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## Japan center on automobile standards in Geneva

Japan Automobile Standards Internationalization Center (JASIC) is promoting the internationalization of vehicle regulations. Headquartered in Tokyo, and established in 1987, its Geneva office has opened just a year after its setting up.

Masahiko Sakai took office in July 2011 and is the ninth director of JASIC Geneva office. He enjoys very much his stay in Switzerland: "I love Geneva and its surrounding mountains. Time passes slowly here. My family and I would like to stay here as long as possible".

*Promoting harmonization, safety and environmental protection*

JASIC is funded by the Japanese Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, but also by the Japanese automobile industrial associations. It has additional offices in Washington and Djakarta, which are respectively focused on US and Asian topics. Its purpose is to promote the harmonization of vehicle regulations, but also to ensure the safety and the environmental protection.

JASIC Geneva office employs four people. Its main activity is to participate in the United Na-



Masahiko Sakai, Director, Geneva Office,  
Japan Automobile Standards  
Internationalization Center

tions World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations, which develops new regulations for vehicles in the fields identified by two agreements.

"Japan is a contracting party of two agreements related to automobile regulations. The 1958 agreement is concerning the mutual recognition of type approval, although the 1998 agreement is concerning the establishing UN global technical regulations", explained Masahiko Sakai.

*Recent evolutions in automobile regulations*

The World Forum encompasses six subsidiary committees, which address different issues,

such as pollution and energy, brakes, lighting, noise, crash safety.

"The meetings take place in Geneva, although some meetings related to them take place in Tokyo, Paris, Brussels and others. The World Forum meets three weeks a year in Geneva; and its subsidiary committees meet each of them two weeks a year", Masahiko Sakai said.

The Japanese government has proposed to the World Forum the introduction of a system of international whole vehicle type approval, instead of the current approvals of components. This development would dramatically increase the mutual recognition of approvals.

In June 2013, the World Forum has established the global regulation on hydrogen and fuel cell vehicles(HFCV).

In addition, electric vehicle is also a "hot" matter at the World Forum. Japan is leading the discussion on warning sounds. "Electric vehicles are silent, and might be dangerous, especially for blind people. Therefore, it is important to set an appropriate level of sound. The next meeting will be held in December in Tokyo to discuss about an international regulation on electric vehicle sound", Mr. Sakai said.

## 動向

SITUATION

## Japan's current economic situation

Japan's economy is continuing to recover. Its GDP rose for the fourth consecutive quarter in the July to September 2013 period, marking an increase by 0.5% from the previous quarter (see graph). Moreover, the seasonally adjusted index for industrial production was up 1.3% from the previous month and up 5.1% from the previous year to 98.3 in September 2013 (2010=100).

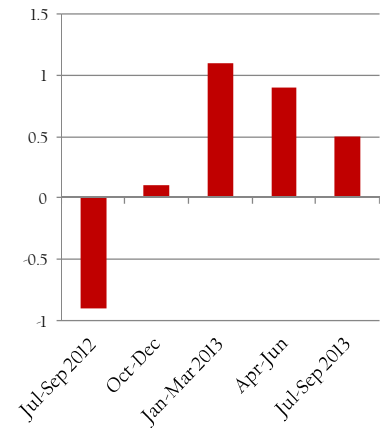
Japan's economy is mainly stimulated by public and private housing investments. Public investments rose 6.5% in the FY2012. Orders received for the construction were up 36.1% in September from the previous month and up 49.2% from

the previous year to ¥ 9,541 billion. Private residential investment increased 2.7% in the July-September period, marking the sixth consecutive quarter of growth.

The domestic consumer demand also continued to back the recovery. The average of consumption expenditures per household was ¥ 315,443, up 5.2% in nominal terms and up 3.7% in real terms from the previous year. Moreover, the number of unemployed people decreased 6.2% from the previous year to 4.0% in September.

Exports increased year-on-year 18.6% in October 2013 to ¥ 6,104.6 billion. Exports were up for all main

regions: +25.4% for North America, +24.3% for Western Europe and +14.9% for Asia.



Gross Domestic Product, seasonally adjusted series, changes from the previous quarter  
Source: Cabinet Office

## 文化

CULTURE

## Japanese food culture to be recognized as UNESCO's heritage

"Washoku; Traditional Dietary Cultures of the Japanese" has been recommended to be added on the list of UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage.

This recommendation has been made by a Subsidiary Body of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage of the UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). As none of its recommendations have so far been reversed, it is likely that the Washoku will be added on UNESCO's list. This decision is expected to be made at a meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee, scheduled to take place in Baku, Azerbaijan, from December 2 to 7, 2013.



"Japan Night", Davos, 2013

The government of Japan has submitted an application to add Japanese cuisine on UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list in March 2012.

According to the government, Washoku is "a social practice based on an essential spirit of the Japanese, respect for nature". It also argued that Washoku "contributes to

healthy life, long life expectancy and prevention of obesity". It furthermore claimed that it "strengthens the bonds of family and community members" and is linked to annual events, such as New Year's celebrations and rice planting.

21 Japanese assets are currently listed on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list. Washoku would be the first Japanese element of this list related to food.

Four other cuisines are already on the list: "Gastronomic Meal of the French", the "Mediterranean Diet" of Spain, Greece, Italy and Morocco, "Traditional Mexican Cuisine" and the "Ceremonial Keskek Tradition" of Turkey.

## Japan and Switzerland will further collaborate in the field of innovation

“Fostering innovation together” was the topic of the symposium organized by the Swiss Commission for Technology and Innovation (CTI) and the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). The symposium took place on October 29, 2013, in Spiez (Canton of Bern). It gathered a total of more than 70 participants from Switzerland and Japan.

On the occasion of this symposium, Japan and Switzerland signed an implementing arrangement to promote science-based innovation cooperation.

The symposium is launching the celebrations in 2014 of the 150 years of Swiss—Japanese diplomatic relations (see below).

### *Swiss and Japanese innovation policies and programs*

The symposium was focused on the following topics: life sciences, innovative surfaces and nanomaterials, and energy efficiency. Scientists from these fields as well as representatives from industry and government were invited to the symposium.

The welcome speeches were deliv-



From left to right: Kanji Fujiki, Deputy Minister, MEXT, Ryuhei Maeda, Ambassador of Japan in Switzerland, and Walter Steinlin, President, CTI.

ered by Walter Steinlin, President, CTI, Kanji Fujiki, Deputy Minister, MEXT, and Mauro Dell’Ambrogio, State Secretary for Education, Research and Innovation.

Speakers from CTI and MEXT then introduced Swiss and Japanese policies related to the promotion of innovation.

There were several presentations of ongoing successful collaborations as well as presentations of projects to initiate future collaboration. All participants had the additional possibility to exchange ideas and introduce projects during the poster sessions.

On the Japanese sides, participants

often represented regional innovation clusters, such as Hamamatsu Photonics K.K. (a top runner in the field of optical technology) and Shizuoka University in the field of Photonics. On the Swiss side, participants were invited based on their past experiences with Japan as well as their interest to initiate a project for the future, as the aim of the symposium was to foster new collaboration.

### *Implementing arrangement to promote innovation cooperation*

At the end of the symposium, Kanji Fujiki, Deputy Minister, MEXT, and Walter Steinlin, President, CTI, signed an implementing arrangement to promote innovation cooperation.

The arrangement intends “to facilitate the cooperation between Swiss and Japanese research and industry for peaceful purpose and for their mutual benefit”.

More specifically, it promotes cooperation activities such as science-based innovation projects and meetings to promote encounters and exchange of partners of research and industry.

行事

EVENT

## Celebrations of 150 years of diplomatic relations

In 1864, Japan and Switzerland established diplomatic relations through the signing of a Treaty on Amity and Trade. Numerous events will take place in 2014 to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of

the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Among them, JETRO will co-organize a symposium in Winterthur, on January 21, 2014. It will

also provide support to other events.

The full list of events is available on the Website of the Japanese Embassy in Switzerland at: [http://www.ch.emb-japan.go.jp/anniversary2014/index\\_e.html](http://www.ch.emb-japan.go.jp/anniversary2014/index_e.html)

行事

EVENT

**革新**

INNOVATION

## Toshiba and ORIX to develop geothermal plan at Okuhida Onsen

On November 19, 2013, Toshiba Corporation and ORIX Corporation (a financial services group) announced their plan to construct a geothermal power plant in Nakao, Okuhida Onsen, Gifu Pref. (in the North of the Japanese Alps).

They jointly established a company named Nakao Geothermal Power Generation Corporation (“Nakao Geothermal”), owned 55% by Toshiba and 45% by ORIX.

Okuhida Onsen is a renowned natural hot spring resort, source of high-temperature steam.

Nakao Geothermal will first assess the commercial and environmental viability through surveys of the hot spring. If assessments confirm the viability of the project, it will start to construct a geothermal power plant.

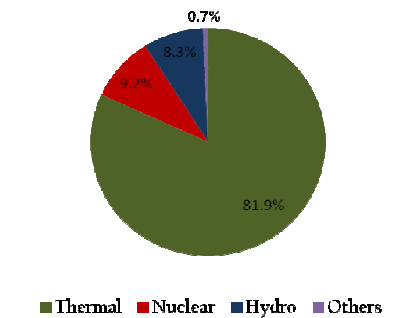


Okuhida, Gifu Pref.,  
Source: Japan National  
Tourism Organization

The plant is expected to be constructed in 2015 and to generate 2,000 kW.

The plant will use the Toshiba's Geoportable™ technology for searching locations of geothermal wells.

According to the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, thermal



Electricity output in percentage in FY 2011  
Source: Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry

energy accounts for 81.9% of the electricity output, nuclear energy for 9.2%, hydro energy for 8.3% and other energies for 0.7% (see graph). From the FY2010 to the FY2011, the nuclear energy part in electricity output reduced from 24.9% to 9.2%.

## Agenda

**日程**

AGENDA

- ✓ 2<sup>nd</sup> December: Seminar on Japanese ICT at JETRO Geneva office
- ✓ 3<sup>rd</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> December: Pollutec Horizons (Show for cleantech, energy and sustainable development) Paris Nord Villepinte, Hall 6, France

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>



**Japan External Trade Organization**

JETRO Geneva  
80, Rue de Lausanne  
1202 Geneva  
Phone: 022/732 13 04  
Fax: 022/732 07 72  
E-mail: SWG@jetro.go.jp