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INTERVIEW

## Koichiro Nakamura becomes Director General of JETRO Geneva

Koichiro Nakamura took up the post of Director General of JETRO Geneva in July 2013.

Born in 1959, he graduated from the University of Tokyo in the field of nuclear engineering. He entered the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) in 1982. In his career, he has been involved in the fields of energy and environment, technology R&D, and international technology collaboration.

### *Positions in Japan, United States and France*

Before joining JETRO Geneva, Koichiro Nakamura was Deputy Director General for the industrial safety at the METI (Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry) since April 2012. He developed safety regulations for renewable energies such as fuel cell vehicles for their introduction to the market.

Koichiro Nakamura also held several positions outside Japan. From 1989 to 1990, he studied energy and environmental policy at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. He also worked in Paris from 1997 to 2000 at the International Energy Agency, which is established in the framework of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). He was in charge of international



technology collaboration agreement in the area of energy and environment.

### *Switzerland is the first country he visited*

"I visited Switzerland thirty years ago. It was my first visit abroad. I went to Zermatt for skiing", Mr. Nakamura said.

Among his hobbies, Mr. Nakamura likes reading novels, playing the flute, and playing golf.

"I climbed up to 43 mountains among the "100 Famous Japanese Mountains" identified in Kyuya Fukada's book. I would like to do hiking in the Swiss mountains, as far as my physical and mental strength can endure".

### *Spreading of positive feeling on economic situation*

Koichiro Nakamura points out the improvement of economic situation in Japan. "The economic situation is getting better. In the first quarter 2013, the GDP grew at annualized rate by

4.1%. The positive feeling on Japanese economic situation is now spreading among people and society. The economic situation is improving thanks to Abenomics: the easing of monetary policy, fiscal measures and the growth strategy".

What could Japan learn from Swiss economy? "As a personal comment, I would like to mention that Switzerland has attractive taxation, labor and human resource development policies. I think that we — the Japanese — could learn a lot from the Swiss system and its policies in these areas", he said.

### *Celebrating 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of diplomatic relations*

"I am honored to be in Geneva and to work for JETRO. My predecessors have already established good relations with Switzerland. I would like to strengthen the relationship between the two countries and with our partners through the promotion of trade and investment. Next year, we will celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Switzerland. In this context, many events are planned. JETRO will be pleased to take part in the organization of these events", Mr. Nakamura said.

## 動向

SITUATION

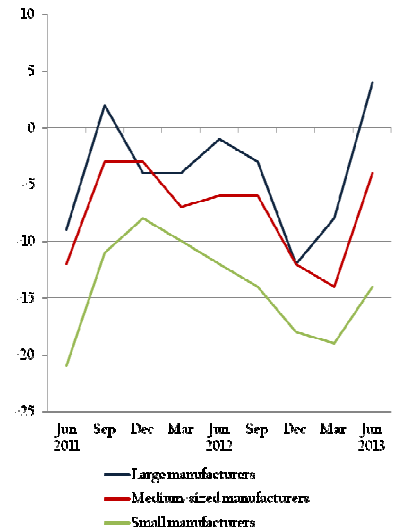
## Japan's current economic situation

According to the July issue of the Cabinet Office's economic report, "The Japanese economy is picking up steadily and shows some movements on the way to recovery". Several indicators outline the improvement of the Japanese economy. The Tankan survey, which is issued on a quarterly basis to provide an accurate picture of business trends of enterprises in Japan, increased from -8 in March to 4 in June for large manufacturers (see graph). Moreover, the index of production rose 1.9% from the previous month to 97.7 in May (2010=100).

The recovery of Japan's economy is

stimulated by the increase of the overseas demand. Exports were up 4.2% in the first half of 2013 from the same period in the preceding year. Exports to North America (+10.5%) and exports to Asia (+4.2%) increased, whereas exports to Western Europe declined 3.4%.

The domestic demand is also picking up. The average of consumption expenditures per household rose 1.1% in nominal terms and 1.4% in real terms from the previous year in May 2013 to ¥307,926. The unemployment rate decreased from 4.4% in May 2012 to 4.1% in May 2013.



Tankan's survey on business conditions for the manufacturing enterprises  
Source: Bank of Japan

## 動向

SITUATION

## Liberal Democratic Party obtained a majority at the House of Councillors

Half of the 242 seats of the Japan's House of Councillors (*Sangiin*, upper house) are contested in election every three years. The election of this House, which took place on July 21, 2013, will put an end to the divisions of the Japanese Diet.

The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), which obtained a majority in December 2012 at the lower house, gained 30 additional seats at the House of Councillors (total: 114). LDP Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's ruling coalition with the New Komeito will be able to secure a majority of 133 seats in the upper House.

The Democratic Party, which ruled the country from 2009 to 2012, lost a total of 29 seats at the upper house.

Born in 1954, Shinzo Abe has already been Prime Minister from



House of Councillors, November 17, 2010  
Source: Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet

2006 to 2007; in this position, he launched the negotiations for the signing of the Economic and Partnership Free Trade Agreement between Switzerland and Japan, which is in force since September 2009.

Results of the election of the House of Councillors

Source: The Yomiuri Shimbun, July 23, 2013

Party	Total seats in new House	Gains or losses in new House
Liberal Democratic Party	115	+31
Democratic Party of Japan	59	-27
New Komeito	20	+1
Your Party	18	+5
Japanese Communist Party	11	+5
Japan Restoration Party (Nippon Ishin no Kai)	9	+6
Social Democratic Party	3	-1
People's Life Party	2	-6
New Renaissance Party	1	-1
Green Wind	0	-4
Independent	4	-4

## Traditional tofu made in Geneva

Organic and healthy food is trendy in Switzerland. One product in particular is on the rise: tofu. Made from soy milk, tofu has been introduced in Japan during the Nara period and has become in Japan a traditional ingredient. Thanks to the company Swissoja, it is possible to find tofu made in Switzerland.

Swissoja is a Geneva based company created in 1979. It is the first company to produce tofu in Switzerland. In 2007 Manuel Martinez became CEO of the company. It now counts 9 employees.

### *Using natural flavors*

The motto of Swissoja is: "Quality and tradition." But how come a Swiss be so passionate by tofu? "I like tofu because it is different, it is an excellent source of protein, it is gluten and lactose free and it contains very little fat" said Manuel Martinez.



Manuel Martinez, CEO, Swissoja

The tofu produced by Swissoja goes from soft silk natural tofu to flavored tofu, all additives and GMO free. Mr. Martinez wants people to change their mind about tofu. Too often he hears: "Tofu, no I don't like it." Then he proposes skeptics to taste it and suddenly they change their minds admitting that they never tasted good tofu so far. The secret of Swissoja tofu is the flavor. Indeed Swissoja adds ingredients to the tofu like, for example basil in summer season or truffles in Christmas period, to match the taste of Swiss people. The company is now

developing "ready to cook" products that go from spicy tofu brochettes to tofu burgers. Almost all the production is made with organic certified soy beans. Every year Swissoja produces around 100 tons of tofu.

### *Assisted by made-in-Japan machines*

The production of tofu is assisted by machines made in Japan, but the key word is: human manpower. The manufacturing process will never be entirely automated; otherwise, it would break the quality of the product. Swissoja moved recently from its very small factory in Carouge to much bigger facilities in Acacias. Their products can be found at Manor, Globus, Aligro and organic shops. Their challenge is to sell more in the German-speaking part and why not to export their excellent tofu abroad?

会見

INTERVIEW

## Tokyo in competition to host 2020 Olympics

Tokyo 2020 Bid Committee made a presentation to introduce the candidature of Tokyo for the 2020 Summer Olympic Games to the members of the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

The presentation took place at the International Olympic Committee on July 3, 2013, in Beaulieu Conference Centre, Lausanne.

Tokyo is bidding to host the Olympics for the first time since 1964. The city of Tokyo is in competition with Madrid (Spain) and Istanbul (Turkey).



Emblem of Tokyo 2020 Bid Committee

Tokyo 2020 Bid Committee includes Tokyo Governor Naoki Inose, Deputy Prime Minister Taro Aso and TV presenter Christel Takigawa.

Deputy Prime Minister Taro Aso, a former Olympic athlete, claimed to the members of the IOC: "After the 2011 tsunami we gave the impression Japan was destroyed, but now we want to rise up again. Holding the Olympic Games in 2020 would strengthen this spirit. We can show the rest of the world how far we have recovered, thanks to their support".

International Olympic Committee will select the city, which will host 2020 Summer Games, at its September session in September.

行事

EVENT

## 革新

INNOVATION

## Honda and GM to develop next generation fuel cell technologies

Honda and General Motors announced on July 2, 2013 an agreement for the cooperation in the development of next generation fuel cell system and hydrogen storage technologies. They aim at developing them by 2020 through the share of knowledge, economies of scales and common sourcing strategies.



Honda FCX Clarity  
at Geneva Motor Show 2013

Honda and GM are eager to accelerate the market penetration of this ultimate clean mobility technology and I am excited to form this collaboration to fuse our leading fuel cell technologies and create an advanced system that will be both more capable and more affordable.”, said Takanobu Ito (Honda Website).

### *Advantages of fuel cell technology*

Fuel cell technology addresses several challenges faced by the automobile industry, such as greenhouse gas emission, petroleum dependency, efficiency, range and refueling time.

Fuel cell vehicles can have a driving range of up to 400 miles (about

640 km). They can be recharged in only 3 minutes. And they only emit water vapor.

President and CEO of Honda Motor Co. Ltd. Takanobu Ito underlines the advantages of this technology: “Among all zero CO2 emission technologies, fuel cell electric vehicles have a definitive advantage with range and refueling time that is as good as conventional gasoline cars.

### *Honda in leading position*

According to the Clean Energy Patent Growth Index, Honda is ranked no.2 in the number of fuel-cell patents filed from 2002 to 2012 and GM is no. 1 in the same period. Honda released the fuel-cell car FCX in 2002 and its successor the FCX Clarity in 2008.

## Agenda

## 日程

AGENDA

- ✓ Two Swiss companies have been invited to visit Japanese Sake Breweries in Hyogo and Fukushima Prefectures from 25<sup>th</sup> September to 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2013.

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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