor”) Seminar organized by OSEC, Bern, Hotel Novotel, 3.30 - 5.45 p.m. (In German)

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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